

PLATINUM JUBILEE
EDITION



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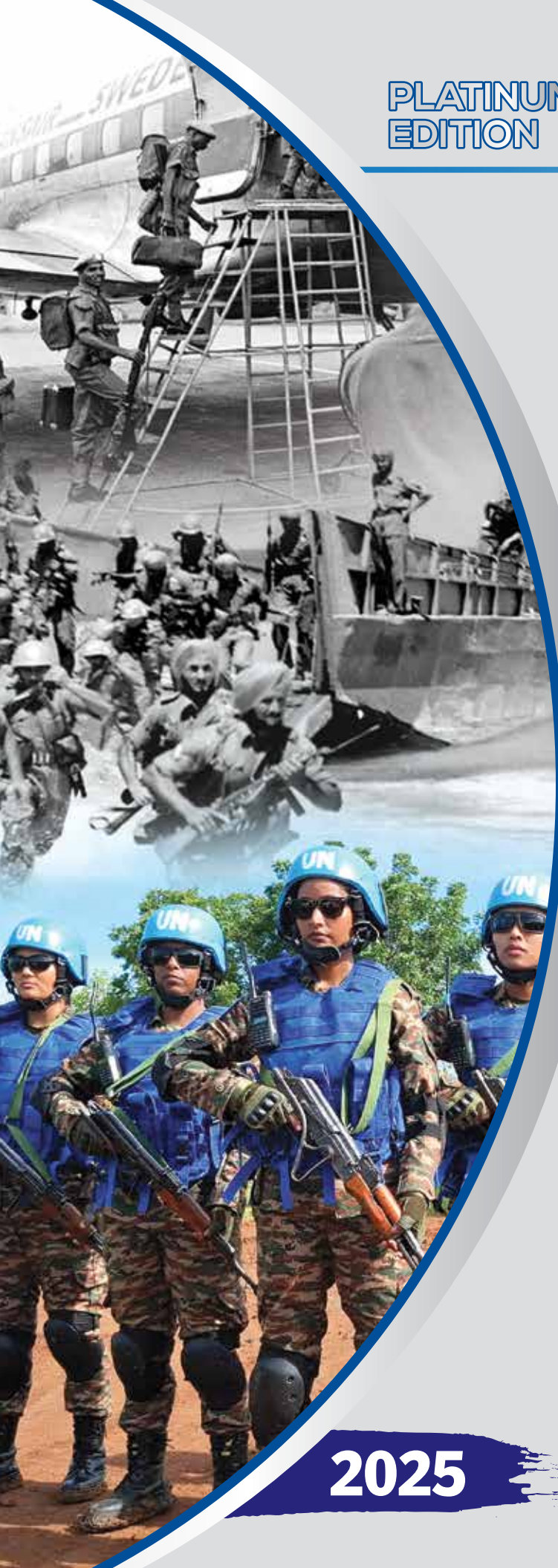
— YEARS OF —

**INDIAN PEACEKEEPING:
CHALLENGES, INNOVATIONS
& FUTURE DIMENSIONS**

**BLUE HELMET
ODYSSEY**



2025



FROM THE CHIEF EDITOR'S DESK



India has consistently demonstrated unparalleled commitment to global peace and security, playing a pivotal role in the success of UN Peacekeeping missions worldwide. For 75 years, India's peacekeepers have been at the forefront of restoring peace, often in some of the world's most challenging and volatile regions. The pledges made by India during

the various UN Ministerials, to provide troops, resources and force multipliers, further underscore India's leadership and solidify its reputation as a cornerstone partner in global peacekeeping.


As we commemorate this remarkable 75-year journey, it is with great pride that we present the *UN Journal 2025*, titled "*Blue Helmet Odyssey – Platinum Jubilee Edition: 75 Years of Indian Peacekeeping: Challenges, Innovations and Future Dimensions.*" This edition not only celebrates India's rich legacy but also explores the challenges faced, innovations introduced and future trajectory of India's contributions to global peacekeeping.

This publication brings together insights from senior leadership, distinguished subject matter experts and peacekeepers, offering a deep reflection on India's evolving role in peacekeeping. The experiences and expertise shared within these pages illuminate how Indian peacekeepers have successfully adapted to an ever-changing global landscape, demonstrating resilience, professionalism and an unwavering commitment to humanitarian principles.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all those who have contributed to this Journal—particularly the officers, experts and peacekeepers, past and present, whose dedication and sacrifices have shaped the course of India's peacekeeping history. Their invaluable contributions continue to inspire and guide future peacekeeping efforts.

Together, let us focus on advancing the noble cause of peace, ensuring that ideals of security, cooperation and harmony continue to guide our collective efforts at the world stage.

'Jai Hind'


(MP Singh)
Lt Gen
DG SD

Contribution for the UN Journal (India)

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BLUE HELMET ODYSSEY

"PLATINUM JUBILEE EDITION-75 YEARS OF INDIAN PEACEKEEPING: CHALLENGES, INNOVATIONS & FUTURE DIMENSION"

2025

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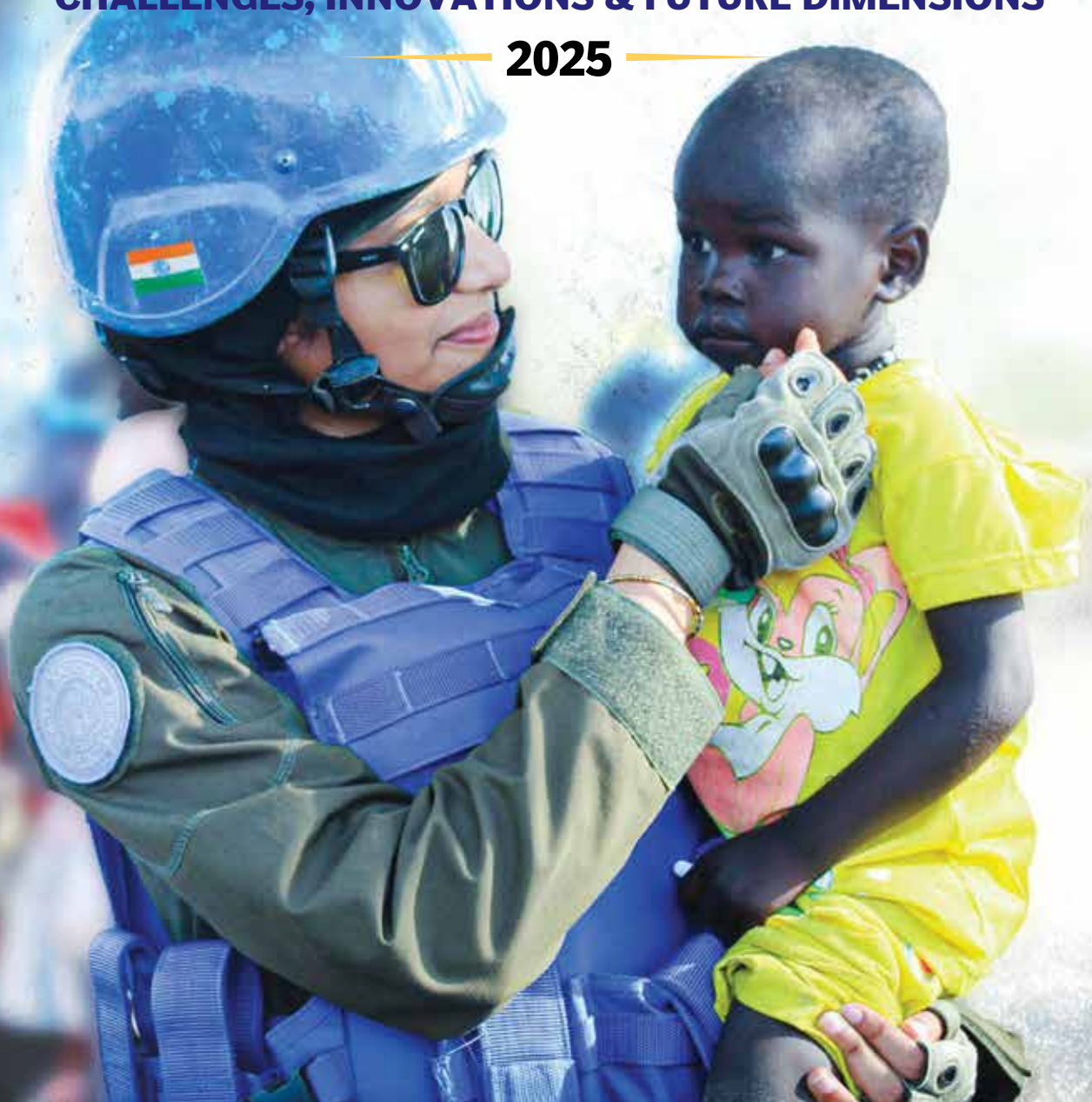


New Delhi, India

BLUE HELMET ODYSSEY

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CHALLENGES, INNOVATIONS & FUTURE DIMENSIONS”**

2025



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SPECIAL MESSAGE BY HON'BLE RAKSHA MANTRI



UN has played a pivotal role in maintaining stability, preventing conflicts and restoring peace in regions ravaged by violence. As we commemorate the Platinum Jubilee Edition of the UN Journal, we reflect on the remarkable legacy of UN peacekeeping in uploading peace and security in conflict affected regions. History attests that these operations have successfully reduced the active conflicts, creating space for political solutions to emerge and evolve.

India has been a pro-active and steadfast contributor to the UN peacekeeping operations, since its first commitment in Korea in 1950. Over the decades, Indian troops have participated in complex peacekeeping operations earning universal admiration for their professional excellence. Our forces have demonstrated exceptional dedication and unwavering commitment to the cause of global peace.

The challenges being faced by the peacekeepers continue to evolve, demanding innovative approaches and enhanced cooperation among the responsible nations. We must invest in training, technology and resources to ensure the safety and effectiveness of our peacekeepers. This edition is not only a tribute to the remarkable journey of the Indian peacekeepers, but also a call for action by all nations to unite in the shared pursuit of a more peaceful, secure and just world.

'Jai Hind'



(Rajnath Singh)
Raksha Mantri

MESSAGE BY CHIEF OF THE ARMY STAFF



Peacekeeping is the embodiment of multilateralism of partnership, which needs to be robust and innovative as conflicts become more complex. Year 2025 marks 75 years of India's monumental contribution to United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO) – a journey rooted in courage, discipline and global solidarity. India with its cultural heritage inspired by **'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'** reflects India's vision of **'One Earth One Family'** is committed towards world peace. India has pioneered the deployment of female peacekeepers, introducing the first all – female contingent to UN peacekeeping mission and establishing Female Engagement Teams to foster inclusive and sensitive peacekeeping operations.

Indian Army in its contribution towards global peace and stability has performed its role with diligence and professionalism transcending the boundaries of tribes/ class/ nations. India is one of the largest troop contributing countries, with over 2,92,000 personnel deployed across 49 missions since 1950. India's journey in peacekeeping operations is a testament of our unmatched track record in facilitating conflict resolution, coupled with commitment to high training standards and employment of state-of-the-art indigenous equipment. Indian Army personnel through their dedication & determination have set a benchmark for rest of the world.

India's peacekeeping odyssey is not just a historical milestone – it is a living legacy of resilience, innovation and responsibility. As the world confronts new age conflicts, India stands ready to lead, with blue helmets symbolising hope, harmony and humanity.

'Jai Hind'

(Upendra Dwivedi)

General

Chief of the Army Staff

MESSAGE BY VICE CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF



As we commemorate the Platinum Jubilee edition of Blue Helmet Odyssey, marking 75 years of India's unwavering commitment to global peacekeeping, we reflect on our legacy of courage, resilience and fortitude that has shaped international security and stability.

Since India's first deployment under the flag of United Nations, our peacekeepers have stood out as sentinels of hope in conflict-ridden regions, embodying the ideals of peace, humanity and cooperation. Indian peacekeepers have consistently demonstrated exceptional professionalism, empathy and commitment which have cemented India's reputation as a significant contributor to global peace.

The challenges faced by UN Peacekeepers have increased exponentially over the years, with complex geopolitical jostling, asymmetric threats and emerging technological paradigms reshaping the security landscape. In response, India has pioneered innovative approaches by leveraging advanced technology, fostering inclusivity through greater participation of women in peacekeeping and reinforcing community-centric strategies for sustainable peace. India remains steadfast in advocating reforms that enhance the effectiveness of peace operations while remaining rooted in humanitarian principles.

The Platinum Jubilee edition of UN Journal 2025 is not merely a celebration of history, but also a reaffirmation of our dedication to a future where peace prevails over conflict, dialogue triumphs over discord and justice restores faith in humanity. I extend my deepest gratitude to every Indian peacekeeper, past and present, who has worn the Blue Helmet/ Beret with honour and distinction.

'Jai Hind'

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Pushendra Singh', written over a circular stamp or mark.

(Pushendra Singh)

Lt Gen
VCOAS

Message by Deputy Chief of Army Staff



The Blue Beret Chronicle - Journal 2025 commemorates India's Platinum Jubilee of UN Peacekeeping service, honouring an extraordinary journey of 75 years of dedication, courage and commitment. This edition pays tribute to India's pivotal role in global peacekeeping missions while exploring the evolving landscape and new challenges in the realm of international peace efforts. This special issue gathers reflections and insights from distinguished civilian & military leaders, as well as first hand stories from Indian peacekeepers who have served in some of the world's most difficult conflicts zones. Their experiences reflect India's strength in navigating complexities, spearheading innovations and constantly enhancing the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations.

Shining a spotlight on India's legacy, the journal highlights peacekeeping and explores the emerging trends in the current milieu. In addition, it focuses on sustainable peace, technological advancements, gender inclusion and adaptive strategies. This edition also envisions India's continued role in shaping the global peacekeeping narrative.

The Platinum Jubilee edition stands not only as a celebration of the past but also as a beacon for the future- It reaffirms India's enduring commitment to global harmony and responsible leadership in building an inclusive and peaceful world.

'Jai Hind'

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Kapoor'.

Rakesh Kapoor

Lieutenant General

Deputy Chief of Army Staff (IS & T)

75 Years of Indian Peacekeeping



Historical Overview of Indian UN Peacekeeping Missions (1948 - 2024)

By Major General PK Goswami, VSM (Retired)

Peacekeeping is not a job for soldiers, but only soldiers can do it

DAG HAMMARSKJÖLD, UN SECRETARY-GENERAL (1953 – 1961)

Introduction

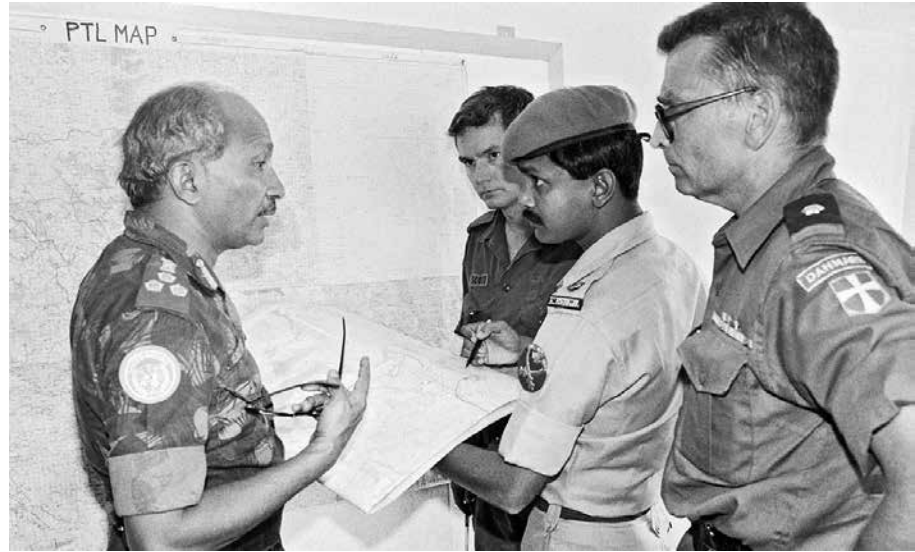
As one of the founding members of the UN, India has time and again reposed its full faith in the organisation, through its active cooperation and a steadfast understanding of its obligations to the UN activities. In the field of UN peace operations, India's spontaneous and unreserved contribution over the years has clearly demonstrated that it is not for any strategic gains but in the spirit of service to promote global peace. India has ample experience in preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and humanitarian operations around the globe. Thus, the Government of India through its Ministries of Defence, Home and External Affairs has always supported the cause of global peace and development. The Permanent Mission of India (PMI) in New York remains India's lead organisation in supporting the UN in its multiple initiatives.

India is proud of its highest-level contributions



as special and deputy special representatives of the UN Secretary-General, interlocutors and special messengers of peace on behalf of the UN; and military and police advisors in the UN HQ. Indian

Armed Forces have contributed outstanding head of missions, force commanders, elite Army, Air Force and police contingents, impartial observers and dedicated staff personnel under the Blue Flag. Besides peacekeeping, medical care, veterinary support to the domestic animals of the local population and infrastructural activities are among the many services Indian peacekeepers provide to the communities for whom they serve on behalf of the UN. India is the first country to field an all-women police contingent for the first time in UN history, besides contributing several peacekeepers, staff officers and police monitors in various missions. Indian contributor's devotion to duty, professional conduct and excellent performances have been widely acclaimed.



Indian Ethos and World Peace

Since ancient times, as per Indian ethnic, social, cultural and religious ethos, we always prayed for world peace and emphasised support to people in distress. This comes out clearly in our ages old shloka recited by us: ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः। सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कश्चिद्दख भाग्भवेत्। ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः॥ **(May all beings be at peace, may no one suffer from any ailment/ illness. May all experience happiness, may no one suffer. Om peace, peace, peace. Let peace prevail.)** Another, ancient shloka often chanted after a yoga practice: लोकः समस्ताः सुखिनो भवन्तु means **May all beings, everywhere, be free and happy.** Similarly, the word वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् (**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**) - which translates to **'world as one family'** is a philosophy that inculcates an understanding that the whole world and humanity is one family. Thus, it highlights that our contribution to world peace is nothing new, we always advocated and supported the betterment of mankind. So, our contribution to UN peacekeeping flows out quite naturally since it is in consonance with our social and cultural heritage and ethos.

India is a land of unity among diversity, and home to a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multilingual society that has lived together for millennia. Our heritage of diversity in languages, and social, cultural, and religious beliefs, combined with living under diverse geographical and economic conditions has facilitated us to be humane and accept others with open hands and hearts. This great heritage has been built into our character and we carry it wherever we go. Thus, we can quickly understand and connect with the affected local population in UN mission areas, resulting in our higher acceptance and more effective peacekeeping.

India's Contribution

India's contributions to UN peacekeeping have been underscored by the professionalism and dedication of experienced soldiers of India's armed forces and police personnel. This fact is further validated by UN statistics on our contribution. So far India has taken part in more than 49 out of 71¹ UN peacekeeping missions with a total contribution exceeding 2,87,000 troops².

Besides two Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and a Deputy SRSG,

¹ India and United Nations Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding <https://www.pminewyork.gov.in/pdf/menu/49151pkeeping.pdf>

² Ministry of Defence Press Release (29 May 2024) <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2022052>

India also has the honour of providing 15 Force Commanders³, two Divisional Commanders and seven Deputy Force Commanders so far, besides two Military Advisors, two (including one woman) Advisors and one Deputy Military Advisor to the UN Secretary-General. India has a long tradition of sending women as Military Observers and Staff Officers apart from them forming part of Medical Units deployed in UN peacekeeping missions. The first all-women contingent for a peacekeeping mission, a Formed Police Unit, was deployed by India in 2007, in Liberia (UNMIL), which earned incredible goodwill of locals to the extent that at the time of de-induction of the unit in Feb 2016,

peacekeepers provide to the communities in which they serve. They also perform specialised tasks such as veterinary support and engineering services. India was the first country to contribute to the Trust Fund, set up in 2016, on sexual exploitation and abuse. Indian peacekeepers have also brought the ancient practice of yoga to UN missions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, India provided made-in-India vaccines, to vaccinate field personnel. Thus India has contributed in many ways to strengthen UN peacekeeping.

But India's longstanding service has not come without cost. 180 Indian peacekeepers have paid the ultimate price while serving with the UN⁵. India has lost more peacekeepers than any other Member State and that itself speaks of the Indian peacekeeper's commitment to the UN cause. India's participation in UN peacekeeping is probably without parallel. A brief mission-wise contribution is given in succeeding paras.



Korea (1950 – 54)

60 Para Field Ambulance. India's first commitment to a UN assignment was consequent to the Korean War, which began on 25 Jun 1950, and raged for three years between the North Korean and Chinese Forces on one side and the South Korean and US Ied UN Forces on the other side. The Indian contingent of 60 Para Field Ambulance became a part of the 1st Commonwealth Division on 29 Nov 1950. The unit treated about 195,000 sick and injured and had performed nearly 2,300 field surgeries. Unit's contribution was recognised and highlighted by Britain's Minister for War, who paid a rich tribute to the Unit and its Commanding Officer in the 'House of Commons', and a 'Meritorious Unit Citation' from the US Army. The Indian Government bestowed Maha Vir Chakra on Lt Col Rangaraj (Commanding Officer) and Maj NB Banerjee and Vir Chakra on seven other officers

the Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf said: "We see you as family, If I had my will, I would have recommended for another unit of the UNMIL to leave, so that the Indian Formed Police Unit would continue its stay in the country for the time being"⁴. This was followed up by sending an all-women Army contingent to the Abyei mission in Jan 2023.

Medical care is among the many services Indian

³ Fernandez, M.; Assessment of India's UN Missions and Impact on Host Nations. Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, Journal of Defence Studies, Vol. 16, No. 3, July–September 2022, 429 - 438.

<https://www.idsa.in/system/files/jds/jds-16-3-2022-Assessment-of-India-UN-Missions.pdf>

⁴ Sharma KK (Quoting Press Trust of India, January 16, 2016, Indian express); in "India and the UN Peace Operations: In Service of Humanity and Global Peace", KW Publishers, p. 373.

⁵ UN Peacekeeping; Fatalities (08 Feb 2025), <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/fatalities>

and men of the unit. 60 Para Field Ambulance joined the Custodian Forces on 23 Aug 1953 and finally returned to India after the closure of the Custodian Force on 09 Feb 1954.

Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (NNRC). On 27 Jul 1953, both the warring sides accepted a resolution sponsored by India and a cease fire was declared. The war had resulted in the capture of a large number of prisoners, many refused repatriation to their countries of origin. For this purpose, the UN set up a NNRC and India assisted in resolving this intricate situation. Lt Gen KS Thimayya was appointed as the Chairman, with members from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Sweden and Switzerland.

The Custodian Force of India (CFI). India provided a Custodian Force under Maj Gen SPP Thorat, to take custody of the prisoners numbering over 22,000, pending their final disposal. The CFI consisted of HQ 190 Inf Bde and troops from five battalions 2 PARA, 6 JAT, 5 RAJRIF, 3 DOGRA and 3 GARHWAL RIFLES, along with 26 Gen Hosp and other supporting units⁶.

NNRC and CFI rendered yeoman service during the brief span of the mission from Sept 1953 to Mar 1954. On completion of the mission, the Indian Government awarded Padma Bhushan to Lt Gen KS Thimayya and the Ashok Chakra to Maj Gen SPP Thorat for their distinguished services of the highest order. On the return of 60 Para Field ambulance, Dr Rajendra Prasad, The President of India, travelled to Agra on 10 Mar 1955 and presented a commemorative trophy to the unit at a special parade.

Indo-China, UN International Commission - 1954 - 1970

India played an important role during the mediations at the Geneva Conference (Apr 1954) on Indo-China, comprising the three States of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. To supervise the compliance of the Geneva Agreement, three separate commissions were set up in Indo-China



(one for each State), called the International Commission for Supervision and Control. Each Commission had an Indian as the Chairman and a military deputy (Alternate Delegate), and members from Canada and Poland. The first batch was flown from Calcutta in Sept 1954.

The Headquarters of the Commission for North Vietnam was at Hanoi and headed by Mr MJ Desai, Ambassador-Designate, with Maj Gen KP Dhargalkar as alternate delegate. For South Vietnam, a Sub-Commission was set up at Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh city). Mr JN Khosla with

⁶ S. N. Prasad, History of the Custodian Force (India) in Korea 1953-54, pp. 137-38, for the complete Orbat, and pp. 153-61, for the list of officers serving in CFI.

Maj Gen PS Gyani as alternate delegate headed the Commission for Laos, which was located in Vientiane. Phnom Penh was the Headquarters of the Commission for Cambodia, with Mr G Parthasarathi as Chairman and Maj Gen Sardanand Singh as his military counterpart. For the security of various headquarters and teams, 2 GUARDS along with a detachment each from the Corps of Signals, Medical, Ordnance, Movement, Postal and Supply were sent to Indo-China. Besides this, two military observers, including the Indian Air Force and Indian Navy, for each Commission were deployed during the entire term. All personnel were rotated once a year.

UN Emergency Force (Gaza Strip, Egypt & Israel) (UNEF) - Nov 1956 - Jun 1967

India contributed an Infantry Battalion contingent, and a platoon from the ASC, detachments from the Corps of Signals, Ordnance, Medical, Military Police and Army Postal Services for the mission. This Force moved to the area in early Dec 1956 and the participating units were changed every year till de-induction in 1967. In Jan 1960, the command of the entire UNEF was given to Maj Gen PS Gyani of India, later Maj Gen IJ Rikhye took over the command in 1966. The UNEF was pulled out on 19 May 1967, just 17 days before the Arab-Israel War.

UN Observation Group in Lebanon (UNOGIL) - Jun 1958 - Dec 1958

To ensure free and fair elections in Lebanon in 1958, UNOGIL was set up in Lebanon, with 71 officers drawn from various countries. India contributed 20 military observers and they arrived in Lebanon on 19 Jun 1958. In addition, Colonel Ranbir Singh headed this mission and the UN Secretary-General also appointed Shri Rajeshwar Dayal of India as a member of UNOGIL. On successful completion of its assigned tasks, the mission was wound up in Dec 1958.

UN Operations in Congo (ONUC) - 1960 - 1964

India's initial participation in the ONUC commenced in Jul 1960, with the supporting elements, to include supply, technical and medical personnel. Col Harmandar Singh was the first contingent commander. Shri Rajeshwar Dayal was the Head of the ONUC from Sept 1960 to May 1961. Subsequently 99 Infantry Brigade Group (1 DOGRA, 2 JAT, 3/1 GORKHA RIFLES, Squadron of 63 CAVALRY, 120 Heavy Mortar Battery, 12 Field Company, Company from 4 MAHAR (Machine Gun), 95 Field Ambulance and a flight of 6 Canberra aircraft from No 5 Squadron) under Brig K A S Raja (who had earlier served in the UNEF-I) was sent in Mar - Jun 1961.

During the two years when the Indian Army operated in Congo, it ensured that Congo remained united and secessionists, supported by Belgian gendarmes were defeated. During this period, the Indian Army sustained 147 casualties including 39 who died in action. Their courage won them many awards (1 Param Vir Chakra, 3 Maha Vir Chakra, 14 Vir Chakra, 23 Sena Medal, 1 Vishisht Seva Medal and 10 Mention-in-Despatches). In one of the operations on 5 Dec 1961, Capt GS Salaria of 3/1 Gorkha Rifles charged the enemy with bayonets, khukris and grenades. In this daring and gallant action, the small force of Capt GS Salaria killed 40 men and destroyed two armed cars of the enemy. Despite being wounded in the neck, by a burst of an automatic fire, he led the charge and continued fighting till he collapsed due to profuse bleeding and made the supreme sacrifice. He was awarded the Param Vir Chakra (Posthumously) for valour of the most exceptional order.

Later, Brig RS Noronha took over as the new Commander of 99 Infantry Brigade in 1962 and Maj Gen Dewan Prem Chand was appointed Commander of the Katanga area; both were awarded PVSM for their exemplary leadership. The contingent returned to India in Mar 1963 but the last UN troops were withdrawn by Jun 1964.

UN Security Forces in West New Guinea (West IRIAN) (UNSF) - Oct 1962 - Apr 1963

To resolve this dispute, the UN established the United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA) and this was the first time in its history that UN assumed direct administrative responsibility for a territory (as opposed to monitoring or supervising). At the same time the United Nations Security Force (UNSF) established in 1962 to monitor ceasefire, to be supervised by Brig (later Maj Gen) IJ Rikhye, the then Military Advisor to the UN Secretary General. The Secretary General also directed him to lead the team of 21 military observers. The Indian contribution two military observers, from its contingent in Congo at that time.

UN Yemen Observer Mission (UNYOM) - Jul 1963 - Sept 1964

The mission comprised 200 personnel with 25 military observers, including two from India. Gen Von Horn was appointed as the Commander of UNYOM. However, he resigned in Aug 1963 and Lt Gen PS Gyani, then Commander of UNEF was temporarily appointed as Commander of UNYOM and reverted back in Nov 1963. Maj Gen IJ Rikhye also helped to organise and establish UNYOM. The mission was finally closed in Sept 1964.

Due to recurrence of the conflict in Yemen and following the 'Stockholm Agreement, reached in Sweden, between the Government of Yemen and the Houthis⁷, a special political mission, the UN Mission to support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA) was deployed in 2018. Lt Gen Abhijit Guha (former military observer in UNTAC and Military Advisor in the UN), after his retirement, was appointed as the Chair of the Redeployment Coordination Committee and head of the UNMHA in Yemen in July 2019.

UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) - Jan 1964 - to date

UNFICYP was established in Jan 1964 and India contributed three force commanders till 2003. On 17 Jan 1964, Lt Gen PS Gyani was appointed personal representative of the UN Secretary

General and later as Force Commander of the 6400 strong UN contingent in Cyprus. He was succeeded by Gen KS Thimayya, in Jun 1964, until his death in Dec 1965. Later, in Dec 1969, Maj Gen Dewan Prem Chand was appointed as the Force Commander, who held that assignment for six long years with distinction. India has also contributed five to eight police personnel to the mission since 2003 and one staff officer since 2020.

UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) - Jun 1974 - to date

In the aftermath of the 1973 Yom Kippur War, UNDOF was established to maintain the ceasefire between Israel and Syria on the Golan Heights. Since 2005, India has participated in the mission with a logistics unit. A 185 member contingent led by Lt Col Ajay Singh of 17 HORSE, replaced the Canadians and became the first Indian logistics battalion in UNDOF. The Contingent was composed of personnel from 17 HORSE, Engineers, Signals, Army Service Corps, Medical, Electronics and Mechanical Engineers, Military Police and the Army Postal Services. It was the first time that an Indian contingent was being deployed on the territory of Israel; whereas Indian forces were deployed on Egyptian territory in the case of UNEF-I and for UNIFIL in Lebanese territory. The units' were replaced every year. In Jul 2012, Maj Gen (later Lt Gen) Iqbal Singh Sangha was appointed as Head of Mission and Force Commander and remained in the post till Jan 2015. Maj Gen Jai Shanker Menon (earlier with UNIFIL and presently Director, Office of Political and Strategic Partnership at UN HQ) was appointed in Feb 2016 and held the position till Oct 2017. Presently India has 200 troops including 12 staff officers in the mission.

UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) - Nov 1978 - to date

UNIFIL was deployed to monitor Israeli Defence Force (IDF) withdrawal, maintain peace and security in Southern Lebanon and assist the

⁷ UN Peace Operations, "United Nations Mission to support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA)". <https://unmha.unmissions.org/background>

Lebanese Government in its effective functioning. One Infantry Battalion Group (2/4 GORKHA RIFLES) was inducted in Nov 1998 and rotated every year. UNIFIL was recently in the news, for being targeted by IDF in 2024, during Israel – Hezbollah conflict.

Maj Gen LM Tiwari was the Force Commander in 2001-2003, while three Deputy Force Commanders and Deputy Heads of the Mission were Brig G. Athmanathan (2000-01), Brig (later Lt Gen) JP Nehra (2006-08) and Brig (later Maj Gen) AK Bardalai (2008-10). Col Jai Shanker Menon (later Maj Gen and Force Commander UNDOF and presently Director, Office of Political and Strategic Partnership at UN HQ) was in charge of logistics. After retirement from the Army, Maj Gen AK Bardalai carried out a detailed study of UNIFIL and assessed its effectiveness. He was awarded a 'Doctorate' for the same by Tilburg University, Netherlands.

UN Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG) - Aug 1988 - Feb 1991

India contributed eight military observers (increased to 11 by Nov 1990), in addition Brig (later Lt Gen) VM Patil was the Assistant Chief Military Observer and Indian National Senior. Lt Col VK Jetley (later Lt Gen and Force Commander in Sierra Leone in 1999) was one of the military observers. The mission was finally closed in 1991.

UN Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM - I, II & III) - Jan 1989 - Jul 1999

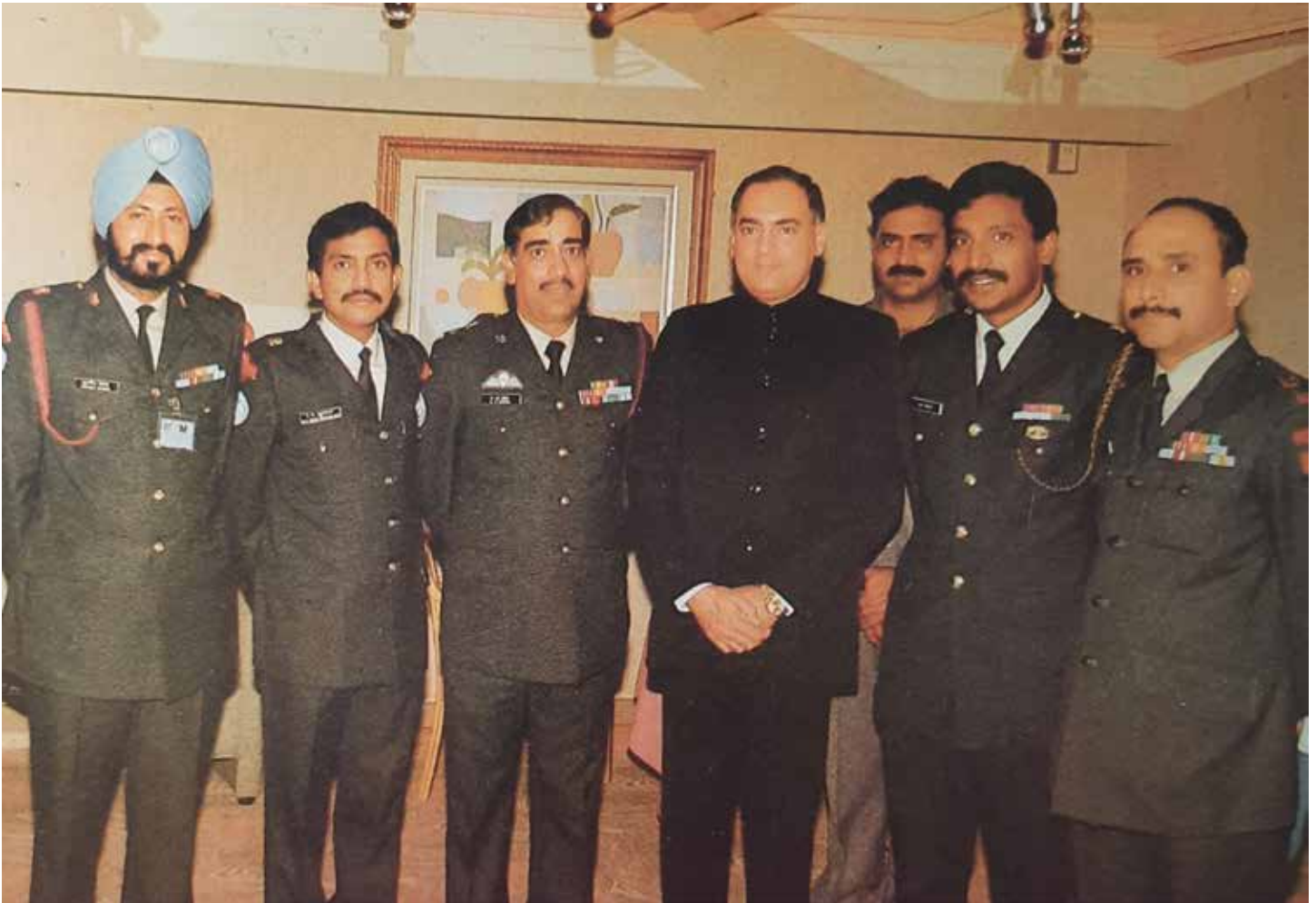
India contributed eight military observers for UNAVEM-I (Dec 1989 to Jun 1991), who were deployed in small multinational teams all over the country. Col (later Brig) YK Saksena was the Deputy Chief Military Observer and he continued with the mission for the next three years and helped in planning for the UNAVEM-II. He was later appointed as a Deputy Force Commander. UNAVEM-I closed down and was taken over by UNAVEM-II (May 1991 - Feb 1995).

UNAVEM-II had an extended mandate and was reorganised with an upgraded Mission Headquarters at Luanda and six regional headquarters. By 1991 it had 350 military personnel including military observers (eight from India), a military medical unit, 126 police observers, 54 international civil support personnel and 41 locally recruited staff. Col (later Lt Gen) AS Jamwal was one of the Regional Commanders and later the Chief of Staff.

By 1995, UNAVEM-III came into being and India sent an Infantry Battalion (14 PUNJAB relieved by 16 GUARDS a year later) supported by 417 Field Company (later replaced by 386 Field Company), a company of 21 Mechanised Battalion and other elements totalling 1,014 all ranks. In addition to the troops, India also provided a regional commander, Col Rajender Singh (later Lt Gen and Force Commander of UN Mission in Ethiopia-Eritrea), 22 military observers and staff officers, and 11 Police personnel. UNAVEM-III was redesignated as the UN Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA), a scaled-down mission in Jun 1997. 16 GUARDS de-inducted in Sept 1997 and Mechanized Company took over the duties of Rapid Reaction Force. It was later renamed as Indian Military Task Force (INDMTF) till it was de-inducted after the closure of the Mission in Apr 1999.

UN Transition Assistance Group in Namibia (UNTAG) - May 1989 - May 1991

India contributed a Force Commander, 15 military observers, police personnel and several electoral supervisors. Lt Gen Dewan Prem Chand of Congo, Cyprus and South Rhodesia fame was appointed as a Force Commander designate in 1980 and played an active part in the preparations for the UNTAG operations, but took charge in Apr 1989, on establishment of mission. The Namibian success story owes a lot to the untiring and able leadership of this General, whose dedicated services to the UN Peacekeeping spread over two decades and UNTAG proved to be his last and most challenging UN peacekeeping assignment.



Organisation De Nations Unites and Central America (ONUCA) - Nov 1989 - Jan 1992

India was one of the principal contributors to the mission, with 23 military observers (by Nov 1990). Col LM Tiwari (later Maj Gen, Head of Mission and Force Commander of UNIFIL in Lebanon) was the commander of Observer Group Costa Rica. On his return in Nov 1991, Lt Col Bikram Singh (later Divisional Commander in Congo and Chief of Army Staff) was appointed Chief Operations Officer of the ONUCA. The mission was finally closed in Jan 1992 and 131 military observers serving with ONUCA were transferred to UN Observer Mission In El Salvador (ONUSAL), including 11 from India.

UN Observer Mission In El Salvador (ONUSAL) - Jul 1991 - Apr 1995

In July 1991 ONUSAL, an offshoot of ONUCA, was launched to monitor all agreements concluded between the Government of El Salvador and FMLN (Frente Fara bund Marti Para la Liberaco'n Nacional). On closer of ONUCA, India provided 11 military observers.

UN Iraq - Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM) - Apr 1991 - Oct 2003

India contributed six to eight military observers (rotated every year) to the UNIKOM, throughout its deployment. Brig Upinder Singh Klair was the acting Force Commander from Aug to Oct 2003, at the time of the closing of the mission.

UN Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC) - Oct 1991 - Mar 1992

This mission was preparation for the deployment of UNTAC efforts in Cambodia and India sent six

military observers including Lt Col (later Lt Gen and Army Commander ARTRAC) Surendra Nath, Lt Col Suresh Nair and Maj (later Maj Gen) Anil Sengar in the lead.

UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) - Feb 1992 - Sept 1993

The Indian contribution to UNTAC consisted of an Infantry Battalion Group, with a field ambulance, a mine training team, 16 staff officers and 17 military observers including six of UNAMIC. Names of some well-known Indian peacekeepers of UNTAC – Col Ram Pal (later Lt Gen), Maj Abhijit Guha (Later Lt Gen, Military Advisor in the UN and Head of the UNMHA in Yemen), and Maj (later Lt Gen) VP Singh. India fielded the largest police contingent from central police organisations (BSF, CRPF, CISF and ITBP) consisting of 366 personnel, which increased to 428 in February 1993⁸. India also fielded an electoral component in the mission.

UN Military Liaison Team in Cambodia (UNMLT) - Sept 1993 - May 1994

After the elections, UNTAC was closed on 15 Nov 1993 and replaced by the UNMLT in Sept 1993. UNMLT comprised 20 military observers including three from India.

UN Protection Force in Former Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) - Feb 1992 - Mar 1993

Lt Gen Satish Nambiar was the first head of the mission and Force Commander of UNPROFOR in Apr 1992. He established this difficult mission with a noteworthy depth of understanding and vision. He completed his assignment of one year with great distinction in one of the most complex missions undertaken by the UN. Lt Col (later Lt Gen and Army Commander) Philip Campose was his staff officer.

UN Operations in Mozambique

(ONUMOZ) - Dec 1992 - Oct 1994

India provided 20 staff officers and 18 military observers, besides an engineer, logistics and administrative company. At the time of the establishment of the mission, Col (later Maj Gen) SD Awasthi was the Chief of Staff. Col JS Lidder (later Lt Gen, Force Commander of UNMIS and then Dy SRSG) replaced him and continued till the closing of the mission. Maj (later Maj Gen and Force Commander UNDOF) JS Menon was the Engineer Task Force Commander.

UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) - Aug 1993 - Mar 1995

Indian contributed one Infantry Brigade Group (1 BIHAR, 5 MAHAR, 2 JAK LI, 3 Mechanised Infantry, a squadron from 7 CAVALRY, 8722 Light Battery, 6 Reconnaissance and Observation Flight, a troop of trawls and logistics elements) under Brig (later Maj Gen) MP Bhagat, was inducted by four Indian Naval Ships in Aug 1993. This naval Task Force also provided the Indian contingent with backup support with six helicopters; ship-to-shore standby fire support and signal communications. India contributed a maximum of 4,940 personnel consisting of 195 Officers, 274 JCOs and 4,471 ORs. Col Deepak Kapoor (later Gen and Chief of Army Staff) was the Chief Operations Officer, Capt (IN) R. Hari Kumar (later Admiral and Chief of Naval Staff) served in the Civil-Military Operations Centre of the mission and Maj Upendra Dwivedi (later Gen and present Chief of Army Staff) was the staff officer.

UN Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) - Sept 1993 - Sept 1997

UNOMIL consisted of 500 personnel including 300 military observers. This was the first mission undertaken by the UN in co-operation with regional peacekeeping organisations. The Indian Army contributed 20 military observers including Lt Col PR Kumar (later Lt Gen and DGMO). Several Indian Military Observers had to undergo various dangerous experiences like even being taken as hostages.

⁸ Sharma, KK, p. 262.

UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) - Oct 1993 - Mar 1996

The Indian contribution, from Nov 1994 to Apr 1996, consisted of an Infantry Battalion Group, with a company each from signals and engineers; in addition to 16 military observers and staff officers (which increased to 22 by Dec 1995). Col (later Lt Gen) KS Sivakumar was appointed as the Chief of Staff and later as Acting Force Commander from 15 Dec 1995 till the mission was finally closed down.

UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) - Dec 1995 - Dec 2002

India contributed six formed police units from 1996 to 2001 and then one military mine information officer.

UN Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) & UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) - July 1998 - Feb 2001

Lt Col PR Kumar (later Lt Gen and DGMO) from the UN mission in Liberia was deputed to carry out technical reconnaissance of the area in 1997. His report was much appreciated and the officer was called to UN HQ for detailed debriefing. UNOMSIL was established on 13 July 1998 with a group of military observers and Brig Subhash Joshi was the Chief Military Observer. Maj Mohan Subramanian (later Lt Gen and present Force Commander UNMISS) was a military observer in 2000-01. Due to deteriorating situation, on 22 Oct 1999, the Security Council authorised the establishment of UNAMSIL and decided to terminate UNOMSIL.

A multinational UN peacekeeping force was deployed under the command of Maj Gen Vijay Jetley, which included military and civilian police from about 30 countries. India contributed one Infantry Battalion (5/8 GORKHA RIFLES), two companies of Mechanised Infantry, company of Engineers, other combat service support elements, a Field Hospital and an Air Force contingent (Mi-8 and Chetak Helicopters). Brig

(later Lt Gen) Randhir Kumar Mehta was the Regional Commander in the Eastern Region. These elements were reinforced by one more infantry battalion (18 GRENADIERS), one Field Battery, a Special Forces Company and an Air Force Detachment with three Attack Helicopters, in Jun-Jul 2000 after the crisis of hostage-taking by the rebels.

Operation Khukri (15-16 July 2000) was a unique multinational operation launched in UNAMSIL, involving troops from India, Ghana, Britain and Nigeria. The operation broke a two month long siege laid by armed cadres of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), around two companies (one each of 5/8 GORKHA RIFLES and Mechanised Infantry) at Kailahun. Its successful execution displayed the effectiveness of the UN Force and professionalism and the dedication of the Indian Armed Forces.

UN Mission in Congo (MONUC) & UN Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) - Nov 1999 - to date

MONUC was established on 30 Nov 1999 and Indian contribution commenced with five military observers, which increased to 21 and seven staff personnel by Dec 2001. IAF contingent comprised of Mi-17 and Mi-25 helicopters with a local protection force from 10 GARH RIF. By 31 Dec 2003, there were 37 military observers and 338 troops from the IAF and supporting company. Indian 301 Infantry Brigade with three battalions and support elements was deployed in Nov 2004 under Brig (later Maj Gen) Vikram Puri. By Dec 2004 Indian contribution was 1,313 troops and 34 military observers. By Dec 2005, overall Indian contribution increased to 3,501 troops, 49 military observers and 250 police personnel, with the induction of two Indian Formed Police Units (IFPU), consisting of ITBP and BSF. It included Maj Gen Bikram Singh (later Gen and Chief of the Army Staff) as UN Divisional Commander, and Brig Bipin Rawat (later Gen, Chief of the Army Staff and the first Chief of Defence Staff) as commander of Indian Brigade.

On 1 Jul 2010, MONUC was renamed as MONUSCO. Lt Gen Chander Prakash was the Force Commander from Aug 2010 to Mar 2013. The IAF contingent was finally withdrawn in Oct 2010. India continued to rotate its brigade and troops till 2023. After the decision of gradual de-induction of the UN Force, Indian battalions also started their drawdown. By Oct 2024, total Indian presence was 1,077 peacekeepers (1,040 troops, 11 military observers, 26 staff officers and 160 police personnel)⁹. A team of 20 women peacekeepers was also deployed in Jun 2019 as a Female Engagement Team (FET).

UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) - Mar 2001 - Jul 2008

UNMEE was the first mission to witness the deployment of the Standby High Readiness Brigade within 30 days of the UN Mandate. India was a major contributor to UNMEE in terms of troops, staff officers and UN military observers, with nearly 1,600 personnel at any point in time. India contributed an Indian infantry battalion group and a Force Reserve Company. Subsequently an Engineer Company and engineer component to the Force Headquarters was also provided in 2006. Maj Gen (later Lt Gen) Rajender Singh was Force Commander from Jul 2004 till April 2006.

UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) - Sept 2003 - Mar 2018

India contributed a Formed Police Unit (FPU) in Jan 2007, for nine long years and every year contingent was rotated. This was the first ever all-woman police unit in UN peacekeeping history. The officers for the first Indian FPU were drawn from the Rapid Action Force battalions of the CRPF.

UN Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) & UN Mission in the South Sudan (UNMISS) - 2005 - to date

With the establishment of UNMIS, in Nov 2005, India provided two Infantry Battalion groups, a

Sector Headquarters, an Engineer Company, a Signal Company and a Level-II Hospital; a total of 947 troops, 20 military observers and 21 police personnel. IAF contingent consisted of six Mi-17 helicopters and 196 personnel led by Gp Capt (later Air Marshal) Manmohan Bahadur. This number increased to 4,326 troops, 47 military observers and 250 police personnel by Dec 2006. Lt Gen JS Lidder was the first Force Commander from Jan 2006 to May 2008, and subsequently Deputy SRSG (P) in 2010-11.

By the time the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) was established in Jul 2011, India's contribution at that time was 2,201 troops, six military observers and 39 police peacekeepers. Brig (later Lt Gen) Asit Mistry served two terms as the Deputy Force Commander in 2012 and 2014. Lt Gen Shailesh Tinaikar was the UNMISS force commander from May 2019 to Jan 2022. Since Jul 2022, Lt Gen Mohan Subramanian (who had earlier served in Sierra Leone) is Force Commander. By Oct 2024, India had 2,409 peacekeepers including 16 military observers, 52 staff personnel, 12 police personnel and 2329 troops deployed in the mission¹⁰. Presently Indian contingent includes two Infantry Battalions, a Mechanised Battalion, three companies of Engineers, Signal, Transport and a Field Hospital.

UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) - 2011 - to date

India deployed two military observers and two staff members in 2012 in UNISFA, who were replaced annually. In 2021, this increased to three staff and three military observers, and two women police officials were also deployed in the mission. On a request from the UN, India deployed its first infantry contingent (LADAKH SCOUTS) in Apr 2022. In Jan 2023, India also sent a platoon of Women Peacekeepers, as part of the Indian Battalion. The platoon consisted of two officers and 25 other ranks and formed an engagement platoon that specialises in community outreach. Apart

⁹ UN Peace Operations: Contributions of Uniformed Personnel, Oct 2024; https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/03_country_and_mission_79_october_2024.pdf

¹⁰ https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/03_country_and_mission_79_october_2024.pdf

from performing comprehensive security-related responsibilities, it also engages in community outreach efforts. This is the largest single unit of Women Peacekeepers in a UN Mission since India deployed the first ever all women Formed Police Unit in Liberia in 2007. By Oct 2024, India had 10 military observers, 16 staff personnel, one police official and 569 infantry personnel in UNIFSA.

Conclusion

India's role in UN peacekeeping has evolved from a passive observer to an active stabiliser in conflict zones worldwide. India's involvement in peacekeeping missions from 1950 till date reflects its commitment to global peace and security. From monitoring ceasefires in Korea & Indo-China to Cambodia and Gaza, Namibia to Bosnia and multidimensional peace enforcement missions in Africa, Indian peacekeepers demonstrated professionalism, courage, dedication and humanitarian approach, left a mark and is universally applauded. There is no doubt that due to changing geo-politics and its impact on international relations, collective endeavour by the UN in maintaining peace, will continue to face the challenges. India being one of the oldest contributors in peacekeeping operations, has a vast repository of experience and best practices, thus as new challenges emerge, India will continue to navigate through it and play a crucial role in shaping UN peacekeeping efforts worldwide. Despite all challenges, India remains a reliable and respected partner in global peacekeeping.

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**Major General
PK Goswami, VSM
(Retired)**

Major General PK Goswami, VSM (Retired) was commissioned into Regiment of Artillery (Air Defence Branch) on 11 June 1977 and has commanded an Air Defence Unit and formation, besides holding prestigious appointments such as Brigadier Administration of a Corps, Assistant Military Secretary, Instructor at Army War College and National Defence Academy, Pune. The officer was deputed as a Military Observer with United Nations Verification Mission at Angola. His academic qualifications include MSc and double M Phil.

He is an alumnus of Defence Services Staff College, Higher Command Course and National Defence College and is the recipient of Vishisht Seva Medal (VSM) for distinguished service. Post retirement he is Deputy Director General and Head UN Cell, the United Service Institution of India.

India's Role in Shaping Global Peacekeeping Norms and Policies

By **Shri Tshering W Sherpa**

Joint-Secretary, United Nations – Political Division, Ministry of External Affairs

Peacekeeping has been a novel, visible and an effective instrument of the United Nations (UN) towards international peace and security. Over the years, as the geo-political situation evolved, so did the mandate and nature of peacekeeping. The changing asymmetric security situations and the nature of conflicts have shaped the metamorphosis of peacekeeping. This flagship activity of the UN is today faced with formidable challenges as the UN completes 80 years of its establishment.

Peacekeeping did not find a mention in the UN Charter and evolved after the UN's establishment. The canvas of peacekeeping, over the years, draws its genesis from the numerous peacekeeping mandates flowing from the UN Security Council (UNSC) mandates.

India strongly believes that peacekeeping is an effective instrument in the maintenance of international peace and security. India is proud of its contributions and association with UN peacekeeping, a commitment that spans decades. Since the 1950s, India has contributed over 290,000 peacekeepers across more than 50 missions. In fact, India remains the largest Troop Contributing Country to this day. Currently, more than 5,000 Indian peacekeepers are deployed in nine of the eleven active missions, often in challenging and hostile environments, with a

singular focus: the advancement of global peace and security.

In this pursuit, India has lost nearly 180 peacekeepers, whose supreme sacrifices are etched in the history of our collective endeavours. One such individual, Captain Gurbachan Singh Salaria, posthumously honoured with the Param Vir Chakra for his courage during the UN Mission in Congo, remains a beacon of inspiration. His is the singular case of this highest honour being awarded for operations conducted abroad.

India has also been at the forefront of deploying women in peacekeeping roles, both military and police. The first chapter of this journey began in the 1960s, when Indian women, as medical officers, were deployed in Congo. In 2007, India was the first to deploy an all-women Formed Police Unit in Liberia—a pioneering initiative that had an indelible impact on both the host community and the broader UN framework. Over the years, this initiative empowered Liberian women, increasing their participation in security sectors. Today, India proudly continues this legacy, with over 150 women peacekeepers deployed across six critical missions, including those in the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Lebanon, Golan Heights, Western Sahara, and Abyei.

India's contribution to the peacekeeping realm goes beyond contribution of troops. It will continue, not only in terms of the number of troops, but also in shaping the norms and policies that govern this critical aspect of UN's commitments towards maintaining international peace and security. India has been vocal in prioritizing sovereignty of host nations.

India has always called for engagement of Troop Contributing Countries as well as host states while mandate formulation of peacekeeping Missions is being undertaken. We have maintained that the power of decision making needs to be diluted from the hands of a few members of the UNSC and all stake holders need to be brought to the table.

Our priority thereby has been to shape the discourse and policy making in a manner that peacekeeping is made more effective and can cater to contemporary challenges. This effectiveness can be ensured if the mandates are commensurate with the resources allocated to Missions. It has been our constant endeavour to urge that the peacekeepers are not burdened with 'Christmas tree' mandates. We have called for mandates to be realistic and clear, while also ensuring that primary responsibility for protection of civilians lies with the host state. India's contribution to policy making in the peacekeeping domain has thereby been vocal, visible, valid and valuable.

We have also walked the talk when it comes to implementing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Our efforts in this regard have been to strengthen UN's objectives in ensuring gender balance in the troops being deployed on the ground. The organizing of the first ever conference on women peacekeepers, earlier in February this year in New Delhi, with the participation of 35 TCCs from the Global South is a testimony towards our commitment to WPS.

As security situations across the globe evolve rapidly aided by access to technology amongst all

state and non-state actors, India has supported UN efforts in meeting these challenges through technological solutions. It was under India's Presidency in August 2021 that the UN Security Council adopted a Presidential Statement on Technology and Peacekeeping, recognizing potential of technology as a 'force multiplier' in peace operations. India has partnered with the UN for development of a UNITE Aware platform, which is a mobile device based situational awareness platform for peacekeepers. India has monetarily contributed US\$ 1.64 million towards the development of the platform. As a land of innovation, India stands ready to be a technology demonstrator to enhance the operational capacity of peacekeeping, usher in more safety for our peacekeepers and also help align with the reduction of the budget over the years.

With peacekeeping missions being vulnerable to mis- and disinformation campaigns, India has called for effective strategic communication which can ensure that the local Government, local stakeholders and local communities are made aware of the exact nature of the Mission mandate. Such communication will go a long way in managing unrealistic expectations which lead to hostility against peacekeepers and Missions. This necessitates that peacekeepers are also trained in utilizing ICTs for effective strategic communication of mission objectives and countering mis- and dis-information. India, with its proven abilities in the area of ICTs, stands ready to be a key player in mitigating these threats.

India is also in the process of deploying renewable energy equipment to UNISFA. The success of this endeavour could pave the way for sustainability and energy security of peacekeeping missions often serving in hostile areas.

Cognizant of the increasingly complex and challenging environment in which peacekeepers operate, India accords paramount importance to the safety and security of peacekeepers. India championed the UNSC Resolution 2589



in August 2021 under its Presidency of the Council to ensure accountability for crimes against UN peacekeepers. Pursuant to this resolution, a comprehensive online database on accountability of crimes against peacekeepers was operationalised. India, with the support of several other delegations, also launched the Group of Friends to Promote Accountability for Crimes Against Peacekeepers. Bringing perpetrators to justice is critical for the safety and security of peacekeepers.

As a mark of respect to the over 4000 martyred peacekeepers, India tabled a resolution in June 2023 on establishing a Memorial Wall within the UN premises in New York. The resolution was co-sponsored by a record 190 countries in a testament to India's leadership in advocating issues which find great global resonance.

While we make our contributions to the

domain and discourse on peacekeeping, India is cognizant of the fact that a large number of conflict zones are in the Global South and that the needs of the Global South are unique calling for unique solutions. We have stood for the cause of the Global South lending our expertise and long-standing experience through capacity building initiatives for peacekeepers from the Global South. The Centre of UN Peacekeeping (CUNPK) located in New Delhi has been in the forefront in providing training to foreign peacekeepers including for women peacekeepers. The CUNPK has emerged as a Global Centre of Excellence for UN Peacekeeping.

A challenge is that while the complexity of conflicts and the scope of mandates have expanded, this has not been commensurate with the available resources allocated. The peacekeeping budget has drastically reduced with uncertainty on funding going forward. The

polarization in the UNSC resulting in lack of decision making is another challenge.

This year is of particular importance, as two significant events will take place: the Peacekeeping Ministerial in Berlin and the Peacebuilding Architecture Review in New York. As the nature of conflicts evolves, the contours of peacekeeping and peacebuilding would need to be redefined to ensure relevance of peace operations.

As peacekeeping Missions find themselves operating in environments where threats are constantly evolving, deepening and expanding, India stands committed to play a positive role as the world navigates through conflict scenarios. Our contribution will continue in terms of the number of troops and in shaping the norms and policies that govern this critical aspect of UN's commitments towards maintaining international peace and security. The Indian experience, capacities and ideas will be relevant for the future of peacekeeping, including in leadership positions.

To quote External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar, *"At the heart of our foreign policy lies a commitment to peace—rooted in dialogue, diplomacy, and cooperation. Guided by the philosophy of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam," the belief that the world is one family, India will continue to contribute meaningfully to the cause of UN peacekeeping"*.



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Shri Tshering W. Sherpa joined the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) in 2002. Before joining the IFS, he served as an Assistant Commissioner of Police in New Delhi.

He was posted in the Embassy of India in the Republic of Korea, Nepal, Japan, and Israel. In the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in New Delhi, he was responsible for the Nepal Affairs and later also the Bhutan Affairs in the Northern Division. Subsequently, he served as Director in the United Nations – Political Division.

His last assignment was as Joint Secretary in the National Security Council Secretariat from September 2000 till March 2024.

Abyei - The Unresolved Tragedy

By **Lieutenant General JS Lidder, UYSM, AVSM (Retired)**

Introduction

The United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) flag flutters in Abyei, an interim mission mandated in July 2011 (SCR 1990) continuing with little signs of winding up¹. The mission is mandated to demilitarise and monitor peace in Abyei, a disputed area as neither Khartoum or Juba could reach an agreement on its future, post South Sudan independence in July 2011. The present mandate stands extended for one year vide resolution 2760 (2024) till November 2025.¹

The ongoing civil war in Sudan between Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) led by General Abdel Fattah-al-Burhan and Rapid Support Force (RSF) led by Mohammed Hamdan 'Hemedti' Dagalo has brought fresh political headaches for Abyei stalling the determination its final status. It has exacerbated Intercommunal tensions resulting in clashes over cattle rustling, with multiple fatalities among the Misseriya and Nuer communities.²

The humanitarian situation has got aggravated by the ongoing violence, with attacks on humanitarian community. Abyei is witnessing increased intercommunal violence, in an area already rooted in ethnic tensions, land rights and climate shocks. In 2025, an estimated 300,000 people, including resident population, IDPs, returnees and refugees from Sudan will require humanitarian assistance in Abyei.³

I handled Abyei in military and political roles from 2006-2011 – as Force Commander of United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) from 2006-2008 and as Deputy Special Representative of Secretary General (Political) from 2009-2011.⁴

The Abyei Politics

Abyei is a bridge between North and South Sudan and a frontier for both peace and war between the two nations. The Abyei Area covers 4000 square miles of desert, farmland and oilfields, bordered in the North by the East Darfur State and West Kordofan State of Sudan and to the South Northern Bahr El-Ghazal (see map). The rich oil reserves make Abyei desirable for both North and South Sudan.⁵

Abyei is the traditional homeland of the Ngok Dinka, a tribal group with strong ethnic, cultural and linguistic ties to the Dinka of South Sudan. Misseriya herders, members of a northern nomadic Arab tribe, seasonally traverse Abyei and other North-South border areas with their cattle in search of water and pasture in the dry season, and to trade goods to Warrap and Unity States of South Sudan⁶.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed by the Government of Sudan (GoS) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) at Nairobi on 09 Jan 2005 formed the basis for peace in Sudan.⁷ The CPA included

¹ Security Council Extends Mandate of UNISFA, UN Press Release, 14 November 2024

² Ongoing War in Sudan Stalls Progress in Disputed Abyei Region, UN Press Release, 07 May 2024

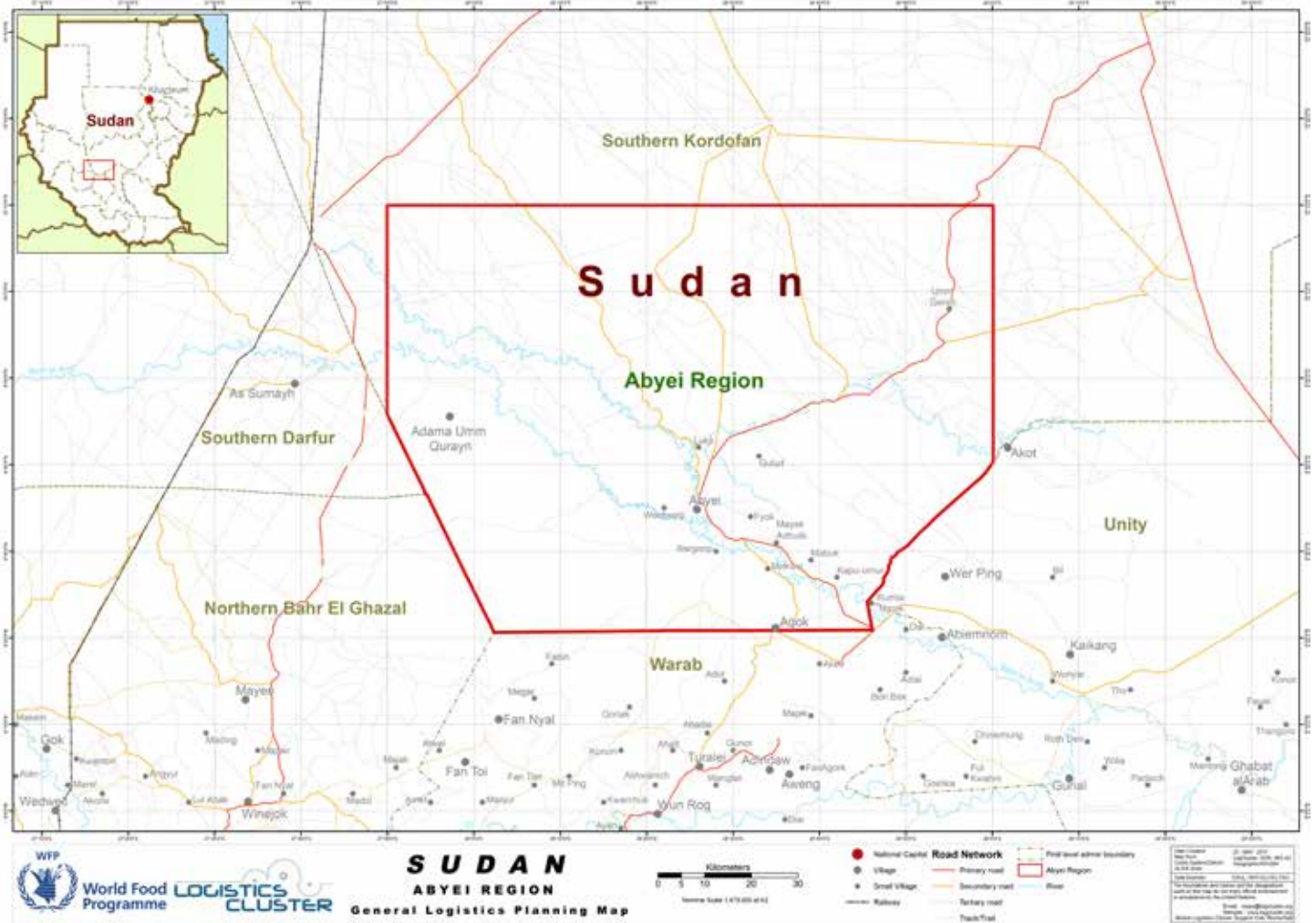
³ Humanitarian Action, Analyzing Needs and Response, Global Humanitarian Overview, 16 December 2024

⁴ UNMIS Website, United Nations

⁵ Enough 101: What is Abyei Area and Why is it Disputed, reliefweb, 16 January 2013

⁶ Abyei Region, Abyei Administrative Area, CSRF South Sudan, 2008

⁷ Implementing Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement; Prospects and Challenges, Wilson Centre, 07 July 2011



Map of Abyei

the Abyei Protocol, which planned to replace Abyei district with new jurisdiction of special administrative status and distribution of wealth.⁸

A referendum was to be conducted in Abyei in 2011, concurrent with the South Sudan referendum allowing residents of Abyei to choose between Sudan or South Sudan.⁹ Both Dinka and Misseriya tribes claimed residency for voting; the Ngok Dinka being land owners and the migrating Misseriya pastoralists spending six months of the year in that area.¹⁰ The referendum did not take place.

Abyei witnessed periodic violence and political instability preceding the South Sudan Referendum, as various protocols created by the Abyei Boundaries Commission, proposing boundaries for the region based on a principle of equitable division were rejected by GoS and Misseriya leaders. Amongst heightened violence, pitched battles were fought In May 2008, leaving much of the town to rubble.¹¹ SAF occupied Abyei through an armed intervention in 2011, just two months before the South Sudan Referendum, with GoS seizing control of Abyei as well as the Diffra oilfield on 25 May 2011.¹²

⁸ Protocol on the Resolution of Abyei Conflict, reliefweb, 26 May 2004

⁹ Analysis: A Guide to Abyei Referendum, refworld, UNHCR 14 July 2010

¹⁰ The Roots of Abyei's Dangerous Impasse, IRIN News Nairobi, Africa Renewal, 2011

¹¹ Abandoning Abyei; Destruction and Displacement, Human Rights Watch, May 2008

¹² Abyei Invasion; Evidence of SAF Incursion Abyei, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, May 2011



**Breaking
The
Deadlock
with The
Misseriya
Tribe in
Abyei**

UNMIS Efforts for Peace

UNMIS was established vide security council resolution 1590 (2005) to support implementation of the CPA, provide political support to the parties and verify security protocols. The mission was mandated to monitor implementation of the Abyei Protocol¹³. UNMIS military strength of 10,000 was deployed in six geographical sectors, three on either side of Line 1/1/56 dividing North and South Sudan.¹⁴

Abyei was held lightly during the initial period of CPA implementation, since the major effort centred on political and military activity related to redeployment of SAF and SPLA to their respective sides of the border and the media-centric conflict in Darfur. During the violence in May 2008, the performance of UNMIS came under investigation after which the sector was reinforced.¹⁵

Due to its strategic significance there were multiple political initiatives by international and regional organisations in Abyei, prominently the African Union High Level Implementation Panel

for Sudan (AUHIP) led by President Mbeki.¹⁶ The political overlap with AUHIP in the lead resulted in ambiguous conflict prevention measures. When SAF occupied Abyei militarily in May 2011, UNMIS assumed central role.

UNMIS had built good working relations with both Khartoum and Juba and encouraged local leaderships to own the political processes. I once flew Ahmed Haroun, Governor of Southern Kordofan to Abyei in 2010 to build bridges with the Misseriya leadership. The decision came under scrutiny since Haroun was indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC). However, our proactive diplomacy greatly helped in establishing sincerity of purpose. There should be no red lines in negotiations.

The first major incident I handled in Abyei was an ambush of a column of Southern Sudan Defense Force (SSDF) in May 2006, an 'other armed group' (OAG) not a signatory to CPA aligning to SPLM/A. Our military observers reached out to negotiate, many providing first-aid risking their own lives. The ambush was not allowed to be investigated by us, stating it fell within purview of the Sudan joint defense board.¹⁷

The Diffra (Abyei)-Aweil (Norther Bahr-el-Ghazal) road would often be blocked by the Misseriya, disrupting economic activity and causing humanitarian deprivation. On one such occasion we decided to drive up to the ambush site. I took the Department of Safety and Security (DSS) waiver for physical travel, with our civil affairs head Lance Clarke and my special assistant Heid Madro willingly accompanying.

We reached the road block site, which looked a shoddy military work with few branches spread randomly across the road. The interaction got protracted, language and ethnicity being

¹³ UNMIS Website, UN Archives

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Abandoning Abyei Destruction and Displacement May 2008, Human Rights Watch, 21 July 2008

¹⁶ African Union High-Level Implementation Panel for Sudan, Tufts Digital Library, 2009-10-29- Present

¹⁷ Sudan Opposes UN's Participation in South Sudan Ambush Probe, Sudan Tribune, 22 March 2006

major barriers. On UN's assurance the block got lifted. Few hugs and a hot cup of Sudanese tea had helped lower the temperature. Much to my surprise rather than an appreciation, I was advised not to undertake such ventures and leave the political space to AUHIP, which I hesitatingly did. Conflicts have become an industry - wheels within the wheels.

Abyei operating base was not adequately prepared for defense and the SAF attacks in May 2011 tested our peacekeepers. As per the political understanding, SAF troops would only secure the northern areas but my military knowledge told me that the offensive would go across the Abyei town and rest on River Kiir, which it did.¹⁸ The UN base was caught between the SAF and SPLA crossfire and though there were no direct hits, artillery and mortar bombs landing inside the campus caused damage. Mercifully, there was no fatality. The Head of Office, Guang Cong (now DSRG-P UNMISS) did a commendable job in holding firm.

The UN security council visited Sudan in January 2011 which included interaction with the host governments and South Sudan population at few locations. The visit proved hugely helpful to converge on the ground realities.¹⁹ Notwithstanding, United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) was given a Chapter -7 mandate, instead of a support mission that President Salva Kiir had requested. UNMISS had started on a wrong foot.

UNISFA Perseveres

As brought out earlier, the Abyei referendum did not take place and UNMIS mandate got over in July 2011. With looming political and security void the GoS and SPLM/A reached an agreement to monitor the Abyei flashpoint and facilitate delivery of humanitarian aid using force.²⁰ In a unique first, a fighting military brigade of The



Author interacting with President Jimmy Carter and ex UN Secretary General Kofi Annan at Juba

Ethiopian Army (4000 plus soldiers) was rushed in to demilitarize Abyei. UNISFA got established through security council resolution 1990 of June 27, 2011 to provide security and protect civilians under imminent threat of violence in the disputed border region.²¹

On formation of UNMISS, I shifted to Khartoum to liquidate UNMIS, a task I successfully completed by 31 December 2011.²² During this tenure, I used my relationships and experience to contribute towards peace in Sudan – both formally and informally. My advice to UNISFA Force Commander Lt General Tadesse Warede Tesfay whenever we met was consistent – remain impartial, think strategic and delegate military tactics to the subordinates. The single-country regional military force with no civilian component has been UNISFA's struggle in recalibrating into a multi-dimensional peacekeeping force.

Through various resolutions the security council has been expanding UNISFA's profile, to include more police and civilian components, importantly women peacekeepers.²³ It is now additionally mandated to monitor the border between North and South Sudan, support the operational activities of the Joint Border Verification and

¹⁸ Abyei Invasion: Evidence of SAF Incursion in Abyei, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, May 2011

¹⁹ United Nations Security Council Press Statement on Southern Sudan Referendum, 06 January 2011

²⁰ United Nations Security Council Report S/2011/384, 24 June 2011

²¹ UNISFA Website, UN Archives

²² The Birth of South Sudan, Jasbir Lidder, United service Institution of India (USI) Journal, January-March 2023

²³ Deployment of Women Peacekeepers in Abyei (UNISFA), Permanent Mission of India, New York, 06 January 2023



Monitoring Mechanism and assist the Ad Hoc Committees.²⁴

UNISFA has provided a source of relative stability and calm in Abyei through robust patrolling, joint security committees and community interaction frameworks.²⁵ The mission is also carrying out quick impact projects for community development.²⁶ Nevertheless, there continue to be cases of heightened ethnic violence and attacks on UNISFA operating bases and personnel, pronounced after the civil war broke out.²⁷

UNISFA faces its legitimacy crisis of impartiality and effectiveness in protecting civilians. Move towards more modified people-centred operations and community-led approach has been recommended.²⁸

A question frequently asked during my stay in Sudan was – Can Khartoum and Juba go to full-scale war on Abyei? My assessment then was Yes. It remains so.

²⁴ A Forgotten People in an Unstable Region, Andrew E Yaw Tchie, NUPI EPON Report, 23 April 2024

²⁵ UNISFA (Abyei, Sudan) Volatility to Stability, UN-i-library, December 2013

²⁶ Security Council Report S/2023/777, Situation in Abyei, 16 October 2023

²⁷ 52 Killed in Clashes in Disputed Region of Abyei, Regional Officials Say, Voice of America, 28 January 2024

²⁸ A Forgotten People in an Unstable Region, Andrew E Yaw Tchie, NUPI EPON Report, 23 April 2024

UN Security Council Visit to Juba. Author Interacting with Ambassador Mark Lyall Grant, Permanent Representative of Great Britain and Northern Ireland



Lieutenant General Jasbir Singh Lidder, UYSM, AVSM (Retired)

Lieutenant General Jasbir Singh Lidder, UYSM, AVSM (Retired) has a military career spanning over 40 years. He has held various senior UN appointments to include Chief of Staff of the UN Mission in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) in 1994 – 95, Force Commander in Sudan (UNMIS) from 2006 – 08 and Deputy Special Representative of Secretary General (Political) in the same mission from 2010 – 11.

The General officer is involved with multiple UN offices and global institutes as an expert and mentor.

India's Leadership and Legacy in Global Peacekeeping: A Commitment to World Peace

By **Mr Shombi Sharp**

UN Resident Coordinator to India

A founding member of the United Nations, India has steadfastly led from the beginning in helping confront challenges to international security, with Indian personnel long putting their lives on the line to maintain peace in some of the world's most volatile regions.

Today, some 5,500¹ Indian men and women are deployed across nine countries in the UNDOF, UNIFIL, UNTSO, UNFICYP, MONUSCO, UNMISS, UNIFSA, MINUSCA and MINURSO peacekeeping missions², standing tall on a legacy of peacebuilding that has drawn service from over 200,000³ Indians. This is more than any other country since 1950, when a newly independent India deployed its first overseas contingent to a peacekeeping mission. In guarding peace, sovereignty and human rights around the world through the years, 179⁴ Indian peacekeepers have made the ultimate sacrifice, giving their lives in service. The world is eternally grateful.

Pioneers of Peacekeeping

Blue Helmets from the world's largest democracy have proved their merit across the peacebuilding spectrum⁵, ranging from protecting civilians, providing medical care and engineering services⁶, to deploying electoral officials, technical experts,



and UN Volunteers who reinforce peacebuilding efforts by working to strengthen communities and uphold democratic processes.

Uniformed Indian personnel working under the UN flag have been regularly honoured for their professionalism and selfless service on the ground in fragile environments. This was first witnessed in 1950, when India's first ever United Nations Peacekeeping mission, the 60 Para Field Ambulance of the Indian Army, earned

¹ <https://peacekeeping.un.org/> (Accessed on 8 January 2025)

² <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/india> (Accessed on 8 January 2025)

³ <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors> (Accessed on 8 January 2025)

⁴ <https://india.un.org/en/270534-un-peacekeepers-honoured-new-delhi> (Accessed on 8 January 2025)

⁵ <https://www.pminewyork.gov.in/pdf/menu/49151pkeeping.pdf> (Accessed on 8 January 2025)

⁶ https://www.me.gov.in/Images/amb/India_United_Nations_new1022.pdf (Accessed on 8 January 2025)

acclaim and even the moniker ‘Airborne Angels’⁷, as it tended to more than 195,000⁸ patients and performed 2,324 field surgeries during the Korean war.

Putting Communities at the Centre of Peacekeeping

Building community resilience can take different forms⁹. In South Sudan, Indian peacekeepers work to provide vocational training to help communities bolster livelihoods besides helping with road repair work to restore connectivity and access to remote locations.

The peace process is often non-linear and promoting peace calls for unique approaches led by compassion, as seen in Abeyi in 2022 when an Indian battalion with the UNISFA worked alongside the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Ghanaian battalion to help vaccinate¹⁰ the cattle population in the region to fend off an epidemic that threatened food security and stability.

In the Upper Nile region too, mobile clinics run by Indian veterinarian peacekeepers crisscross the locality, helping protect cattle and livestock¹¹ against disease and malnutrition. This has helped provide opportunities for communities with a history of conflict to come together, learning culturally sensitive best practices in animal husbandry.

Indian peacekeepers have also been recognised for their inclusive and responsive approaches to earn the trust of communities they are assigned to support. This was most recently exemplified by Major Radhika Sen, recipient of the United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year in 2023 for her efforts to engage with conflict-affected



communities in North Kivu. As Commander of the Engagement Platoon for the Indian Rapid Deployment Battalion in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) with the UN peacekeeping mission, MONUSCO, Major Sen helped create safe spaces for community leaders to highlight community concerns, including amplifying voices of women and those from marginalized groups in local discussions on peace.

From first deploying women personnel to support medical services the Republic of Congo in 1960¹² to its current title as one of the world’s largest contributors of women peacekeepers, India has displayed exemplary leadership in gender-sensitive peacekeeping.

⁷ The History of the United Nations Forces in the Korean War, Vol VI, p. 538

⁸ <https://www.usiofindia.org/publication-journal/India-Contribution-in-the-UN-Peacekeeping-Mission-in-Korea.html> (Accessed on 8 January 2025)

⁹ <https://www.flickr.com/photos/unmissmultimedia/sets/72177720322347632/> (Accessed on 8 January 2025)

¹⁰ <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/veterinarian-peacekeepers-india-help-protect-peace-caring-cows-abyei> (Accessed on 8 January 2025)

¹¹ <https://unmiss.unmissions.org/indian-peacekeepers-take-unique-approach-promoting-peace-through-animal-health-and-welfare> (Accessed on 8 January 2025)

¹² <https://news.un.org/en/gallery/541602> (Accessed on 8 January 2025)



In 2007, India became the first country to deploy an all-women contingent to a UN peacekeeping mission in post-conflict Liberia. The nine all-female police units departed the West African nation in February 2016 and were hailed for their ability to connect with women and children in conflict zones¹³. A second all-woman Indian platoon, the largest since Liberia, was deployed to Abyei to boost community engagement as part of the Indian Battalion in the United Nations Interim Security Force (UNISFA) in 2023.

With the gender advocate award, Major Radhika Sen joins a long list of decorated Indian women peacekeepers, including the UN's first police officer and Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award co-recipient in 2019, Major Suman Gawani, and Shakti Devi, recipient of the International Female Police Peacekeeper Award.

Fortifying the Force in the Face of Change

In keeping with the country's unwavering commitment to the UN Charter, India regularly advocates for the need to build a robust peacekeeping force that is well equipped to respond in a timely, effective manner when peace is threatened. This includes several dimensions, such as raising investment in training and resources, strengthening internal and external accountability, and addressing operational and institutional reforms to build a futuristic standard of peacebuilding operations.

A proponent of the need to invest in training and fortifying the force by leveraging technology, India contributed \$1.64 million for the UNITE AWARE situational awareness platform for peacekeepers in 2021.

State-of the equipment and vehicles manufactured under the 'Make in India' initiative have been deployed to sustain peacekeeping operations in several missions, including 62 ambulances and other vehicles, deployed to

UNIFIL in Lebanon in January 2025, and 159 vehicles and equipment handed over by the Indian Army to the UNISFA mission in Abyei in 2023.

In addition to leading efforts toward the adoption of the first-ever resolution on accountability for crimes against UN peacekeepers (sponsored by India) and the Presidential Statement on leveraging digital technology in peacekeeping and prioritizing peacekeeping during its tenure in the Security Council in 2021-2022, India was also the first to contribute to the Trust Fund for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse set up in 2016.

Indian peacekeeping, with its emphasis on sharing best practices and cooperation, holds the power to lead the way in accelerating progress on the Sustainable Development Goals while advancing South-South cooperation to promote mutual understanding and cohesive growth among peoples of the Global South.

The Centre for UN Peacekeeping (CUNPK) in New Delhi is a towering example of India's efforts strengthen international cooperation in the ethos of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (the world is one family). Besides regularly exchanging courses, learnings and mobile training teams with friendly countries, the centre has also provided capacity building training for multiple batches of international women personnel over the years to help nurture an inclusive peacekeeping force that is equipped with diverse perspectives and skillsets to deal with the nuances of rebuilding communities shattered by conflict.

The Road Ahead

Contemporary peacekeeping, now in its 77th year, stands on the precipice of change in a world where conflicts are growing in both scale and complexity. Rapidly evolving threats to international peace and security have reared their heads in the form of hate speech, misinformation, proliferation of cyber crime, transnational organised crime and stealthier advanced weaponry.

¹³ <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/at-the-crossroads-india-and-the-future-of-un-peacekeeping-in-africa/> (Accessed on 8 January 2025)

As global tensions and interlinked crises mount, the looming threat of climate change threatens to exacerbate existing fault lines. Extreme weather and climate-related displacement is on the rise, and the surge in demand for critical minerals is sparking fears of fresh exploitation of mineral-rich developing countries.

The United Nations, which turns 80 in 2025, was founded in the pursuit of peace, humanity's greatest responsibility. As multiple challenges unfold simultaneously, redrawing the contours of the world as we know it, it is our collective responsibility to uphold human rights wherever it is threatened.

In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "There is no way to peace, peace is the way". This is true now, more than ever. And with its commitment to multilateralism and consistent efforts to promote global peacekeeping efforts, India brings much needed cause for optimism in a challenged world.



Mr Shombi Sharp

UN Resident Coordinator in India

Mr Shombi Sharp is the UN Resident Coordinator for India since November 2021. Mr. Sharp has more than 25 years of experience in promoting inclusive and sustainable development internationally. He has served as UN Resident Coordinator in Armenia, Deputy Resident Representative in Georgia, Deputy Country Director in Lebanon, Regional HIV/AIDS Practice Team Leader for UNDP Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States in the Russian Federation, Programme Manager for Western Balkans in New York and Assistant Resident Representative in the Russian Federation.

He is a published author of works in health economics and was a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) "Policy Champion" as well as a nominee for the UNDP Administrator's Award.

Women in Indian Peacekeeping: A Journey of Inclusion and Leadership

By **Colonel Vimal Sharma**

Ex Contingent Commander, INDBATT, UNISFA

Women in Indian Peacekeeping

The UN has mandated targets to increase the participation of women peacekeepers as part of its gender parity drive to address the concerns of the host community women population in the mission areas. **Gender-responsive operations** entail the integration of **gender mainstreaming** efforts in the planning and conduct of peacekeeping operations while recognising, considering, supporting, and contributing to gender mainstreaming efforts.

Gender Neutral Approach. The **Indian Army** is in a transition phase as far as induction of women

officers and soldiers is concerned. The women officers were inducted in Indian Army in 1992 and women soldiers were inducted in Indian Army in 2019. However, the CRPF had started induction of women soldiers in 1986 as per functional requirements and Assam Rifles inducted its female soldiers in 2015.

Contribution. The first Indian women peacekeepers were from the Indian Armed Forces Medical Services who were deployed to



the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1960. In a path-breaking initiative, India deployed an all female formed police unit of CRPF to Liberia as part of the UN Peacekeeping Mission in 2007. In recent times India has been deploying women officers as staff officers, military observers and medical officers to fully support the UN's initiative and in line with 'Nari Shakti' (Female Power) initiative of Government of India. Since 2022, women soldiers are also being deployed. A Platoon size Female Engagement Team (FET) was deployed in UNISFA, a section strength in MONUSCO and Women Military Police in UNDOF. Deployment of a substantially large strength of women peacekeepers in UN Mission by Indian Army is a groundbreaking step towards integration of gender mainstreaming efforts in peacekeeping.

Performance in UN Missions. The Indian women peacekeepers have been performing exceptionally well during their deployment, even though peacekeeping can't act as a direct yardstick for assessment as UN in itself is a different ecosystem altogether. The actions, activities and performance of women peacekeepers have been exceptional and at par with their counterparts of different countries and at times above par owing to their better adaptability, capability, initiative and intent.

Women Peace and Security Agenda

The term "Female Engagement Team" (FET) was coined by US Marines in 2005. The military components of UN peacekeeping operations have used engagement teams to conduct community engagement activities since 2015. The Idea of Mixed Engagement Platoons was conceptualized in 2016 & later in 2018, Engagement Platoons Working Group was formed with 22 member states in response to the 2018 Santos Cruz Report. Gender responsive peacekeeping operations are centered around the four pillars of the WPS Agenda, namely.

- (a) Women's participation at all levels of decision making in peace building.
- (b) Prevention of conflict and all forms of violence

against women.

- (c) Protection of women and girls and their rights.
- (d) Gender responsive relief and recovery.

Relevance. The FET working under the UN mission is highly relevant due to its ability to bridge cultural gaps and connect with local communities. The presence of women in the military can often facilitate better communication and understanding, particularly in regions and cultures, where norms limit interaction with females. Their unique position allows them to engage with women and children, providing a more comprehensive and nuanced perspective on community dynamics. The philosophy involves empathy, cultural sensitivity and a commitment to foster positive relationships.



Deployment Rationale. To support a more integrated response by military personnel in peacekeeping missions, the deployment rationale is the overarching driver of the following roles and activities undertaken by the FET: -

- (a) Gender mainstreaming.
- (b) Diversification of intelligence sources.
- (c) Increased reach into the local community.
- (d) Gender Responsive Peacekeeping operations.
- (e) Function in close coordination with unit operations, intelligence, CIMIC and MPIO section in carrying out various engagement activities.

The core tasks of Engagement Platoon are to

Observe, Engage and Report i.e. **Observe** and map human terrain in the Area of Operations, to identify vulnerable areas and groups and improve early warning mechanisms; **Engage** with the location population, especially women and vulnerable groups, in order to understand and communicate about their respective situation, interests, concerns, needs, potential or imminent risks and ongoing threats; **Report** the data collected through observation and engagement to all relevant mission stakeholders to establish/maintain cooperation with the community, local/regional organisations, mission partners and other humanitarian actors.

Female Engagement Team: INDBATT-1 UNISFA

True to its name and tradition First Battalion the LADAKH SCOUTS Regt embarked on an unfamiliar sojourn on 10 May 2022. **The journey from Olive Green to Blue Helmets** i.e. the journey as INDBATT-1 to the green field mission of United Nations Interim Security Force in Abyei (UNISFA) as the pioneer battalion. It was truly a Team India, which included LADAKH SCOUTS as core infantry component, sappers of 15 Engr Regt, 4 GUARDS as mechanized element and to top it all 25 women soldiers of Female

Engagement Team (ten from Corps of Military Police of Indian Army and fifteen from Assam Rifles) almost one each from every state of India.

Pre-Induction Training. The team comprising of two women officers and 25 women soldiers congregated at 274 Transit Camp Khanpur in October 2022, where the team integrated with INDBATT-1 being deployed for UNISFA. The team underwent pre-induction training at Transit Camp and CUNPK. The Training included all aspects of Peacekeeping Operations, Arabic Language training, tactical operations and Prevention of Sea.

Induction and Orientation. INDBATT Female Engagement Team was finally inducted in UNISFA as part of the Battalion's Build Up Group in January 2023. The team underwent orientation training on induction which included briefs and in-mission training on tactical, operational, administrative and all other aspects of unit's functioning including area familiarization to all parts of the battalion AoR.

Employment Philosophy. A dynamic employment philosophy was adopted by



INDBATT-1 UNISFA for employment of FET with periodic reviews to make it relevant, realistic and effective. It include following key aspects:-

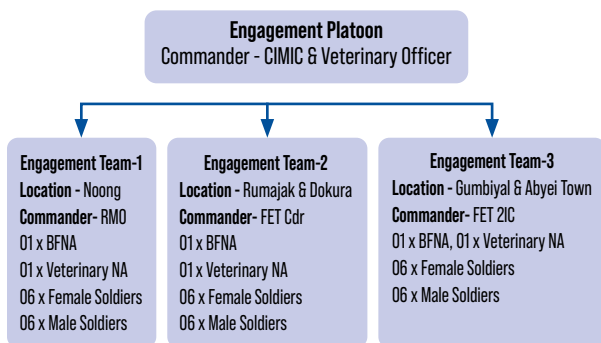
- (a) As part of INDBATT-1, to work towards gathering information useful for enhancing situational awareness of the mission area of operations.
- (b) Engage with women, children, youth, and elders (vulnerable groups) in the mission area to aid the communities in need and report on community's expectations and concerns.
- (c) Carry out potential and imminent threat analysis, risk assessment, reporting on local social economic and security situation.
- (d) Sustained engagement endeavors with an aim to improve relations between the peacekeepers and the local communities, for building durable and lasting trust and peace.
- (e) Carry out patrolling (mixed gender patrols) and security duties in line with Protection of Civilians Mandate of the Mission.

Methodology for Employment. To put the employment philosophy to work, the FET was deployed as integral part of an all-inclusive Engagement Platoon composed of male and female combat troops along with Medical and Veterinary staff of the unit represented as under:-

Activities undertaken. The FET was deployed with a holistic approach and a well thought out engagement program, as per which the team carried out a host of activities as given below:-

(a) Security Duties.

- (i) Static round-the-clock security



- deployments at camp gates.
- (ii) Regular Patrolling in various villages in sector AoR.
- (iii) Special patrols, search operations and



- escorts duties.
- (iv) Snap Check Posts.
- (v) Temporary IDP camp security.

(b) Community Engagement.

- (i) Daily Gender Responsive Patrols.
- (ii) Interaction with village elders, chiefs, traditional leaders & opinion makers.
- (iii) Interaction with civil administration & women groups.
- (iv) Regular engagement activities with youth, women and children including sports competitions, drawing competitions etc.
- (v) Regular visits and interaction with IDPs at IDP sites.

(c) Humanitarian Assistance.

- (i) Conduct of Medical and Veterinary Camps alongwith unit's Medical and Veterinary staff.
- (ii) Distribution of relief items, stationery, sports items & hygiene kits during various events.

(d) Miscellaneous.

- (i) Regular interactions with Mission Gender Unit and Abyei Women Association.
- (ii) Observe and Report on any SGBV, CRSV, SEA

Cases.

The Impact of Women Peacekeepers

The participation of Indian women officers and soldiers in peace keeping operations, as part of engagement team, staff officers and military observers, has given positive results with substantial impact. The feedback of the local community towards the deployment of FET and women peacekeepers has been encouraging and positive, evident during interactions at different levels. The impact is summarized as under: -

- (a) Very high acceptability of female troops within the local community.
- (b) Increased level of trust between peacekeepers and community.
- (c) Increased situational awareness with diversified sources of information.
- (d) Improved interaction with wider set of population including women, children and



- elderly.
- (e) Role model for young women.
- (f) Enhanced capability within the unit for Gender sensitive response to CRSV/ SGBV cases.
- (g) Increased effectiveness of operations and activities by factoring in gendered perspectives.
- (h) Increased deterrence to SEA.

Lessons Learnt and Action Plans: Inclusion and Leadership

The Indian women peacekeepers, wherever

deployed and in whatever role, worked relentlessly to effectively deliver the Mission's Mandate. Challenges are always there; however, they can be overcome by dynamism, ingenuity and resilience of women peacekeepers. It is imperative to understand these challenges and to incorporate the lessons learnt and fine-tune the strategies for more effective employment. Lessons learnt and action plans are further elucidated as under: -

Flexible Mindset. The pre-conceived notions while planning and conduct of operations by women soldiers is the biggest obstruction in effective employment. The protective mindset should be shunned so as not to limit their employment, Flexible mindset, graduated exposure and dynamism is essential for the effective employment.

Long Term planning Horizon. There are high expectations from women peacekeepers and thus short-term approach is adopted for quick results. High expectations and short-term approach clubbed with the lack of resources, challenges and UN work environmental add on to undue pressure, over hype and negative perception. Employment philosophy for deployment of women soldiers in peacekeeping has to be based on long term planning horizon, well complemented with consistent and sincere efforts.

Holistic Training. Peacekeeping requires practical training in terms of cross-cultural understanding, face-to-face communication skill, handling of CRSV & SGBV cases, negotiation techniques, conflict resolution techniques and intelligence gathering. The classical training, alone does not result in effective employment. The training of women soldiers alongside the male soldiers is also very important, since the collective training builds camaraderie, team work, mutual trust and respect.

Parity in Roles. As this is a novel concept, where women officers and soldiers have been integrated with Infantry troops, it is important not to assign gender stereotyping roles while employing the

women soldiers. The employment of women soldiers must be integrated with all operational activities carried out by the unit. Women soldiers should be multitasked similar to their male counterparts, in order to develop multitasking skills for wholesome employment and integration.

Regular Reviews. Dynamism and responsiveness are the guiding principles for deployment of women soldiers. Rigidity and status quo approach do not bear rightful and effective results. The situation in UN mission is unpredictable, thus, periodic reviews of, tactical operations, activities and tasks assigned must be carried out to assess their effectiveness and undertake corrective actions, accordingly.

Leadership. The limitation of women soldiers is directly proportional to the limitation of their Commanders i.e. sum total of Commander's risk-taking ability, professionalism, ingenuity, innovation, flexibility, trust and faith in the team. The leadership should be inclusive, supportive and sensitive to the gender issues.

The Peacekeeper with a Difference

Employment of Women in peacekeeping results in more effective peacekeeping as women have greater access to communities, help in promoting human rights, and encourage local women to become a meaningful part of peace and political processes. Diversity in United Nations peacekeepers allows engagement with all members of the communities as our own composition reflects the composition of the communities we serve.

Role Models and Mentors. Women peacekeepers

also serve as powerful mentors and role models for women and girls in post-conflict settings in the host communities, setting examples for them to advocate for their own rights and pursue non-traditional careers. Owing to their greater access to varied communities, women peacekeepers add greater diversity and broaden the tools at the Battalion Commander's disposal for their deployment in myriad activities contributing to success of Peacekeeping Missions.



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Colonel Vimal Sharma was commissioned into the Infantry in 2003 from the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun. The officer has vast operational experience of serving in varied terrain and operation. He has previously served in Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) as part of contingent in 2011-12. He has tenanted multiple Instructor tenures at various Training Institutions and had his staff exposure as Adjutant & Quarter Master of a Brigade and Officer Commanding of a Battle School in High Altitude Area. He is presently commanding a Motorized Infantry Battalion in United Nation Interim Security Force for Abyei. The officer has been instrumental in successfully establishing and operationalizing first ever Indian Battalion in UNISFA (Abyei) in a short span of time, post reconfiguration of the Mission.



75 Years of Indian Peacekeeping: Unwavering National Support through the Ages

By Colonel (Dr) Kulwant Kumar Sharma (Retired)

Abstract

India's contribution to the UN Peacekeeping has been steadfast, principled and always aligned to the core spirit of the UN Charter. There has always been bipartisan support for India's engagement with the UN and its various agencies. This is observed from the periodic media coverage and government support to the armed forces and police peacekeepers.

Coming from a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-lingual society, Indian peacekeepers receive universal acceptance. India's 75 years of peacekeeping is a testament to its unwavering commitment to the ideals of the UN. Indian peacekeepers embody professionalism, compassion and resilience, contributing not only to the resolution of conflicts but also to the rebuilding of societies torn by war. As India continues to advocate for a more inclusive and effective global peacekeeping system, its legacy of service remains a cornerstone of its global diplomatic efforts.

While there is a fair degree of recognition for the efforts of India's peacekeepers across the globe, much of this is accomplished with the untiring efforts of our government, ministries and diplomats at work. Starting from the Korean

conflict in the 1950s, our ambassadors and other diplomats have been arduous behind the scene negotiators, peacebuilders and real architects of many peacekeeping interventions. Through its diplomatic channels, India has supported training and capacity-building programs for peacekeepers, particularly in the global South, to enhance the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. India calls for reforms in the operational and financial frameworks of UN peacekeeping to address modern challenges, including terrorism, cyber threats and asymmetric warfare. Indian diplomacy emphasizes the importance of political dialogue and local ownership in peacebuilding, viewing peacekeeping as a means to foster sustainable solutions. This paper is a tribute to the efforts of Indian strategic and operational leaders both in the ministries and our permanent mission to the UN in New York.

Introduction

As one of the founding members of the UN, India has always reposed its full faith in the organisation, through its active cooperation and a steadfast understanding of its obligations to the UN activities. In the field of UN Peace Operations (UNPOs), India's contribution has been undertaken in the spirit of service to

promote global peace, and not for any strategic gains. India's position has always been bipartisan within the country, and appreciated by all stakeholders across the political, diplomatic and media spectrum. This is seen from the periodic media coverage and government support to the armed forces and police peacekeepers. Prime Minister Modi addressed the Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping in New York on 28 Sep 2015 and had articulated that '*Success of UN peacekeeping ultimately depends not on the weapons that the soldiers carry, but on the moral forces that decisions of the UN Security Council commands*'.

India is a home to a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-lingual society, that has lived together for millennia. The professional excellence of the Indian peacekeepers coming from this civilisation with their cross-cultural working ethos, receives universal acceptance. India has also demonstrated its unique capacity to sustain large troop commitments over prolonged periods in all types of conditions of UN missions. The countries which participate in UNPOs, have to provide not only diplomatic, military or police expertise but also should be politically acceptable to a host country and its neighbours. India has its presence in 10 of the 11 current ongoing missions and has participated with nearly 195,000 soldiers and police personnel in more than 49 of the 71 missions¹. This is indeed a matter of pride and showcases India's acceptance as a messenger of peace.

There is some scattered literature on India's participation and operational or tactical level achievements in the UNPOs, but very little is available on the contributions of the Indian diplomatic community as well as our stellar role at the strategic levels. Many books have been written by these protagonists and this paper is an attempt to collate such available information with a specific perspective of UNPOs.

Evolving Peacekeeping Philosophy

The UN was conceived as a successor to the League of Nations, which had failed in its most

important function – to prevent another world war. Representatives of 50 countries (including India) gathered at the UN Conference in San Francisco, from 25 April to 26 June 1945. They prepared and signed the UN Charter, which gave a basic framework of the UN, including its organisation, responsibilities and broad-based guidelines. UNPO philosophy is reflected in the Charter through its Articles VI, VII and VIII.

During the evolving years of the UN, former UN Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld and Under Secretary General Ralph Bunch engaged many member states in framing the Basic principles of UNPOs. These two leaders along with Mr Brian Urquhart, the Assistant Secretary General looking after the UNPOs, were the pioneers of modern UNPOs. UN Secretary-General presented a study on Peace Operations to the General Assembly after the deployment of the first UN Emergency Force in 1956².

The three core principles that evolved during this period and are still applicable to a larger extent are 'Consent of the Parties', 'Impartiality of the Peacekeepers', and 'Non-use of Force except in Self-defence'. The foundational principles of UNPOs in operational and policy terms owe a lot to the inputs of the first Military Adviser to the UN Secretary-General, Maj Gen Indarjit Rikhye³, who had experienced the actual operations in the Middle East, Africa and the Caribbean.

India's Role: Strong Architecture on UN Cooperation

UN Charter calls for "*...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*", as a cornerstone of the UN's existence. India has adhered to the Charter principle irrevocably and consistently. India provided its voice in the UN towards solving various global conflicts, ending colonialism and supporting the world body right from its inception⁴. India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru had laid down India's clear position even before the independence, when he declared that 'towards

the UN, India's attitude is that of wholehearted cooperation, and unreserved adherence, in both letter and spirit, to the Charter governing it⁵. Nayudu at a Brookings Meeting on 19 December 2018, traced a part of India's engagement with the UN through the important relationship between Prime Minister Nehru and UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, which shaped India's approach to the UN. The Prime Minister delivered his first address to the UN General Assembly on 03 November 1948, highlighting racial inequalities and colonialism as the central themes⁶. India actively played its role in solving some of the most inextricable crises like in Korea, Indo-China, Suez Canal & Gaza, Lebanon and finally Congo in the first decade of its participation.

Aligned to the UN Charter, India exercised its extensive experience in preventive diplomacy, peacebuilding, peacekeeping and humanitarian operations around the globe. The role of the government through its ministries of Defence, Home and External Affairs has always been to support the cause of global peace and development. The Permanent Mission of India (PMI) in New York remains India's lead organisation in supporting the UN in its multiple initiatives including its primary objective of 'maintenance of international peace and security'. At the national level, it is the unison of three leading ministries – the Defence, External and Home Affairs; which drives the endeavours in peacekeeping.

India had brilliant diplomats, political leaders and senior officials from the security forces representing the country at the apex global body. The Indian delegation at the time of the signing of the UN Charter was led by Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, who was a champion of the Economic and Social Council, one of the principal organs of the UN. Later he was unanimously selected as the first President of the Council⁷. He articulated India's concern about a restructured UNSC, where he opposed the veto provision of permanent members. As a commitment to the UN ideals, Mrs Vijayalakshmi Pandit joined the General

Assembly's first session and in her speech, on 25 October 1946, pledged on behalf of "the Government and people of India our commitment to the principles of peace and justice as enshrined in the UN Charter".

The Permanent Representatives of India: Anchor Pins

Permanent Representatives (PR) at the PMI and many special ambassadors have always been outstanding anchor pins in articulating India's position at the apex level. Some of them contributed to developing and nurturing India's position towards UNPOs. Sir Benegal Narsing Rau was the first PR to the UN from 1949 to 1952, who repeatedly pleaded for restraint and reconciliation during the Korean crisis in 1950. Sardar KM Panikkar, the Indian ambassador in Peking (now Beijing), played a crucial role in conveying the views of the Chinese Government to the UN through the Indian mission, as the People's Republic of China was not a member of the UN at that time. Mr Rikhi Jaipal represented India on the Visiting Mission of the UN. Trusteeship Council in Tanganyika (now Tanzania) in 1954, which also covered Ruanda-Urundi (now Rwanda and Burundi) and Somaliland (Somalia). The Mission spent three months in the East African Trust Territories as a member of the Standing Committee on Petitions of the Trusteeship Council⁸.

Mr Rajeshwar Dayal, a PR from 1949 to 1954, was later selected by the UN Secretary-General to deal with the crisis in Lebanon in 1958. Mr Dayal was a member of the UN Observation Group in Lebanon (UNOGIL)⁹, and head of the UN Operation in the Congo from September 1960 to May 1961. Mr G. Parthasarathy served as the Chief Commissioner of the International Control Commission set up to monitor the Geneva Accords, first in Cambodia and then in Vietnam in 1956. Mr Chinmaya Garekhan, the PR from 1986 to 1992, was appointed as a special envoy by the UN Secretary-General in January 1993 to the Middle East peace process. Another diplomat, Mr Prakash Shah, a PR in 1995 to 1997, was appointed as a special envoy in August 1998 to Baghdad during the conflict in Iraq.

Continuing their special peacebuilding and mediation role, Mr Kamalesh Sharma, another PR at the PMI from 1997 to 2002, was the UN Secretary General's special representative to East Timor from 2002 to 2004. Later years another brilliant ambassador, Mr Asoke Kumar Mukerji was the PR at the PMI from 2013 to 2015 and had many notable contributions to the cause of peacekeeping. He projected the interests of India as a major troop contributing country to the UN. On his insistence, the UN agreed to increase the monthly reimbursements to troops deployed on UNPOs in July 2014. India also became the first UN troop contributing country to create a Virtual Wall in honour of fallen UN peacekeepers, which was launched by Mr Mukerji at the UN on 29 May 2015. Mr TS Tirumurti was India's PR from May 2020 to June 2022 and successfully steered the UN Resolution 2589 (2021) on the call on governments to protect peacekeepers and the creation of an online database cataloguing attacks on the peacekeepers.

During India's presidency in August 2021 and December 2022, with Ms Ruchira Kamboj as the PR, three significant issues concerning Peace Operations were discussed and relevant resolutions were passed. These were 'Accountability of Crimes Against UN Peacekeepers', 'Technology for Peacekeeping' and 'UNITE Aware Situational Awareness Technology Platform'.

Senior Leadership from India and UN Peacekeeping

India has provided two Special Representatives of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG); one Deputy SRSG; over Six Under Secretary Generals (USG); and numerous director-level officials to date. India's defence and police forces have played their part at the strategic and operational levels at both the UN HQ and on field missions. In the 1950s and 60s, names of Lt Gen (later Gen) KS Thimayya, Lt Gen PS Gyani, Lt Gen Dewan Prem Chand and Maj Gen Indarjit Rikhye reverberated in the corridors of 45th Street, Manhattan in New York. They were the true global crisis managers and

led multiple missions across Asia and Africa. In later years, in 2003, Lt Gen Satish Nambiar was a member of the prestigious Blue Ribbon High-Level Panel to review the status of international collective security mechanisms. Lt Gen Abhijit Guha was also a member of another High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) in 2015, still referred to for its excellent recommendations.

India has so far provided 15 Force Commanders (including three Heads of Missions); two Military Advisors (Major Gen Indarjit Rikhye and Lt Gen Randhir Mehta) and one Deputy Military Advisor (Maj Gen MP Bhagat) to the UN Secretary-General. Two Division Commanders and eight Deputy Force Commanders (including two Deputy Heads of Missions) have also been provided by India for the operational leadership role till 31 December 2024. Lt Gen Mohan Subramanian continues to hold the fort as a Force Commander, in the UN Mission in South Sudan to date.

Conclusion

India's 75 years of peacekeeping is a testament to its unwavering commitment to the ideals of the UN. Indian peacekeepers embody professionalism, compassion and resilience, contributing not only to the resolution of conflicts but also to the rebuilding of societies torn by war. Many Indian diplomats and senior officials have shaped India's policies and position on UNPOs over the last 75 years.

Over the decades, India has advocated for equitable participation of nations in peacekeeping efforts, highlighting the importance of reflecting the diversity of the UN membership in peacekeeping missions. India was a pioneer in deploying all-female police units in UN missions, underscoring the role of women in conflict resolution and community stabilization. Through its diplomatic channels, India has supported training and capacity-building programs for peacekeepers, particularly in developing countries, to enhance the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations.

India calls for reforms in the operational and financial frameworks of UN peacekeeping to address modern challenges, including terrorism, cyber threats and asymmetric warfare. Indian diplomacy emphasizes the importance of political dialogue and local ownership in peacebuilding, viewing peacekeeping as a means to foster sustainable solutions.

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He was an active member in writing of UN Capstone Doctrine on peacekeeping, and manuals for trainers in the OHCHR, Geneva. He was a research member for EPON study with NUPI Norway, on the effectiveness of protection mandate, which he presented to the UN officials in New York in May 2022.

Role of Technology in Peacekeeping: Innovations for a New Era

By **Colonel Ankush Goyal**,
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“The United Nations was not created to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell”

DAG HAMMARSKJÖLD, THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL, MAY 13, 1954

Introduction

Peacekeeping has been a cornerstone of international relations since the mid-20th century. Strong participation of Indian troops in UN Missions worldwide provides a very potent and persuasive leverage to India in the UN ecosystem and on the global negotiating table. India has been one of the largest Troop Contributing Countries and many Indian soldiers have even made the supreme sacrifice of their lives for the cause of humanity. UN has also always been appreciative of Indian efforts in enhancing global peacekeeping.





in 14 missions around the world.

Scope of Peace Operations

The scope of peace operations today is not just limited to peacekeeping but rather involves a complex myriad of interlinked and long drawn activities ranging from preventive diplomacy to peace building operations to maintaining international peace and security.

These operations can be broadly categorised into three types i.e. peacekeeping, peace building and peace enforcement operations. Peacekeeping operations involve the deployment of UN personnel to monitor and maintain ceasefire



Historical Perspective of Peacekeeping

The concept of peacekeeping dates back to the establishment of the UN in 1945. The first peacekeeping mission was deployed in 1948 to the Middle East. Since then, peacekeeping has evolved to address various conflicts, from inter-state wars to intra-state conflicts and humanitarian crises. Today, the UN deploys over 70,000 peacekeepers

agreements, protect civilians and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid. Examples of UN peacekeeping operations include the missions like the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

Peace building operations, on the other hand, focus on supporting countries in their transition from conflict to peace. This involves helping



countries to establish stable institutions, promote economic development, and rebuild their infrastructure. The UN Peacebuilding Commission, established in 2005, plays a key role in coordinating peacebuilding efforts. For instance, the UN Peacebuilding Fund has provided support to countries such as Liberia and Sierra Leone to help them recover from conflict.

Peace enforcement operations, also known as Chapter VII operations, involve the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security. These operations are authorised by the UN Security Council and involve the deployment of military personnel to enforce ceasefire agreements, protect civilians, or defeat enemy

forces. An example of a UN peace enforcement operation is the United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II), which was established in 1993 to provide humanitarian assistance and restore order in Somalia.

Challenges faced by Peacekeepers

The new era peace operations vastly differ in scope, mandate, participation, accountability and relevance from the initial missions of 1950s. The progress made in peacekeeping has also increased challenges and introduced new and diverse complexities. Some of the complexities and challenges are discussed below.

Political and Security Challenges

Challenges to Legitimacy. UN peacekeeping operations face significant challenges to their legitimacy in terms of representation and accountability. The UN Security Council, which authorises peacekeeping missions, is dominated by five permanent members, also called the P5, who often have competing interests and agendas¹. This can lead to accusations of bias and selectivity in the deployment of peacekeepers, undermining the legitimacy of the operation in the eyes of local populations.

Complexity of Conflicts. Modern conflicts are often characterised by multiple actors, complex political dynamics, and humanitarian crises, making it challenging for peacekeepers to navigate and achieve their mandate. Regional complexities also pose significant challenges to UN peacekeeping. Many contemporary conflicts involve multiple state and non-state actors, making it difficult for peacekeepers to navigate the complex web of alliances and rivalries². For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, peacekeepers have struggled to contend with the numerous armed groups operating in the Eastern part of the country, many of which have links to neighboring countries. Similarly, in Yemen, peacekeepers have faced challenges in navigating the complex relationships between the government, Houthi rebels and regional powers like Saudi Arabia and the UAE³.

Interlinked International Relations. The intricate interlinkages of international relations also pose challenges for UN peacekeeping. Many conflicts are now deeply intertwined with global issues like climate change, migration and terrorism⁴. For example, the conflict in Mali is closely linked to the spread of extremist groups across the Sahel region, which in turn is fueled by factors like poverty, inequality, and climate change. Similarly, the conflict in Ukraine is deeply linked to the broader geopolitical rivalry between Russia and the West⁵. These interlinkages can make it difficult for peacekeepers to achieve their objectives, as they must navigate complex global dynamics.

Effectiveness of UN Operations. The effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations is also a major challenge. Despite the growth in the number and size of peacekeeping missions, many operations have struggled to achieve their objectives⁶. For example, the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has faced criticism for its inability to protect civilians from violence, despite being one of the largest and most expensive peacekeeping operations in the world⁷. Similarly, the UN mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) has struggled to contain the violence and instability that has plagued the country since 2013⁸.

These challenges to effectiveness undermine the credibility and legitimacy of UN peacekeeping, making it harder to achieve lasting peace and stability.

Asymmetric Warfare. Peacekeepers often face significant security risks, including attacks from armed groups, terrorist organisations and even local populations. Peacekeepers often face non-state actors who employ unconventional tactics, making it difficult for peacekeepers to respond effectively.

Mandate Limitations. Peacekeeping mandates are often limited in scope and duration, which can hinder the effectiveness of operations.

Lack of Political Will. The UN's ability to respond to crises is often hindered by a lack of political will among its member states or more specifically the P5, which can lead to delays or inaction.

Competition from other Actors. The UN faces competition from other actors, such as regional organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), which can sometimes undermine its effectiveness.

Funding and Logistics

Decreasing budget. The peacekeeping budget of UN has been decreasing in recent years, from \$8.3 billion in 2015 to \$6.5 billion in 2022. This

reduction has forced the UN to prioritise and cut back on certain operations.

Limited Resources. Peacekeeping missions often operate with limited resources, personnel and equipment. Peacekeeping operations often require significant logistical support, like transportation, communication and medical facilities, which can be difficult to establish and maintain in remote or hostile environments.

Humanitarian and Human Rights Challenges

Human Rights Abuses. Peacekeepers have been accused of human rights abuses in the past, including sexual exploitation and abuse, which can undermine the credibility and effectiveness of operations.

Humanitarian Access. Peacekeepers may face challenges in accessing areas affected by conflict, which can hinder the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Use of Technology. The UN is increasingly using technology, such as drones and satellite imaging, to support peacekeeping operations, but this requires significant investment and expertise.

Other Challenges

Pandemics. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for peacekeepers to be prepared to respond to public health crises, which can have significant impacts on operations.

Environmental Sustainability. The UN is increasingly focused on sustainability, and peacekeeping operations are no exception. The UN is working to reduce its environmental footprint and promote sustainable practices in its operations.

Technology Used by Rivals

Non-state actors and rival states have increasingly employed technology to counter peacekeeping efforts. These include:-

(a) **Drone Technology.** Rivals have used drones

for reconnaissance, surveillance and even attacks on peacekeepers.

(b) **Cyber Warfare.** Rivals have employed cyber attacks to disrupt peacekeeping operations, steal sensitive information and spread propaganda.

(c) **Social Media Manipulation.** Various actors and stakeholders have used social media to spread disinformation, incite violence and undermine peacekeeping efforts.

Innovation In Peace Operations

Since the time of Mahabharata, it is believed that all the technology developed and all innovations undertaken in the world are for the purpose of war fighting and conflicts and it is only later that their peaceful usages are found out. This has proven to be true from historical days to Aeroplanes and Nuclear Bombs. Similarly, increasingly, the technology is being used to alter the paradigm of peace operations.

As noted by the United Nations Secretary-General, 'Technology has the potential to transform the way we keep peace'. With the world becoming increasingly interconnected, the role of technology in peacekeeping has become more crucial than ever. The use of technology in peacekeeping has the potential to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of peacekeeping operations, ultimately increasing the safety of the peacekeeper and reducing collateral damage. Despite the challenges posed by rivals, technology can be a game-changer for peacekeeping efforts. In recent years, UN has leveraged various technologies to improve its peacekeeping capabilities. Some aspects of technological innovations are given in subsequent paragraphs.

Enhanced Situational Awareness. Technologies like satellite imaging, drones and sensors can provide peacekeepers with real-time information on the conflict environment. The UN can leverage IoT and multitude of other sensor technologies to collect and analyse data from various sources,

including environmental sensors, cameras and other devices. This data can be used to support situational awareness, monitoring and early warning systems. The UN is exploring the use of AI-powered analytics in terms of platforms like UNITE AWARE and SAGE to enhance its situational awareness and predictive capabilities⁹. AI and ML can also be leveraged to analyze large datasets, identify trends and patterns, and provide insights to enable data-driven decision-making and more effective resource allocation. These technologies can also help peacekeepers streamline their operations, reduce costs and improve accountability.

Improved Communications. Technology can also enhance the efficiency of peacekeeping operations through improved communications and information management. Cloud-based platforms and collaborative tools can facilitate real-time information sharing, reducing the need for physical meetings and enhancing situational awareness. Technologies like satellite communication, mobile networks, and social media can facilitate communication between peacekeepers, local communities and other stakeholders.

Social Media and Internet. The UN has utilised social media platforms and Radio FM channels to disseminate information, promote peacebuilding, and engage with local communities¹⁰. Additionally, the UN has employed internet-based technologies to enhance communication, facilitate information sharing, counter mis-information and support operational planning.

Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Prevention. The UN can utilize cyber security and cybercrime prevention technologies to protect its operations, data and personnel from cyber threats. This includes the use of encryption, firewalls and other security measures.

Drones and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs). One of the most significant technological innovations in UN peacekeeping has been the use

of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), commonly known as drones. Recent conflicts world over have shown the importance of the versatility of utilisation of a drone. Drones can vary in size, utilisation, endurance and cost and have nearly revolutionised the way military operations are conducted. The side with the stronger drone system wins and it has replaced the need to have pilots in the air. The drones are relatively cheaper and hence are much more efficient. The use of drones is another example of how technology can improve cost efficiency in UN peace operations. Drones have been deployed in various UN peacekeeping missions, including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali and South Sudan, to support operational tasks such as surveillance, reconnaissance and monitoring¹¹. Furthermore, drones can be deployed for cargo transport, medical supply delivery and other logistical tasks, reducing costs and enhancing operational efficiency. Utilisation of drones to provide Early Warning about movement of Armed Groups has also ensured Protection of Civilians.

Satellite Imagery and Geospatial Analysis. The UN can utilise satellite imagery and geospatial analysis to support mapping, monitoring and analysis of various phenomena, including environmental degradation, population movement and infrastructure development.

Virtual and Augmented Reality. Virtual and augmented reality technologies are being planned to be utilized to support training, simulation, and planning in various contexts, including peacekeeping, humanitarian response and development.

Energy Conservation: Reducing Carbon Footprint. Another area where technology can make a significant impact is towards reducing the energy consumption. UN peacekeeping missions often rely on diesel generators for power, which are not only expensive but also environmentally hazardous. Transitioning to renewable energy sources, such as solar or wind

power, can substantially reduce energy costs and carbon emissions. Moreover, energy-efficient technologies like LED lighting and smart grids can further optimise energy usage.

Logistics and Supply Chain Management. The UN peace operations can benefit significantly from technological advancements to improve cost efficiency. One key area is logistics and supply chain management. Implementing digital platforms and data analytics can improve efficiency of resource allocation, reduce transportation costs and enhance overall operational efficiency. For instance, adopting blockchain technology can ensure transparent and tamper-proof tracking of supplies, minimising losses and misappropriation.

UN's utilization of various technologies has significantly enhanced the effectiveness and efficiency of its peacekeeping operations. The innovative use of these technologies has improved the UN's situational awareness, facilitated information sharing and supported operational planning. As the UN continues to explore new technologies, it is likely that the organisation's peacekeeping capabilities will be further enhanced.

Cost Implications

UN's desire to adopt technologically superior systems also raises concerns about the potential costs. The organisation may need to pay a premium for cutting-edge technologies, which could strain its budget. Moreover, the integration of new technologies may require significant investments in training and capacity-building for UN personnel. Nevertheless, the long-term benefits of technological advancements in terms of cost savings, improved efficiency and enhanced effectiveness are likely to outweigh the initial costs.

To address cost concerns, the UN could consider partnering with private sector companies and technology startups to leverage their expertise and resources. This could involve collaborative

research and development, joint procurement initiatives, or public-private partnerships to deliver specific technologies or services. By working together with the private sector, the UN can access cutting-edge technologies while sharing the costs and risks.

The UN should also insist in getting troops and military units from TCCs who bring in technology to mission area rather than relying on redundant equipment. The Statement of Unit Requirements (SURs) for each unit should clearly spell out these mandatory parameters. This will ensure that UN gets judicious returns for the money being spent and also increase the technology quotient in the mission area.

Recommendations

To harness the potential of technology in Peacekeeping, following recommendations are made:-

- (a) **Invest in Research and Development.** The UN and member states should invest in research and development to identify and develop new technologies that can support peacekeeping efforts.
- (b) **Technology Contributing Countries.** In today's world, technology plays a crucial role in peacekeeping. The country with better technology should have better prospects in peacekeeping. The equipment requirement in UN peacekeeping missions is changing rapidly. With the advent of new technologies, peacekeeping operations can be made more efficient and effective by partnering with the right TCCs. In addition, a concept of Equipment/ Technology Contributing Countries could be considered.
- (c) **SURs and Mission Factors.** Military units are inducted based on the SUR document which forms the basis of organisation, kitting and equipment that a unit brings to the mission area. SURs provide a standardised framework for deploying troops, while Mission Factors

take into account the specific requirements of each mission. By using SURs and Mission Factors, the UN can ensure that peacekeeping missions are well-equipped and well-prepared to handle the challenges they face.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, technology has the potential to transform peacekeeping efforts in the 21st century. By leveraging technologies like satellite imaging, drones, artificial intelligence and blockchain, UN can increase efficiency of the peacekeeping missions and be more nimble footed. As the world becomes increasingly complex and interconnected, it is essential that peacekeeping efforts adapt to these changes by embracing technological innovations. Adaption of technology could truly be the game-changer in peacekeeping.



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Col Ankush Goyal is an officer of the Corps of Signals and is an alumnus of the prestigious Defense Service Staff College, Wellington. He has been associated with the UN since 2008 when he participated in a Multi-National Exercise AMAN SENA organised by CDM, Secunderabad. He has participated in a UN Mission at Golan Heights and has been part of the UN HQ Secretariat at New York for two years. He has also been part of an Instructor Exchange Program at CCOPAB, Rio De Janeiro at Brazil. After commanding his unit in Eastern Ladakh, the officer is presently posted at Army HQ.

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Protection of Civilians: Expanding the Peacekeeping Mandates

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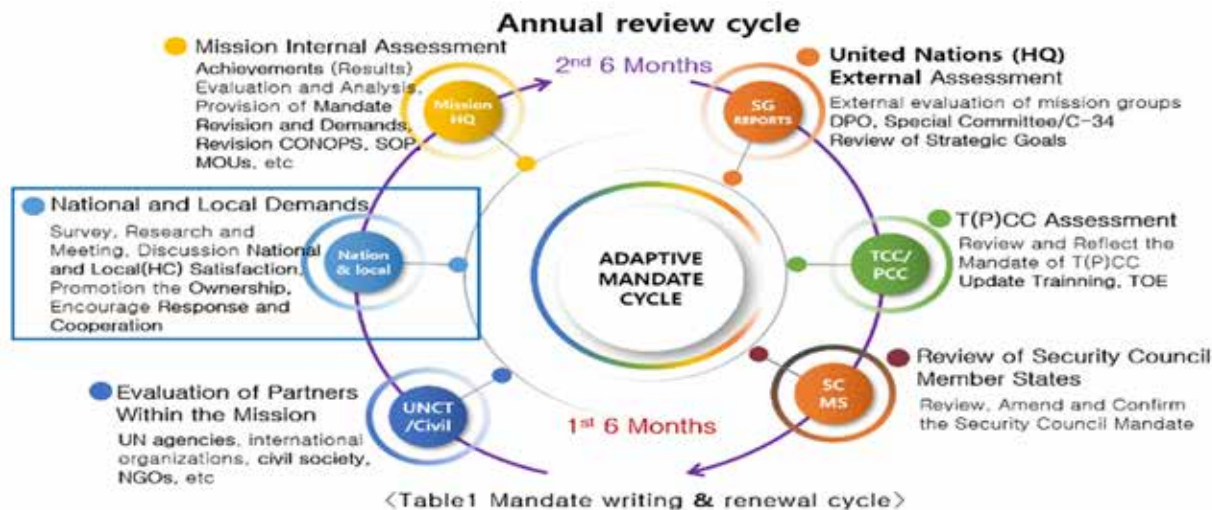
The UN Protection of Civilians (PoC) mandate within peacekeeping operations has been a major goal of the UN and the international community since the 1990s. Recently, UN peacekeeping mandates have explicitly incorporated civilian protection as a core task. The PoC mandate provides the legal and policy framework for peacekeepers to use force to safeguard the lives and safety of civilians. This authority grants peacekeepers the right to use force against conflicting parties to uphold the mandate. However, this authority is constrained by the principles of “use of force only in self-defense and defense of the mandate,” making the use of force cautious and, in some cases, impractical. Particularly, in host nations, where peacekeeping operations rely on cooperation and legal legitimacy, using force against the host state poses even greater challenges. Failure by peacekeepers to protect civilians, however, risks undermining their consent, legitimacy and credibility, creating a significant dilemma¹. Such dilemmas highlight conflicts between ideals and realities, potentially impacting the legitimacy of peacekeeping operations. This dilemma has been especially evident in stabilization missions undertaken by UN peacekeeping forces in the 2000s.

The UN Capstone Doctrine is firmly rooted in

three core principles: the consent of conflict parties, impartiality, and the prohibition of the use of force except in self-defense and defense of the mandate. However, as time passes and circumstances evolve, it is necessary to question whether these core principles remain applicable and whether current mandates can uphold and adhere to these principles. In particular, the use of undefined terminology can create confusion within missions and cause a disconnect with the realities on the ground. Without sufficient consensus, the unique organizational structure of the UN may face friction in ensuring consistent and integrated implementation. Therefore, terms used in mandates must be clearly defined and mutually agreed upon before their application. The Capstone Doctrine must be reinterpreted and redefined to suit current circumstances and periodically reviewed and updated. In dynamic peacekeeping operations, it is essential to revisit the fundamental principles to ensure they form actionable doctrines. For the UN to become more effective and responsive, mandates must be based on modernized doctrines and drafted with a focus on practicality and adaptability. A shared understanding of the mandates is crucial for achieving common objectives.

If mandates are drafted, reviewed, or renewed by a limited set of actors or under time constraints

¹Victoria Holt and Glyn Taylor with Max Kell, “Protecting Civilians in the Context of UN Peacekeeping Operations, Successes, Setbacks and Remaining Challenges”(2009), pp. 22-23.



without incorporating on-the-ground conditions and feedback, gaps can emerge between mandates and field realities, making effective implementation difficult.² Mandates require systematic procedures to measure and reflect the performance of missions. For instance, a mandate renewed annually could include biannual evaluations - both internal and external - engaging the mission, the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Secretariat, humanitarian and civil society organizations, intergovernmental and non-governmental actors, troop and police contributing countries, host states and conflict parties. This model demonstrates an adaptive approach to mandate drafting that connects with field realities. Their cooperation is essential. It is essential to evaluate whether mandated tasks are being properly implemented (Measures of Performance) and whether the right mandated tasks are being taken (Measures of Effectiveness). Particular attention should be given to the satisfaction and perceptions of peace among the beneficiaries of the mandate - namely, the host nation and local populations. The impact and

outcomes of the mandate on these stakeholders must be carefully considered (Measures of Effectiveness). The Security Council must listen to, communicate with, and reflect the voices from the field, addressing aspects such as military and environmental stability, humanitarian issues, and economic, political and social dimensions. A mandate must not become a “*Christmas tree*”³ laden with unrelated decorations or a “*one-sided tale*.”

United Nations peacekeeping operations carry out tasks through mandates and activities. These mandated tasks⁴ are not only performed by a single sector or agency but rather through coordinated efforts involving various sectors, UN bodies and member states. The international community widely recognizes that the UN’s three core pillars - human rights, peace and security and development - are interconnected and mutually reinforcing.⁵ The protection and promotion of human rights positively influence peace and development, whereas human rights violations negatively impact both. At the UN

² “Is Christmas Really Over? Improving the Mandating of Peace Operations”, Security Council Report Research Report, pp.1-2. February 2019.

³ Ibid. p.2, Secretary-General António Guterres urged Council members to end “Christmas tree” mandates. He also called for mandates to be streamlined and to have clear strategic objectives.

⁴ Mandated Tasks of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, UN Core Pre-Deployment Training Materials 2017

⁵ Secretary-General’s remarks at United Nations Private Sector Forum (24 September 2018), “It is common to say that peace, development and human rights are three faces of the same reality – there is no peace without development, there is no development without peace, there is no peace and development without human rights. It was Kofi Annan who said it in a very clear way. (2005)”

S/RES/1645 (2005), A/RES/60/180 (2005), The Peacebuilding Commission Recognizing that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.



< Table 2 Mandated tasks of UNPKOs >

level, efforts are required to integrate human rights with peace⁶ and security, as well as with development⁷, from the perspective of rights. The tasks outlined in peacekeeping mandates must adopt an integrated approach that prioritizes the UN's three core pillars. Among these tasks, the protection of civilians (PoC) is a central focus. The PoC mandate should be integrated into a comprehensive mission strategy alongside other peacekeeping tasks. Moreover, the PoC mandate should extend beyond its immediate objectives by connecting peacekeeping efforts to post-conflict peacebuilding and early recovery processes. By doing so, the mandate would lay the groundwork for sustainable peace, ensuring long-term stability and development in post-conflict regions.

The expansion of mandates introduces limitations and challenges in the approach to peacekeeping operations. Are the missions sufficiently robust in their design and adequately resourced to achieve their goals? Are they effectively structured, provided with mandate-specific training, and protected under international law? Doubts also arise regarding whether the use of robust force is the best approach to resolving conflicts. To effectively implement the protection of civilians (PoC) mandate, member states must be provided with standardized doctrines

supported by mission-critical training, technical assistance and lessons learned. Peacekeeping forces must have access to adequate resources and adopt advanced technologies (e.g., drones, surveillance reconnaissance, satellites and digital transformation) to leverage both hard power and soft power across multiple domains. Strengthening the capacity of UN peacekeeping forces is directly linked to fulfilling the PoC mandate as well as ensuring the safety and security of peacekeepers themselves.

A robust mandate in peacekeeping operations can be effective in achieving the UN's core task of protecting civilians and ensuring the safety and security of UN personnel. However, it may also lead to unintended consequences. The UN could inadvertently become a party to the conflict or face criticism for causing harm to innocent civilians, thereby challenging the principles of impartiality and legitimacy that underpin peacekeeping operations. Military interventions by UN peacekeepers can make mandate implementation increasingly difficult and expose not only military personnel but also civilians, police, and other mission components to heightened risks as targets of attacks. It is essential to recognize that the use of force could potentially diminish the overall effectiveness of

⁶ [On the report of the Third Committee (A/71/484/Add.2)] 71/189. Declaration on the Right to Peace. Article 1 Everyone has the right to enjoy peace such that all human rights are promoted and protected and development is fully realized, 19 December 2016.

⁷ Resolution 41/128 (1986). ANNEX 97th plenary meeting. Declaration on the right to development.

the mission. The use of force must not become the easiest or default tool within Security Council mandates. Efforts to prevent conflict, mediate and negotiate along with collaboration with regional partners, must be pursued simultaneously to mitigate the negative impacts of military force.

The loss of civilian lives is increasing in many parts of the world, making unified cooperation and leadership from the international community more critical than ever. Transforming and advancing the UN is a vital challenge in preventing and resolving conflicts and achieving sustainable peace and development. The UN must be flexible and sufficiently responsive to ensure that its missions can effectively carry out their tasks in conflict situations. While the protection of civilians (PoC) mandate is central to UN peacekeeping and one of its most critical tasks, expanding mandates within missions often only addresses the immediate needs of conflict zones. To protect civilians facing grave threats such as genocide, war crimes and ethnic cleansing, the international community must engage in early intervention before conflicts escalate. This requires building and strengthening systems for rapid and effective UN intervention to prevent large-scale harm proactively.⁸ Such efforts must precede the implementation of peacekeeping mandates in conflict areas and be both urgent and effective. Discussions on reforming the UN to enable more active engagement in human rights and civilian protection issues must yield tangible outcomes.

UN peacekeeping operations are facing increasing risks, with the causes of conflicts and their solutions becoming more complex. Despite the growing complexity and limitations of mission organization and tasks, there have been positive outcomes alongside the increasing necessity of their role. Member states must actively participate by taking responsibility for personnel, equipment and funding. Regional organizations, which are

directly connected to regional stability, also need to strengthen their responsiveness through cooperation and accountability. The protection of civilians should be recognized not only as a key aspect of peacekeeping on the ground but also as a shared responsibility of the international community. There must be effective and binding agreement to ensure its implementation.



Prof Guil Kwon

KNDU, South Korea

Background

- 2020 (5yrs), Peace Keeping Operations Center, Professor, KNDU, Republic Of Korea (ROK)

Military Background

- 2015(3yrs), Chief of C9, ROK-US Combined Division, ROK
- 2012(3yrs), Financial Planner, C5, ROK Army HQ.
- 2009(2yrs), Commander, Armor Battalion, 26th Mechanized Infantry Division, ROK
- 2008, War Planner, C5, ROK-US Combined Force Commander, ROK
- 2007, MNF-Iraq, Planner, ROK Coordination Group in Iraq
- 2002, Military Observer, UNOMIG (United Nations Mission In Georgia)
- Observer, S-4, MTC planner
- 1991, Graduate, Korea Military Academy

⁸ A/RES/60/1, 2005 World Summit Outcome, paragraphs 138 and 139 thereof, 24 October 2005.
A/RES/63/308, The responsibility to protect, The Responsibility to Protect populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing has emerged as an important global principle since the adoption of the UN World Summit Outcome Document in 2005, 14 September 2009.

Gender and Peacekeeping: The Growing Role of Women in Conflict Zones

By **Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj**

Ex PR to PMI

Women play a vital role in conflict resolution and post conflict recovery. Studies show that peace agreements are more likely to last when women are involved in the negotiation process. ‘War may have been started by men, but peace will not be achieved without women.’ Otherwise put: the role played by women in community trust building, conflict resolution and the protection of women and children in conflict zones is positive, transformational and proven.

Instances abound when women have led reconciliation efforts— in Colombia, in Sudan, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Rwanda, in Liberia. They have led —as mediators, as bridge builders and as agents of reconciliation. That’s the quiet power of women in peacemaking—agents of peace and security, not mere victims of war.

The debate gained sharper focus with the landmark adoption of UNSC Resolution 1325 in 2000, which placed the Women, Peace and Security(WPS) agenda at the forefront of international discourse. For the first time, it formally recognized both the disproportionate impact of conflict on women and their indispensable role in forging lasting peace. It underscored the need for women’s participation in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, resolution, and post-conflict reconstruction—bringing a vital gendered perspective to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Over the years, the Resolution has inspired national action plans, strengthened legal protections and led to an increase in women’s leadership in peace processes, making it a key pillar of the WPS agenda.

And every October—the anniversary of resolution 1325—the UN Security Council in New York provides a vital platform for member states, civil society and international organizations to track progress and growth. Where advocacy takes center stage, reinforcing the undeniable truth that sustainable peace requires women.

India has been an active supporter of this agenda and participates every year at the debate advocating for more representation of women in peacekeeping and better funding for gender responsive security initiatives.

In practical terms as well, Indian women have been in the frontlines of peacekeeping efforts. Witness our pioneering role in Liberia of 2007 sending the first ever all female Formed Police Unit as part of the UN Mission. Our team had a threefold ground impact: improved trust and cooperation amongst local women folk who felt more comfortable dealing with women peacekeepers; reduced gender based violence by encouraging women to report crimes and inspired local women to join the armed forces increasing women’s representation

in Liberia's police. President Johnson Sirleaf commended this 'family' of role models who inspired a generation of Liberian women to take to policing roles in their own country.

"The all-female Indian FPU played an outstanding role in Liberia since 2007 and put the soul of Security Council resolution 1325 into operational action and visibility...These courageous women patrolled Monrovia streets at night together with their Liberian counterparts, maintained calm during the Ebola crisis and devoted time and resources above and beyond the call of duty to protect the communities. The legacy these peacekeepers leave behind is the next generation of female Liberian leaders, already serving in the national police today," said then UN Police Advisor Stefan Feller, lauding the contribution of India to the WPS agenda.

This wasn't a flash in the pan. Indian women also deployed in South Sudan (UNMISS) Congo (MONUSCO) and Cyprus(UNFICYP) in military, medical and police roles. In January 2023, we deployed another women-only peacekeeping unit to Abyei(UNISFA) reinforcing our commitment to gender responsive peace efforts. Where our ladies walked the talk every inch of the way. Their contributions were indeed remarkable and did the nation proud—from reaching remote communities to empowering violence victims—they were key players in nation-building. PM Modi's tweet summed up the spirit and essence: 'Proud to see this...India has a tradition of active participation in UN peacekeeping missions. The participation by our Nari Shakti is even more gladdening'.

At an individual level, many women from India have distinguished themselves in peacekeeping roles—both in policy making and at the field level. Kiran Bedi was chosen to be the first woman CIVPOL Advisor from any country when the post was established within the UN Department of Peace Operations in the early 2000s. Major Suman Gawani, was recognized as UN Military Gender Advocate for the year 2019. In 2024 there

was an encore when Major Radhika Sen earned this honour for her exceptional contribution to the UN peacekeeping mission in the eastern DRC. I vividly recall my meeting with her at the Indian Mission to the UN in New York May last year— she indeed did us proud by her commitment to peace and equality.

India was also the first country to contribute to the UN Secretary-General's Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), signing the voluntary compact on SEA with the Secretary-General in 2017. Another example where we have not hesitated to walk the talk, through the strongest commitment to the cause of gender empowerment and equity.

Moving forward, we aim to take the next step—not just by integrating more female peacekeepers into our missions, but by establishing a dedicated women's interface in all our peacekeeping operations. We intend to strengthen training programs for our women peacekeepers while continuing to actively advocate for the WPS agenda at the UN each year. Additionally, we will push for increased funding for WPS initiatives in the Global South. Briefly put: we are firmly committed to enhancing the role of women in global peace and security efforts—as we see this, it is not just a matter of inclusion but of necessity.

It is a matter of some gratification that none of our activism has gone unnoticed or unappreciated. We have been recognised by the UN—no less: 'India has the largest percentage of women, especially in the police force - 22 percent are women - which is absolutely remarkable, an extraordinary contribution...India is the example of commitment to the United Nations Charter, the values of the UN and the sacrifice that the men and women make to peacekeeping...I want to express my deep gratitude and appreciation for the contribution of your country.' This statement by UN Secretary General Guterres at a 2019 International Peacekeepers Day commemoration in New York in May 2019, says it all.

But why just India? The UN actively advocates this. Gender equality is at the centre of the UN's values, making the increased participation of women in peacekeeping missions and peace-building processes as a natural and necessary progression. The commitment is at all levels: via policy, leadership statements and funding mechanisms. 'Despite clear evidence that women's involvement leads to more sustainable peace agreements, they remain underrepresented. The UN continues to push for meaningful inclusion at all levels.' – UN Women, 2023.

Many countries have also been trying to emulate the Indian example, given the unique outreach provided by women in conflict and post conflict situations. Canada's Elsie initiative for women in peace operations, is one instance. Equally significant is Sweden and Norway's active interest in the women, peace and security agenda. From Africa, Rwanda leads on female peacekeepers, adding to the growing momentum in this direction. They have taken on roles as varied as military personnel, police officers and advisors contributing to security, conflict resolution and community engagement.

Way Forward

Clearly there have been gains. From UNSC resolution 1325 to its successors, from India's pioneering deployment of a FPU in Liberia, to the increasing presence of women peacekeepers from various countries at the ground level—there is progress.

But let's not forget that despite the gains, women are still routinely under-represented in and excluded from formal peace processes, political dialogues and peacebuilding. The gender perspective is yet neglected in conflict prevention, recovery and reconstruction. For example, according to an available statistic, out of approximately 95,000 peacekeepers, women constitute only 4.8% of military contingents and 10.9% of formed police units in UN Peacekeeping missions. It is essential, that we increase the representation of female peacekeepers in UN

peacekeeping operations to order to achieve sustainable peace and the improved well-being of women and girls in conflict-affected regions.

Importantly as well, women are missing from leadership positions and key decision making processes. According to data available in 2022, women held only 16% of negotiator positions, a sharp decline from 23% in earlier years. This trend contradicts reality: women and children are often the most vulnerable in conflict zones, and studies have shown that women's participation in negotiations leads to more effective outcomes. Moreover, the recently adopted UN Pact for the Future calls for rebuilding multilateralism in a way that benefits everyone, everywhere. Why, then, does resistance persist?

And what's the way out? While supporting participation, we must also equally focus in a holistic manner on the socio-economic empowerment of women, including their access to credit, finance and technology. Digital technologies have enormous potential to empower women by providing greater access for women to education, finance, credit, social services, marketplace and employment.

The United Nations and regional organizations could support national authorities, upon request, in strengthening legal frameworks and institutions to ensure accountability and end impunity for violence against women.

We need a call to action to ensure advocacy does not become mere political correctness. Women can no longer be marginalized when they are fifty percent stakeholders in the global landscape. Peacekeeping is no exception—we need to go beyond commitments and deliver real change. This means more funding, more training and more leadership opportunities for women in global security efforts.

As far as India goes, women are being encouraged to be at the forefront of community mobilization and the public-government interface. In

September 2023, India took a historic step towards gender equality, when the Indian parliament passed the Women's Reservation Bill to reserve one third of all seats in National and State legislatures for women. The women of India are now more empowered than ever to participate in political decision-making at the national, regional and local levels, potentially contributing to the realization of a women-led development vision.

The positive impact of this activism naturally impacts the WPS agenda. It is therefore worth reiterating that India stands fully committed to contribute and implement the UN Agenda on women, peace and security. 'Through technical and military assistance through training through advocacy. India stands with all women who seek to build peace, whether on the battlefield, at the negotiating table, or in rebuilding their societies.' PM Narendra Modi.



Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj

Ex PR to PMI

Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj, a trailblazer in the Indian Foreign Service, has had a distinguished career marked by numerous pioneering achievements. As the top performer in the 1987 batch of the Indian Foreign Service and the all-India women's topper of the 1987 Civil Services batch, she has consistently demonstrated exceptional leadership and diplomatic acumen.

Notably, Ambassador Kamboj served as the first female Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations in New York until May 2024, leading various initiatives and representing India's interests with distinction. Her tenure was highlighted by a historic milestone: becoming the first woman from India to preside over the United Nations Security Council in December 2022.

Throughout her illustrious career, Ambassador Kamboj has broken new ground, serving as the first female Ambassador of India to Bhutan, a country crucial to India's foreign policy in the region. As high commissioner to South Africa, she significantly strengthened relations with a key gateway to the African continent. Her tenure as Ambassador/Permanent Representative to UNESCO in Paris was marked by landmark achievements aligned with the agency's mandate.

Between 2011 and 2014, Ambassador Kamboj made history again as India's first female Chief of Protocol, playing a pivotal role in orchestrating high-level diplomatic engagements that substantially elevated India's global standing.

UN Peacekeeping: Introspect, Adapt, Refine, Restructure and Reform

By **Lieutenant General Mohan Subramanian, PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM**
Force Cdr, UNMISS

UN Peacekeeping at Crossroads?

In May 1948, 50 members of UN Guard Force were deployed in the UN Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO), the world's first UN peacekeeping mission established post the first Arab-Israeli War to monitor implementation of Armistice Agreements. In the 76 years hence, UN peacekeeping has evolved and matured as the foremost tool for the UN for international peace and security. Commencing with a supervisory role to monitor implementation of peace agreements in the 40s and 50s, peacekeeping today is a holistic multi-dimensional tool aggregating political, socio-economic, humanitarian and security measures to keep, enforce, build and sustain peace. In the words of the current Secretary General, "UN peacekeeping is a flagship enterprise of UN and peacekeepers are a beacon of hope for protection for civilians caught in conflict".

UN peacekeeping has had notable successes from Cambodia in the East to Sierra Leone in the West and failures too. What has not diminished over the years is the credibility of the instrument as the most politically neutral, impartial, reliable and cost-effective tool in the international tool kit to address international conflicts. However, the world today is witnessing increasing multi-lateralism and multiple concurrent conflicts leading to questions being raised on the relevance of UN peacekeeping, accentuated by the recent closure/ drawdown of a few peacekeeping

missions. There is an increasing reluctance amongst UN member states to fund resources required for peacekeeping.

This is not the first time, however, that UN peacekeeping has found itself in the crossroads as a target of global questioning of its relevance. As in the previous such instances, the need of the hour is to introspect, adapt, refine, restructure and reform to meet the current and emerging challenges of global peacekeeping. This is hence, an apt moment to trace the UN peacekeeping journey over the years, turn the search light inwards to introspect what is going right and what is going wrong and to crystal-gaze on what should be done to restore the world's faith in the most credible instrument for global conflict, UN peace keeping, both immediate and long term. This article is an attempt in this regard to suggest certain areas wherein UN peacekeeping needs to adapt, refine, restructure and reform to remain relevant.

Robust Foundational Agreements and Resources to meet Current and Emerging Challenges

In the first few decades of UN peacekeeping operations, conflicts were largely Inter-State and peacekeeping was generally to monitor/ supervise cease fire and Armistice Agreements. States had the capacity to implement the agreements. In those days, peacekeepers were

largely military experts. In contrast, conflicts from 1990s onwards, are largely Intra-State, occurring in the world's most impoverished countries with poor infrastructure and institutional capacity. Sometimes, the host governments and armed forces are parties to the conflict. Foremost amongst the challenges confronting peacekeeping today is that peacekeeping missions operate in increasingly dangerous and volatile environments amidst fragile security provided by poorly evolved security apparatus of host nations. The environment in most peacekeeping missions is also characterized by lack of genuine commitment by signatory parties, sometimes including the host governments, to the foundational peace agreement as well as new and potent threats to peacekeepers such as Improvised Explosive Devices, Unmanned Aerial Systems, violent extremism, terrorism, rebellion, insurgencies, weaponisation of information including hate speech amongst others. Future missions need to have the technological and human resources capabilities commensurate to these challenges. Status of Forces Agreements must become more robust and ensure that a mission's ability to move, deploy and meet these threats are in no way harmed or obstructed by the host government throughout the lifecycle of the mission.

Unanimous and Realistic Peacekeeping Mandates

Commensurate to the evolution of threats and conflicts, UN peacekeeping missions have also evolved. Commencing with relatively simpler mandates of supervision of ceasefire agreements in 1940s and 50s, UN peacekeeping operations evolved to peacekeeping and conflict mitigation/ resolution in the 1960s and peace enforcement/ peace building and stabilisation to sustain peace in the last two decades. In 1999, protection of civilians (PoC) found an explicit mention for the first time in the mandate of UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). Commencing then till now, 16 UNPK Missions have had PoC mandates. PoC has thus become a corner stone of mandates of current UNPK missions. Today, major UN Peacekeeping missions are multi-dimensional, complex, integrated missions, many of them with a predominant PoC mandate. Conflict mediations/ resolutions, PoC, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), Security

Sector Reforms (SSR), creating conditions conducive for Humanitarian Assistance, Monitoring and Reporting of Human Rights, Prevention of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) and Conflict Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) and other substantive issues have become part of mandates. Mandates have also evolved from a single page mandate of UNTSO in 1948 to complex multi-page 'christmas tree' mandates that 'over ask' and are high on expectations. Increasingly, they are also not unanimous reflecting the multi-lateralism of the world. Non-unanimous mandates may be exploited by stakeholders by according different priorities to various sub mandates. Implementation of mandates in such environments has become extremely complex.

Optimal Resourcing of UN Peacekeeping Missions

The gulf between mandates high on expectations and resourcing of UN peacekeeping missions is ever-widening with increasing under-funding by UN member states and lack of timely liquidity. Traditional UN peacekeeping missions are hugely under-funded in comparison to special missions such as the "Coalition of the Willing" in Afghanistan which was well resourced both in terms of number of personnel and quantum and quality of equipment. This, in a way, sets up traditional missions for failure, despite the fact that some of them remain afloat and eventually manage to be successful due to various factors despite such under-resourcing. There is a need to establish clear and linear links between mandate expectations and resources provided to missions.

Uncrowded Peacekeeping Space for Success of Peacekeeping Missions

There have been notable successes of UN peacekeeping operations. Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Mozambique, Angola and Cambodia amongst others had attained a reasonable degree of stability with the support of UN Peacekeeping Missions. In the same breath, there is also a need to acknowledge failure of UN Peacekeeping in Rwanda in 1994 to prevent the genocide that left thousands of Tutsis and Hutus dead and in 1995 to prevent the massacres of approximately 8000 mostly Muslim men and boys at Srebrenica during the war in Bosnia. Recently,

there have been premature closure/ drawdown of Peacekeeping Missions in Mali and Congo. A common thread that runs through the successful missions, arguably, is the clear dominance of UN peacekeeping in the space available for peacekeeping without overcrowding by regional forces, parallel forces, extra regional forces, forces under bilateral arrangements with host countries, et al. Ideally, UN peacekeeping must be provided an uncrowded peacekeeping space or atleast the clear lead in the peacekeeping domain, failing which, missions may get 'set up' for failure.

Managing Host Country's Consent

Mandates seek proactive actions by peacekeeping missions in PoC situations against imminent physical threat to civilians irrespective of the source of such threat. Wherein such threat emanates from the host government forces or forces in alliance with host government or key signatories of the peace agreement, such actions by peacekeeping missions may impact the core UN principle of 'Consent'. Moreover, going against the host government's views in any PoC situation, even if host government forces are not involved, can result in restrictions in other domains of activity of the Mission. To some extent, loss of host government consent will impact effectiveness in mandate delivery. Peacekeeping missions may also invariably lack capacity to take on host government security forces. These limitations must be well recognized. The tight rope walking between ensuring mandate delivery effectiveness while maintaining host country consent is a critical leadership challenge for missions. In this regard, missions need to be accorded due support by the Security Council, member states and their missions in host country.

Measuring Success in Intermediate Objectives of Missions

Given the enormous difficulties in achieving the ultimate political purposes of UN peacekeeping missions and the fact that missions alone cannot achieve them, it is unfair to judge success or failure of a UN peacekeeping mission based on political achievements alone. Unarguably, numerous clashes and conflicts have been prevented world over every other day by UN peacekeeping and consequently several lives of civilians saved and made better. There

are no scales that the world has developed to measure success in this regard. On the other hand, there are effective measures of counting the conflicts that take place and the lives that are lost. PoC, an intermediate but equally important objective, has emerged as the most significant and central purpose of most UN peacekeeping missions. There are also many successful endeavours undertaken frequently to create conditions conducive to enable effective humanitarian assistance. There is a need to measure success of a mission in terms of achieving these intermediate but equally critical objectives rather than judging only the achievement of political goals.

Robust Strategic Communication

Strategic communication should not be seen or practiced to 'window dress' a 'make believe' story. 'Narrative building' should also not be the intent as it inherently implies 'story telling'. Instead, strategic communication should bring out the truth transparently and in a timely manner, especially when stakeholders and international/ national media fail to do so. Interaction of leadership of the mission to share information transparently with various stakeholders is the key to effective strategic communication. Such interaction in a timely manner is the effective counter to mis/mal/dis-information. UN peacekeeping missions need to focus on countering mis/mal/dis-information proactively by highlighting the truth and not be shy of admitting errors in judgement and consequent mistakes, which are inevitable in conflicts despite best efforts. Mistakes and tactical failures do not lead to an overall failure if transparency is ensured. The fact that missions do not have unlimited resources and are often forced to prioritise their actions must be clearly communicated.

Need to Factor 'Principle of Necessity' in Mission Responses

There are other serious threats that host country's communities may face in addition to threat of physical violence such as threat of CRSV and/or SGBV and threats from calamitous effects of climate change including floods and famines resulting in direct loss of lives and exacerbation of herders vs farmers conflicts. Missions cannot be bystanders when communities face such severe threats without losing credibility.

Missions need to factor these threats too in their threat response matrix even if they do not fall within the conceptual definition of PoC.

Mindset of Uniformed and Civilian Peacekeepers: Caveat Free Contingents

PoC responsibilities require commanders at all levels to take timely and proactive decisions without looking over their shoulders. While safety and security of peacekeepers are of paramount importance, being risk averse to the extent of inadequate/ improper implementation of mandate is unacceptable and is a reputational risk for UN. Declared/ undeclared caveats by Troop and Police Contributing Countries, if any, would also derail mandate delivery effectiveness. Many civilian substantive and support sections also need to develop a proactive mindset with respect to prioritization of all resources and capacities of the mission towards PoC and taking requisite measures to ensure robust aviation, engineering and logistic support to the forces on ground. UN Member States must ensure that full freedom is provided to the Mission and Force Leadership to take appropriate operational decisions without being encumbered by caveats. On the other hand, mission leadership has to be accountable for ensuring timely decisions that address safety and security needs of peacekeepers. Managing this acceptable risk profile and safety and security of peacekeepers without detriment to mandate delivery is a key leadership challenge. Accountability in this regard must be strictly ensured.

Technology Infusion

In the fields of integrated data base, predictive analysis, GIS utilization, base defence, use of aerial surveillance and digital surveillance, missions need to cover a long distance to become contemporary to threat scenarios. The efforts are ongoing but are resource/ funds intensive and need due support from member states.

Mindful Integration and Effective Command and Control (C2)

The need of the hour is integration. But

integration is not a panacea for all requirements. It can be counter-productive to efficiency and robustness when accountability and empowerment of tactical commanders are obfuscated. Integration shall be in planning stages. Tactical commanders must exercise full command over all elements participating in an operation. Any dilution can be perilous. Getting the C2 right, well before the operations are contemplated is half the job done.

Do not Throw the Baby with the Bath Water

UN Peacekeeping needs to address its current and emerging challenges and refine, restructure and reform itself to adapt to the needs of contemporary peacekeeping. In this regard, the international community needs to support its most credible, reliable and cost-effective tool to prevent/ mitigate international conflicts. The need of the hour, therefore, is to change the bath water and not throw the baby with the bath water.



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FORCE COMMANDER, UNMISS

The officer was commissioned in June 1986, into Army Air Defence. Lt Gen Mohan Subramanian has served in the Indian Army for 39 years. He is serving as Force Commander, UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) from August 2022.

Previously, he served as Commandant, Staff College, GOC Central Military Region, ADG Procurement and Equipment Management at Integrated HQ of MoD, GOC Strike Mountain Division, Secretary Chiefs of Staff Committee, Commander of a Mountain Brigade and Commanding Officer of an Air Defence Regiment, Defence Attaché to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia and in UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL).

An alumnus of Sainik School, Amaravathinagar, National Defence Academy, Indian Military Academy and other premier Indian Defence Institutions, he holds Post Graduate qualifications in Defence and Strategic Studies, Defence and Management Studies, Social Studies, Public Administration and Human Rights.

India's 75-Year Saga Of Global Guardianship: Blue Berets to Bold Horizons

By **Major Akash Bisht**
UNISFA

A Legacy of Service and Sacrifice

India's association with UN peacekeeping began in 1948, with its involvement in the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO). Since then, India has emerged as one of the most reliable contributors to global peace efforts, demonstrating a steadfast commitment to the principles of multilateralism and humanitarianism. India's contributions extend far beyond its numbers, which are remarkable in their own right. Over the past 75 years, India has deployed nearly 195,000 troops across 49 missions, making it the largest troop-contributing nation to the United Nations. India's efforts not only represent a deep-seated commitment to peace but also underscore its broader vision of global stability and development, rooted in the ethos of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*—the world is one family.

Legacy of the Blue Beret

India's peacekeeping journey, evolving alongside the United Nations, has been marked by significant milestones. Its commitment to peacekeeping began pre-independence in 1945, with early contributions in the Korean War and the Suez Crisis, setting a benchmark for future engagements. The post-Cold War era saw India adapt to complex missions, with notable operations in Somalia, Angola and Rwanda, demonstrating exceptional courage and leadership in politically sensitive environments. In recent decades, India has

continued to lead, with missions in South Sudan, Lebanon, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A defining moment was the deployment of the first all-female Formed Police Unit in Liberia in 2007, highlighting India's commitment to gender inclusivity.

Unveiling the Challenges of Indian Peacekeepers

Resource Constraints: The Achilles' Heel of Effectiveness. Indian peacekeepers often operate under constrained resources, which limit their operational capacity and readiness. Operating in remote locations with limited access to resources leads to delays in providing necessary equipment and supplies. Such limitations are particularly detrimental in high-risk zones where not only the availability of modern surveillance equipment, armored vehicles and medical facilities is indispensable for mission success but also their routine repair and maintenance is crucial to maintain desired level of operational readiness.

Safety and Health Risks: A Persistent Challenge.

The safety of peacekeepers is a perennial concern, particularly in volatile regions like Africa, which accounts for over 70% of peacekeeper fatalities. Indian troops face threats ranging from direct armed conflict to landmines, ambushes and asymmetric warfare tactics employed by non-state actors. However, beyond these immediate

dangers lies an equally grave issue: health risks. Peacekeepers are exposed to infectious diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and other vector borne diseases for which the Indian troops do not have natural resistance as these microbes are not common to the sub-continent. As per a study between 2000 and 2017, disease-related fatalities among peacekeepers equalled if not outnumbered those caused by violence, underscoring the need for robust preventive measures.

Operational Ambiguities. Indian peacekeepers often operate under ambiguous mandates, which create confusion regarding their roles and responsibilities. For instance, missions may begin as ceasefire monitoring operations but evolve into broader tasks such as civilian protection or post-conflict reconstruction without adequate resources or training. This phenomenon, known as “mission creep,” dilutes the focus of peacekeepers and stretches resources thin. Cultural and linguistic barriers further complicate operations, as peacekeepers frequently encounter local populations with whom they share little common ground. Addressing these challenges requires clearer mandates from the UN, specialized training in cultural sensitivity and stronger coordination mechanisms with local stakeholders.

Innovations and Strategic Adaptations

Gender Inclusivity: India's Trailblazing Role. India has consistently championed gender inclusivity in peacekeeping, in January 2023, India reinforced its commitment to gender inclusivity by deploying a female platoon to Abyei, a contested region between Sudan and South Sudan. Female peacekeepers are particularly effective in addressing gender-based violence, engaging with women and children in conflict zones and fostering trust among local populations. This approach aligns with UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 5 on gender equality and highlights India's forward-thinking strategy in peacekeeping.



Harnessing Technology for Mission Efficiency. A plethora of technical force multipliers are being partially deployed by the sub-units operating on ground, however an organized approach to tackle financial and logistical constraints that one might expect to mar a sub-unit's efforts, will exponentially streamline induction of technological force multipliers into critical mission areas. The integration of digital platforms like UNITE AWARE and SAGE further underscores the importance of technology in modern peacekeeping. This platform allows peacekeepers to access real-time





intelligence, coordinate operations seamlessly and enhance their overall effectiveness.

Capacity Building: Empowering Host Nations.

India has long recognized the importance of building local capacity as a cornerstone of sustainable peacekeeping. The contingents work hand in hand with whatever limited local governance institutions, which sometimes are worse than non-existent, towards a brighter future of the local populace. By fostering self-reliance among host communities, India not only reduces the long-term dependence on external interventions but also contributes to the broader goal of sustainable development in conflict-affected regions.

Strategic Directions for Future Engagement

Strengthening Resource Allocation and Safety Measures. To address resource constraints, India must advocate for better funding mechanisms within the UN system while simultaneously enhancing its domestic investment in peacekeeping readiness. Allocating funds for advanced protective gear, modern surveillance systems, and rapid medical response units will significantly improve operational safety. Additionally, India should push for timely

disbursement of assessed contributions from the UN member nations to ensure uninterrupted support for peacekeeping missions.

Investing in Technology for Tactical Superiority.

The future of peacekeeping lies in technology-driven solutions. India should prioritize the integration of advanced tools such as AI-based threat detection, UAVs, and cybersecurity systems to address the complexities of modern conflicts. By collaborating with technology leaders and sharing these advancements with other troop-contributing nations, India can enhance the collective capability of UN missions while reinforcing its leadership role.

Expanding Gender-Inclusive Policies.

India's pioneering efforts in deploying female peacekeepers should be scaled up to include greater representation in leadership roles. Advocating for gender-sensitive strategies in mission planning can address the unique challenges faced by women and children in conflict zones. Establishing specialized training programs for female peacekeepers will further solidify India's reputation as a leader in inclusive peacekeeping practices.

Enhancing Strategic Partnerships.

India must deepen its engagement with regional organizations such as the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). These partnerships can facilitate localized conflict resolution strategies, leveraging regional expertise to complement India's contributions. Regular defense dialogues and joint training exercises can strengthen operational synergies and improve mission outcomes.

Leading Peacekeeping Policy Reforms.

India's extensive experience positions it uniquely to advocate for reforms within the UN. By working towards clearer mandates, streamlined operations and enhanced accountability mechanisms, India can address the systemic challenges facing peacekeeping missions. Additionally, India should champion the

integration of climate resilience and economic development into peacekeeping mandates, aligning with the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Legacy of Leadership

India's legacy in UN peacekeeping is one of courage, commitment, and innovation. As it celebrates 75 years of service, India stands at a crossroads, poised to redefine its role in a rapidly changing global security landscape. By addressing resource constraints, embracing technological advancements and championing gender inclusivity, India can set new benchmarks for peacekeeping. Through strategic partnerships, policy leadership, and sustainable development initiatives, India can ensure that its contributions remain impactful, reaffirming its role as a global peacebuilder. In doing so, India not only honours its rich legacy but also paves the way for a more peaceful and equitable world.



Major Akash Bisht

Major Akash Bisht was commissioned into the Infantry in June 2017. An alumnus of the National Defence Academy, he has held the appointment of Company Commander and is currently serving as the Permanent Operating Base Commander at Paramount Chief POB as part of INDBATT, UNISFA.

75 Years Of Peacekeeping: A Journey Of Challenges and Change

By **Captain Saket Kumar Saklani**
UNISFA

The Realities of Peacekeeping Beyond the Mandate: The Realities of Peacekeeping in Action. While the legacy is illustrious, the challenges faced by Indian peacekeepers are formidable. Their missions take them to volatile regions, demanding both physical and mental fortitude.

Complex Environment. Peacekeepers frequently operate in regions marked by political instability, ethnic tensions and weak governance, creating a highly volatile and unpredictable environment. These areas are often plagued by fragmented leadership, competing factions and deep-rooted mistrust among local communities. Peacekeepers must navigate this intricate web

of challenges while striving to protect civilians, mediate conflicts and promote stability. The absence of a functioning government or rule of law further complicates their efforts, as they may need to step into roles typically handled by local authorities, such as maintaining security or facilitating humanitarian aid. Additionally, peacekeepers often face threats to their own safety, as armed groups or insurgents may view their presence as a disruption to their agendas. Successfully operating in such environments requires exceptional adaptability, cultural sensitivity and unwavering commitment to the mission's goals despite the ever-present uncertainty and risk.





for TCCs to ensure rigorous training, alignment with international standards, and transparent communication to uphold their credibility and effectiveness on the global stage.

Defensive Limitations. Operating in conflict zones with limited weaponry against well-armed groups presents significant challenges for peacekeepers. Rival factions and insurgent groups often possess advanced, modern weaponry, including high-caliber firearms, Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), and even anti-tank weapons, placing peacekeeping forces at a severe disadvantage. The disparity in equipment not only compromises the safety of personnel but also undermines the ability to effectively deter violence and protect civilians. The growing sophistication of rival groups necessitates urgent investment in advanced equipment, such as heavy machine guns, reinforced armoured vehicles and enhanced surveillance systems, to ensure mission success. Peacekeepers must also be equipped with modern communication tools, drones for reconnaissance and protective gear designed to withstand the harsh realities of such missions. Bridging this capability gap is essential to safeguarding personnel, maintaining operational credibility and addressing the escalating security threats in contemporary conflict zones.



Reputational and Operational Challenges.

Participating in United Nations missions requires close collaboration with diverse armies, placing the reputation of contributing countries under constant scrutiny. For Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs), peacekeepers often face the dual responsibility of adhering to the UN mandate -sometimes diverging from operational practices followed at home while maintaining the integrity of their nation's image. Differences in operating styles, legal frameworks and cultural norms can create challenges, especially when decisions made in dynamic and high-pressure environments are subject to global scrutiny. Even a single misstep can have far-reaching implications, leading to legal complications and reputational damage. To address these challenges, it is vital

Bridging Language Gaps. Language barriers pose significant challenges in peacekeeping operations, often hindering trust-building and effective communication with local



communities. Without a shared language, conveying intentions, understanding cultural nuances and addressing grievances becomes difficult, leading to misunderstandings and potential conflict escalation. Peacekeepers must rely on interpreters, which can slow down negotiations and introduce errors. To overcome this challenge, investing in language training, deploying personnel with regional linguistic skills and fostering cultural sensitivity are essential strategies. These measures help build stronger relationships with local populations, ensuring that peacekeeping efforts are not just heard but genuinely understood.

Peacekeeping with a Heart: India's Heritage of Harmony. India's peacekeeping philosophy is deeply rooted in its cultural ethos, emphasizing harmony, nonviolence and coexistence. These principles form the foundation of its approach to resolving conflicts.

Inner Strength for Outer Peace. India's traditions of yoga, meditation and pranayama provide peacekeepers with tools to manage stress and

foster emotional resilience. This holistic approach is now being adopted by global peacebuilding initiatives, recognizing the need to heal trauma alongside restoring order.





Empowering Communities. Indian peacekeepers excel in community engagement, building trust by addressing the root causes of conflict. Their efforts focus on empowering local leaders and fostering sustainable peace from within.

The Role of Women in Peacekeeping. In 2007, India broke new ground by deploying the **first all-female Formed Police Unit** to Liberia. These women not only maintained security but also inspired trust and hope, especially among women in local communities. Their success underscores the transformative power of gender inclusivity in peacekeeping.



Pioneering Change: India's Innovations in Peacekeeping. India's contributions go beyond its troops. By embracing innovation, it has redefined the role of peacekeepers in modern conflict zones.

Tech-Driven Missions. The use of **drones** for surveillance, mine sweepers and **night vision equipment** for operations has significantly enhanced the efficiency and safety of peacekeeping missions.



Beyond the Battlefield. Indian peacekeepers are known for rebuilding schools, providing healthcare and mentoring local leaders. These humanitarian efforts bridge the gap between immediate relief and long-term recovery, fostering stability in conflict-affected areas.



Green Peacekeeping. India's eco-friendly practices, such as the use of **solar-powered equipment** and sustainable reconstruction methods, set an example for environmentally conscious peacekeeping. These initiatives not only minimize environmental impact but also promote sustainable living in post-conflict zones.





Veterinary Outreach: Extending Compassion Beyond Humans.

Indian peacekeepers have consistently demonstrated their holistic approach to peace building by addressing not just human needs but also those of local livestock, which are often integral to the livelihoods of conflict-affected communities. Veterinary outreach programs conducted by Indian peacekeeping contingents provide essential medical care, vaccinations and nutritional support for animals in regions devastated by war. These efforts not only improve the health and productivity of livestock but also rebuild trust and goodwill among local populations. By safeguarding the primary source of income and sustenance for many families, Indian peacekeepers contribute to economic recovery and stability, reinforcing their role as compassionate guardians of peace.

A Vision for Global Harmony. As India marks 75 years of peacekeeping, it stands as a testament to its commitment to peace, service and humanity. From the rugged mountains of Kashmir to the challenging terrains of Africa, Indian peacekeepers have consistently demonstrated courage, professionalism and innovation. In a world grappling with rising violence and instability, India's approach—rooted in its cultural wisdom and modern strategies - offers a roadmap

for sustainable peace. By combining technology, community empowerment and holistic practices, India continues to set the standard for global peacekeeping. As a rising global power and an aspirational **Vishwa Guru (World Teacher)**, India's legacy in peacekeeping is not just a reflection of its past but a beacon for the future—a future defined by harmony, coexistence and shared prosperity.



**Captain
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Captain Saket Kumar Saklani was commissioned into Infantry in June 2019. An alumnus of the Indian Military Academy, he has held the appointment of Ghatak Platoon Commander and is currently serving as the QRF Commander for the Central Sector under UNISFA.

Adapting to Asymmetric Warfare : Redefining UN Peacekeeping in the Face of Non-Traditional Threats

By Colonel Vaibhav Vadera,
Ex Contingent Commander, INDRDB, MONUSCO

“That survives ... the one that is most adaptable to change”

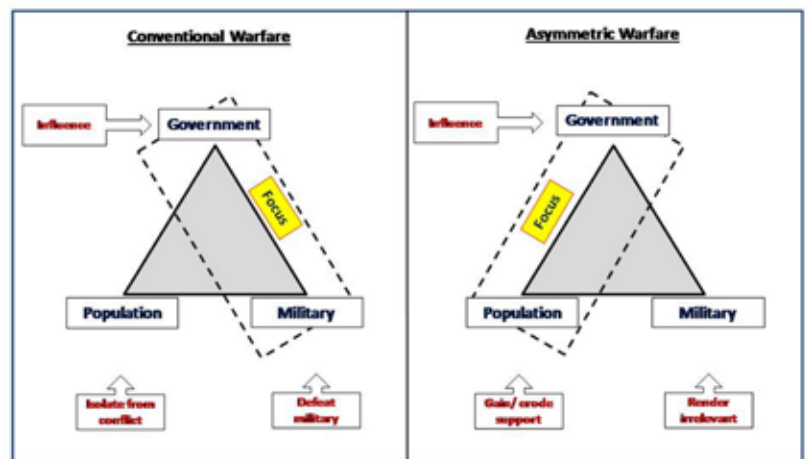
CHARLES DARWIN

Introduction

Warfare has evolved over the years thereby necessitating the peacekeepers to increasingly operate in the face of non-traditional threats in an asymmetric environment. This article makes an attempt to understand asymmetric warfare and non-traditional threats through their recent manifestations in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) where the author commanded a Rapidly Deployable Battalion (RDB) in a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous (VUCA) operational environment. The article also highlights some of the important issues that merit attention so that peacekeeping operations can be optimally adapted in rapidly evolving inter- & intra-state conflict scenarios.

Asymmetric Warfare & Non-Traditional Threats

It is a war between belligerents who have asymmetric power in terms of resources, strategy and tactics. The belligerents exploit each other's weaknesses by posing non-traditional threats to include proxies, non-state & private actors, globally-connected violent terrorist & extremist



Asymmetric actors like M23 (duly supported by regional countries) since year 2022, have been operating to gain support of the population in DRC; have rendered state forces irrelevant and have influenced the DRC government to target Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) in Eastern Congo

groups, trans-national illicit networks & organized crime, security threats due to climate change, disruptive technologies and pandemics.

Threat Manifestations in DRC

Dynamic Asymmetry.

(a) DRC presents itself as a suitable example wherein the 'Blue Helmets' recently undertook peacekeeping operations in



Lt Gen Otavio Rodrigues, Force Commander, MONUSCO interacting with the author during his operational visit to a forward Blocking Position that prevented capture of strategic town of Sake in 2024

the face of dynamic asymmetric threats in a complex security environment. The fact that the previous asymmetry of M23 “terrorists” vis-à-vis state forces of DRC duly supported by UN and other regional actors, was altered in favour of M23, due to regional support, made the security milieu complex.

- (b) As per UN Group of Experts report, thousands of RDF soldiers have been operating inside eastern DRC since year 2022. First hand account of peacekeepers indicated that RDF made hybrid teams with M23 “terrorists” and led the assault on FARDC defensive positions. Sophisticated weapons and equipment like top-attack guided missiles, ground-to-air missiles, drones & counter-drones technology and advanced night vision devices were fielded by RDF/ M23 against a poorly equipped FARDC.
- (c) Bintou Keita, SRSG, MONUSCO briefed the Security Council that “M23 possesses firepower and equipment, which is increasingly sophisticated, specifically in terms of long-range fire capacities, mortars and machine guns as well as precision fire against aircraft”. She further stated that “the M23 has conducted itself increasingly as a conventional army rather than an armed group”, thus reducing the symmetry gap.
- (d) Additionally, the increasing threat of Allied Democratic Forces (ADF)– a Central African Branch of Islamic State, has added even greater complexity in the scale of asymmetry in DRC. This shift in asymmetry due to regional support to M23 and advent of ADF was further aggravated due to MONUSCO’s ongoing transition which had a direct implication on the capabilities of the force in DRC.

Non-Traditional Threat Spectrum. The 'Blue Helmets' had to operate in 'grey zones', characterised not only by employment of RDF-M23 hybrid teams or ADF for kinetic operations but also extensive use of mis- & disinformation campaigns against GoDRC & MONUSCO. These grey zone tactics provided an element of 'deniability' to the belligerents. The belligerents even fueled increase in crime rate particularly in Goma; incited political warfare after M23 alliance with Congo River Alliance (AFC); employed political pressure groups to create civil unrest & pose threat to UN installations and sapped the minerals of Masisi territory through transnational networks. The contest for profitable mines and illicit mining by national, regional and international actors only means that the 'GENOCOST' will continue to be very high for DRC. Such extensive mining and associated erosion of the biodiversity will only increase climate-change related security threats in DRC in future. In essence, the threats will continue to remain protracted and the response strategy will also have to be planned and executed accordingly.

Mission's Response.

- (a) The aforementioned dynamically asymmetric and non-traditional threats necessitated that MONUSCO under transition, addresses the fast changing political & operational scenario in DRC by adaptive employment of political, diplomatic and military resources.
 - (b) To this end, the deployment of peacekeepers with politico-military aims bore fruit despite of all challenges. Lt Gen Otavio Rodrigues, Force Commander of MONUSCO reported in Jun 2024 that these deployments prevented the capture of Goma and Sake by M23 armed group. Requisite emphasis was also given to addressing the ADF problem albeit with mixed results.
 - (c) The mission continued with its relentless political and diplomatic engagements and
- rightly supported regional actors like African Union (AU) & South African Development Community Mission in DRC (SAMIDRC) to arrive at requisite peace agreements. Due to the efforts of international & regional countries duly supported by UN, a fragile ceasefire has been in place between DRC and Rwanda since Aug 2024.
- (d) In Dec 2024, Bintou Keita highlighted mission's recent response and underscored the robust operation of 'Blue Helmets' in such dynamic asymmetric environments. She reiterated the regional dimension in DRC security array and stated that Rwanda targeted MONUSCO forces but despite that "MONUSCO remains well-positioned to do what peacekeeping missions do best: create space for peace processes and protect civilians."

Redefining UN Peacekeeping

The case of DRC highlights the increasingly complex and dynamic asymmetric environments in which the "Blue Helmets" operate. Apropos, there is a definite need to redefine peacekeeping operations to evolve the response strategy against such non-traditional threats. To this end, the following merit attention :-

- (a) **More Targeted Mandates.** The most important step is timely recognition and clear mention of the threats and actors in the resolutions giving well defined mandates to the peacekeepers to operate. Aspects like regional dimensions of conflicts, use of mis- & disinformation, trans-national illicit networks to incite crime in targeted country and climate-change linked security threats must be clearly mentioned in the resolutions. As of now, the US remained "dismayed" on non-inclusion of the "language factually describing Rwanda's role" and presence of RDF in DRC in UNSC resolution 2765 (2024). The mandates need to be more targeted.
- (b) **Definition of Terrorism.** There is an urgent

need by the UN Security Council to clearly define “terrorism” for conceptual clarity and deployment of suitable mechanisms. It would assist the peacekeepers to operate along with non-UN forces. It is noteworthy that DRC calls M23 as a “terrorist organization”, yet MONUSCO recognizes them as an “armed group”. Similarly, Uganda and US recognize ADF as a terrorist group since it is an African branch of Islamic State.

- (c) **Preventing Violent Extremism.** The priority areas to prevent violent extremism should be dialogue, good governance, rule of law, upholding human rights, engagement with communities, youth & women empowerment, gender equality, education, skill development, employment generation and strategic communication. The aforementioned necessitates an “All-of-UN” approach.
- (d) **Security Sector Reforms (SSR).** While the “New Issues Observatory” project supported by French Ministry of Defense in 2016, opined that “direct confrontation” with terrorist organizations is “outside the scope of peace operations”, the Troops Contributing Countries (TCCs) can immensely contribute in training the government forces to operate against asymmetric threat actors. Although, the peacekeeping contingents are already involved in SSR in the host countries including DRC, training of forces of host-countries in premier institutes like Counter Insurgency & Jungle Warfare School (CIJWS) in India can be a game-changer. Additionally, joint training teams of CIJWS and Centre for UN Peacekeeping (CUNPK) of India can also be deployed to boost such training endeavours in the host countries.
- (e) **Resource Management.** Resources in addition to uniformed personnel would be required to address non-traditional threats. These include civilian subject matter experts to address issues related to hate speech, pandemic and climate-change related threats. However, there would be a need to have better coordination between the uniformed and civilian counterparts in mission areas.
- (f) **Protracted Operations.** Operations in asymmetric environments are protracted and need prolonged deployments. However, TCCs need to rotate their contingents after stipulated time. In case of unavoidable operational commitments, the Tour-of-Duty (ToD) of the contingents should be either extended or suitable relief should be provided within the missions, to maintain continuity in operations. Non-extension of ToD and non-provision of relief would disrupt the operational momentum.
- (g) **Analytical Capabilities.** There is a need to improve the “information and intelligence framework” to better analyze and understand the context down to the tactical level. UN needs to improve its assessments before UN missions deploy or undergo transition to be able to operate safely in asymmetric environment. An efficient analytical framework will ensure formulation of a practical strategy for a “gradual, responsible and sustainable withdrawal” of MONUSCO from DRC.
- (h) **Mis- & Disinformation.** There is a definite need to establish a mechanism to curb spread of mis- & disinformation. The propaganda and rumors spread not only through social media but also through word-of-mouth. Overreliance on OSINT, often results into wrong conclusions and planning thereof. The recent operations in DRC witnessed a lot of agenda-driven propaganda by belligerents and political pressure groups which affected the GoDRC & even MONUSCO officials.
- (j) **Strategic Communication.** Countering mis- & disinformation in isolation would

not be enough. The mission must adopt and implement customized strategic communication strategies that are proactive and credible in nature. There is a great scope of improvement in this domain in all missions including MONUSCO.

(k) **Technology Infusion.** The TCC need to infuse counter-drone solutions, night fighting capabilities, AI driven solutions to be able to better tackle the asymmetric threats. A capable TCC can also contribute as a Technology Contributing Country to address the non-traditional threats. Recently, the peacekeepers in MONUSCO successfully addressed challenges of Kamikazi drones and Information Warfare (IW) due to deployment of suitable technology solutions. Among other advancements, UN must also accelerate its digital transformation endeavours.

(l) **Human Security Approach.** A people-centric Human Security approach would address the economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political insecurities. There is an absolute need to increase the programs that are funded by United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS), not only in MONUSCO but in other missions as well.

Conclusion

As in DRC, similar trends in security landscape exist in other conflict affected regions also. It is therefore inevitable for the Security Council to continuously analyse the threat spectrum, clearly state them in the mandates without any biases, adapt the higher strategy and deploy suitable resources in an environment which is increasingly being affected by mis- & disinformation among other disruptive technological applications. Only when the UN will be “adaptable to change”, peacekeeping missions will “survive”, thus giving hope of peace & security to the vulnerable population in conflict-ridden areas.

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Peacekeepers and Chapter VII: Navigating Military Mandates in UN Operations

By **Major Hemant Kumar Singh**
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'In the face of adversity, the peacekeepers stand as beacons of hope, embodying the principles of peace, courage and sacrifice in the service of humanity'

Introduction

Chapter VII of the UN Charter is pivotal in defining the role of UN peacekeepers, particularly regarding military action to address threats to international peace and security. As peacekeeping missions evolve to include peace enforcement, the provisions of Chapter VII now carry significant strategic and operational implications for peacekeepers. These mandates often require the application of military force for deterrence, projection and the neutralization of armed groups. This expanded operational scope highlights the critical need for robust strategic planning, efficient resource allocation and heightened operational readiness to effectively address the multifaceted challenges of modern peacekeeping. Such measures are essential to ensuring mission success and fostering long-term stability in conflict-affected regions.

Under Chapter VII, peacekeepers are increasingly deployed in environments where the use of military force is not just a possibility but a necessity. This shift from traditional peacekeeping to peace enforcement has introduced new

challenges and complexities, particularly in high-intensity conflict zones. The article outlines the strategic and operational implications of Chapter VII mandates for peacekeepers.

Strategic Implications

Expanded Military Mandates. Chapter VII authorizes peacekeepers to use force beyond self-defense, expanding their roles to wider canvas to include maintaining internal security, protecting civilians, securing humanitarian corridors,

Protection of Civilians through Force Projection by peacekeepers in MONUSCO



conducting Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programs and engaging in frontline combat against armed groups. This expanded role requires peacekeepers to balance offensive operations with human rights protection, with success enhancing their credibility and any shortcomings risking reputational damage.

Political & Legal Complexity. Peacekeepers operating under Chapter VII mandates frequently encounter complex political and legal challenges. Balancing neutrality with the use of force, risks alienating local factions and regional actors, complicating mission dynamics. Legal obligations, such as adherence to International Humanitarian law and mitigating accountability for collateral damage, further intensify operational complexities. Additionally, ethical dilemmas arise when protecting civilians while engaging in combat, posing potential reputational risks for both the mission and Troop Contributing Countries (TCC).

Protection of Civilians. Deploying peacekeepers across multifaceted tasks risks overextending their capabilities, diminishing their ability to respond effectively to sudden escalations or emerging threats in high-risk areas, such as Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. Shifting from a primary focus on civilian protection to



Anti-UN protest in front of a UN base



Civilians can be seen moving to shelter into IDP Camps during hostilities

a more militarized strategy; particularly when neutralizing armed groups in the absence of an immediate threat to civilians may inadvertently compromise the mission's perceived neutrality and operational effectiveness. This shift could erode local trust, complicate engagement with conflicting parties and weaken the mission's ability to fulfill its core mandate of safeguarding civilians and promoting stability. Balancing the use of force with the principles of impartiality and humanitarian protection is essential to maintaining the credibility and success of peacekeeping operation.

HR Violations. Peacekeepers face challenges in balancing civilian protection with combat against armed groups. While mandated to use force under Chapter VII, risks of human rights violations and collateral damage persist. Such incidents can undermine mission credibility, strain local trust, ferment anti- UN sentiments amongst locals and attract international scrutiny, complicating peacekeeping role.

Command & Control. Peacekeepers often face complex dilemmas in high-intensity conflict zones, where political turmoil and a lack of joint strategy between local forces and peacekeepers can hinder decisive action. This can leave peacekeepers trapped between conflicting forces, compromising their ability to act effectively and increasing risks to their safety.

Increased Risk of Military Engagement. Under Chapter VII, peacekeepers are increasingly placed

in environments where the use of military force is not just a possibility but a necessity. The increased authorisation for military intervention has direct consequences towards the safety and operational complexity faced by peacekeepers.

Undefined Escalation Dynamics. Without clearly defined escalation protocols, peacekeepers are vulnerable to sudden surges in violence, artillery & mortar fire and retaliatory attacks from armed groups, jeopardizing their safety and operational effectiveness. This persistent operational ambiguity in Chapter VII missions complicates strategic planning, resource allocation and the ability to maintain neutrality, placing peacekeepers in increasingly complex and high-risk environments. Such challenges demand precise mandates, robust contingency planning, and enhanced coordination to ensure mission success and the protection of personnel.



A UN Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) destroyed by a guided munition during clashes with armed rebels in MONUSCO on 24 January 2025

Combat Situations. Peacekeepers are frequently engaged in encountering high-risk combat missions that require confronting armed groups, safeguarding civilians from violent attacks and defending critical infrastructure such as refugee camps, IDP camps and UN bases. This Catch-22 situation of balancing military action with the mission's core mandate of civilian protection has become a recurring challenge, often placing peacekeepers in complex and precarious operational dilemmas. Such circumstances highlight the need for clear mandates, enhanced resources and adaptive strategies to effectively navigate these multifaceted challenges.

Changing Operational Environment. Modern peacekeeping missions often operate in **Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous (VUCA)** environments that demand advanced military capabilities, resources and continuous training. Armed groups in these zones are getting increasingly equipped with sophisticated weapon, including high-caliber weapons, advanced artillery, air defense systems, drones and armoured vehicles.

Undefined Area of Operations. The lack of clearly defined areas of operation for forces can create operational ambiguity, increasing risks of overextension, challenges in coordination and difficulties in protecting civilians and conducting stabilization operations.

Challenges of Impartiality and Neutrality. The mandate to use force under Chapter VII also challenges the principle of impartiality, a cornerstone of UN peacekeeping. Unavoidable military action against armed groups raises ethical concerns and potentially undermine perceived neutrality. This could lead to political backlash, affecting diplomatic standing of TCC's role in UN Missions.

Operational Implications

Military Intelligence & ISR. Comprehensive and integrated Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities are critical for commanders at all levels to make informed, timely decisions and allocate resources effectively during operations. Fragmented intelligence often can result in delayed responses, which may expose peacekeepers to asymmetric threats. Strengthening ISR capabilities and establishing a cohesive, integrated intelligence network can yield significant operational benefits and enhance mission effectiveness.

Firepower Resources. Limited firepower resources can reduce the effectiveness of peacekeepers in establishing deterrence, maintaining tactical superiority and neutralizing hostile threats especially in frontlines. Stringent

compliance with collateral damage mitigation measures further constrains the employment of available firepower.

Employment of Force Reserve. The timely employment of reserves and offensive forces at decision points can significantly strengthen the defensive posture of peacekeepers. A well-integrated, thoroughly rehearsed and effectively implementable operational plan is essential to counter armed groups in Chapter VII missions. Such a plan ensures coordinated action, enhances situational awareness and enables peacekeepers to respond swiftly and decisively to emerging threats, thereby safeguarding civilians and maintaining mission mandates.

Operational Synchronisation. Inadequate synchronization of operations between forces can result in defensive vulnerabilities and impede effective intelligence-sharing. Enhanced coordination, unified command and resource optimization are key areas to ensure operational success and troop safety.

Capacity and Capability Mismatch. The capacity and capability mismatch of UN peacekeepers in Chapter VII missions poses significant operational challenges. Often, peacekeepers lack the necessary resources, training and adequate equipment to effectively confront armed groups, protect civilians and secure volatile conflict zones. This mismatch leads to overstretched forces, delayed responses and compromised mission objectives, particularly in high-intensity environments. Such gaps not only increase risks to peacekeepers and civilians but also undermine the mission's credibility and long-term stability. Addressing these disparities through enhanced training, modern equipment and strategic resource allocation is essential for ensuring mission success and operational effectiveness.

Logistics Challenges. Logistics challenges for UN peacekeepers in Chapter VII missions significantly impact operational effectiveness. Inadequate infrastructure and poor road

networks hinder the timely delivery of resources, medical support and reinforcements to frontline units. These constraints compromise mobility, reduce response capabilities and strain mission readiness, particularly in remote or hostile environments. Addressing these logistical gaps through improved supply chains, enhanced transport systems and pre-deployment planning is critical to ensuring mission success and the safety of both peacekeepers and civilians.

Recommendations

The evolving nature of UN peacekeeping, particularly under Chapter VII mandates, necessitates a strategic and operational overhaul for the TCC to effectively address the complexities of modern peacekeeping. Based on the challenges and implications outlined, the following recommendations to include India's global role as one of the major TCC contributor are proposed to enhance peacekeeper's preparedness and effectiveness in future Chapter VII missions.

Strategic Planning and Mandate Clarity

Advocating for clearer and more precise mandates in UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) is essential to eliminate ambiguity in roles, particularly regarding the use of force, frontline combat and civilian protection. Conducting comprehensive pre-deployment assessments of conflict zones including political dynamics, threat levels, and resource requirements ensures alignment between mission objectives and

Peacekeepers seen providing critical escort for resupply missions to frontline troops



operational capabilities. Additionally, developing robust contingency plans for scenarios such as sudden escalations, asymmetric threats and multi-front engagements enhances flexibility and adaptability in responding to evolving challenges.

Enhanced Military Capacity

To enhance effectiveness of peacekeepers, equip them with advanced ISR technologies, armored protected vehicles, and counter-UAS systems for superior mobility and threat mitigation. Provide terrain-specific training for jungles and urban areas, alongside scenario-based drills for asymmetric threats. Implement continuous training on evolving conflict dynamics and new technologies and conduct post-mission reviews to integrate lessons learned. Embrace AI and unmanned systems to boost operational effectiveness and adaptability in complex peacekeeping environments.

Diplomatic and Political Engagement

TCC must advocate for mandates balancing military action with political solutions, emphasizing conflict resolution and reconstruction. Engage regional actors to address conflict drivers, while deploying strategic communication to counter misinformation, build trust and showcase TCC's commitment to peace and stability.

Strengthening India's Global Role

Leverage India's extensive peacekeeping experience to assume leadership roles in UN missions, shaping strategies that reflect its commitment to global peace. Share expertise in counterinsurgency, disaster response, and civilian protection through training programs and joint initiatives with other Troop Contributing Countries. Advocate for UN peacekeeping reforms, including better resource allocation, improved mandate design and enhanced support for troop-contributing nations, reinforcing India's role as a key advocate for effective and sustainable peacekeeping operations worldwide.

Conclusion

The role of peacekeepers in Chapter VII missions offers an opportunity to address complex global challenges while upholding the principles of peace and security. By advocating for clearer mandates, enhancing military capabilities and prioritizing diplomatic engagement, peacekeepers can improve operational effectiveness and contribute to long-term stability. Balancing force with ethical considerations and civilian protection will ensure the credibility and success of peacekeeping missions, reinforcing their role as a cornerstone of international peace and security.



Major Hemant Kumar Singh

Major Hemant Kumar Singh was commissioned into the an Armoured Regiment in 2012. An alumnus of Sainik School Purulia, National Defence Academy (NDA) Khadakwasla and Defence Services Staff College (DSSC) Wellington, he holds an MSc in Defence Studies and Management. He has served in diverse terrains including the Obsacle Ridden Terrain (ORT), Desert and the Line of Control (LoC). He has also held the appointment of Staff Officer Operations in an Armoured Brigade. Currently, He is serving as G4 MOVCON at the Headquarters of the Central Sector (MONUSCO)

Indian Contribution to United Nations Peacekeeping

By **Colonel Vikram Shahaney**

Colonel SD 3A (UN)

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations have played a crucial role in maintaining international peace and security since their inception in 1948. Among the many nations contributing to this noble endeavour, India stands out as one of the largest and most consistent contributors to UN peacekeeping forces. India's participation reflects its commitment to global peace, multilateralism and neutrality. Over the decades, Indian troops, police personnel, and civilian experts have made significant sacrifices and contributions to various peacekeeping missions worldwide. India has a long and distinguished history of contributing to (UN) peacekeeping missions. Since its independence in 1947, India has been one of the largest troop-contributing nations to the UN, participating in 53 UN peacekeeping missions and deploying over 2,92,000 personnel. Indian peacekeepers have served with distinction in some of the most challenging and dangerous regions of the world, often making great personal sacrifices. India has always participated in UN peacekeeping operations in clear pursuit of the commitment to the objectives set out in the UN Charter. This commitment is in real terms, even to the extent of accepting casualties to person. 182 Indian peacekeepers have made their supreme sacrifice in the defence of UN mandate. Indian army has provided 15 Force Commanders, Two Military Advisors, Two Deputy Military Advisors, Two Divisional Commanders and Eight Deputy Force Commanders.

As part of our current contribution to the peacekeeping operations, Indian Army has deployed 05 Infantry Battalions and 11 Formed Units apart from Staff Officers/ Military Observers in 10 UN Missions. Approximately 5200 military personnel are deployed in some of the most violent and volatile parts of the world under the UN Flag to include Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Abyei, Western Sahara, Central African Republic, Lebanon, Syria, Israel and Cyprus.

In support of UN's noble initiative of gender parity and synchronized with India's own Nari Shakti Campaign, India has deployed Female Engagement Teams (FETs) in MONUSCO, UNMISS and UNISFA (the second largest Indian women contingent after Liberia). India has also deployed women peacekeepers including women Staff Officers / Military Observers in various missions. The increased representation of women peacekeepers has translated to better operational efficiency of Indian contingents. India has planned to further increase women participation with all Indian contingents in the coming years. Moreover, to ameliorate the suffering of women and children, women psychological counselors Military Nursing Service (MNS) officers are also being posted in mission areas. In addition, India has deployed trained Army Physical Training Corps (APTC) personnel with all contingents for the conduct of Yoga for both peacekeepers and local population.

In order to ensure operational efficiency and sustainability of Indian contingents in UN missions, as part of self-reliant (Atmanirbhar), India has deployed state-of-the-art Make-in-India equipment and vehicles. These vehicles and equipment are manufactured in India and have successfully withstood the vagaries of difficult terrain, weather and operational conditions in the mission areas.

India in order to affirm its commitment towards UN, has continuously pledged military units and force enablers in the past. Besides hard power, India continues in capacity building of friendly countries through training by Centre for UN Peacekeeping (CUNPK) in peacekeeping operations. It trains more than 10000 troops every year and takes pride in being a Centre of Excellence and repository of experience and best practices.

The Indian Peacekeepers boast a wealth of experience in conducting successful operations, thanks to our hardworking, dedicated and loyal troops. Guided by the principles of neutrality and dynamism, we carry out UN-mandated tasks with a nuanced understanding of sensitivities and neutrality. Our contributions have helped convert violent and volatile missions into stable ones. Our peacekeepers are recognized for their professionalism in operations, conduct and discipline and their contributions have earned us various UN appreciations and awards. These actions have generated tremendous respect from the local and international communities for both the UN and India. We take our role as a responsible partner in the world community seriously, and we continue to strive to uphold the UN Charter and mandates.

HISTORICAL INVOLVEMENT

India's participation in UN peacekeeping dates back to its early years as an independent nation. Between 1950 to 1980 there were few missions authorised by the UNSC. Some important missions in which India contributed are as follows:-

- (a) **Initial Engagement: Korea.** India's first major involvement was during the Korean War (1950-1953), where it provided medical aid through a field ambulance unit. The Indian 60th Parachute Field Ambulance rendered critical services, treating over 2,00,000 casualties. This mission set the stage for India's long-term commitment to UN peacekeeping.
- (b) **Congo 1960.** India played a pivotal role in the United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC). The Congo mission was one of the earliest large-scale peacekeeping operations by the UN, and Indian forces contributed significantly to restoring order during a period of political instability and conflict. Indian troops carried out rescue missions, provided humanitarian aid, and undertook military operations, often in highly challenging circumstances. Capt GS Salaria, displayed extraordinary bravery & was posthumously awarded the Param Vir Chakra, India's highest military honour for gallantry actions.

After 1980, a large Number of missions were launched by the UNSC. Due to its established capability, India remained on the preferred TCC list and participated in most of the missions. Africa has been a major focus of India's peacekeeping efforts where Indian troops participated in numerous missions on the continent, including:-

- (a) **United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM).** India's contributions in Somalia during the 1990s included military and logistical support. Indian peacekeepers provided humanitarian aid and ensured the safe delivery of food supplies during a severe famine.
- (b) **United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL).** The Indian Army played a crucial role in restoring stability in Sierra Leone during its civil war. One of the most notable incidents was the heroic action by the Indian battalion at Kailahun in 2000, which

successfully repelled a large-scale attack by rebel forces.

(c) **United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).** India remains one of the largest contributors to MONUSCO, a mission aimed at stabilizing the conflict-ridden eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Indian forces have been instrumental in protecting civilians, providing medical care and conducting operations against armed groups. During the relentless operations in the pursuit of peace many Indian peacekeepers laid down their lives.

(d) **United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) and South Sudan (UNMISS).** India has contributed to peacekeeping in Sudan and South Sudan, focusing on protecting civilians, supporting humanitarian assistance, and facilitating post-conflict reconstruction. During the Malakal crisis, Indian Peacekeepers played crucial role in defending UN personnel and property. 09 casualties occurred during 2013 in South Sudan in various operations.

United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Indian peacekeepers have been part of UNIFIL since 1978, working to maintain peace and security along the Lebanon-Israel border. Their efforts include demining operations, medical assistance and educational outreach programs.

United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). Indian peacekeepers have been part of UNDOF since 2006. Indian logistic battalion and now logistic company has been providing continuous support to the peacekeepers from 48 countries in hostile terrain & sensitive security situation.

Statistical Overview. India has experienced 182 fatalities among its UN peacekeepers, the highest for any troop-contributing country. A significant number of these losses have occurred in African missions. These sacrifices underscore

India's unwavering commitment to global peace and security. The bravery and dedication of Indian peacekeepers continue to be recognized and honoured worldwide.

Indian personnel are often praised for their professionalism, discipline and compassion. Their sacrifices reflect India's commitment to global peace and stability, underscoring its philosophy of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (The world is one family). These contributions have not only enhanced India's global reputation but also strengthened the UN's ability to maintain international peace.

INDIA'S EFFORTS TOWARDS IMPROVING UN PEACEKEEPING





Substantial Troop Contributions. India currently is the fourth largest contributor of troops to UN peacekeeping missions, with over 5200 Indian personnel currently deployed to 09 out of 11 current missions. Indian forces have served in challenging environments, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Lebanon during the worst of the times showcasing resilience and professionalism.

Focus on Training and Capacity Building. India has established the Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK) in New Delhi, which in addition to conducting pre-deployment training of all Indian troops also trains peacekeepers from various countries. It emphasizes on International Humanitarian Laws, modern conflict-resolution techniques, gender sensitivity and cultural awareness. Indian forces while deployed in the missions also train security personnel of the host nations, helping build sustainable peace.



Women in Peacekeeping. India deployed the first-ever all-women Formed Police Unit to Liberia in 2007, setting a benchmark for gender equality and inspiring women globally to join peace operations. Indian women peacekeepers have been instrumental in community outreach, addressing sexual violence and building trust with local populations. By June 25, India will have an engagement team with each Infantry Battalion deployed.

Technological and Logistical Support. Indian contingents often bring advanced medical, engineering, and logistical expertise to missions. For example, Indian engineers have built infrastructure like roads, schools and hospitals in conflict-affected areas. They also provide critical humanitarian aid during crisis.

Commitment to Multilateralism. India advocates for strengthening the effectiveness and transparency of UN peacekeeping operations. It has emphasized the need for robust mandates, proper funding and clear objectives in peacekeeping missions.

Sacrifices and Dedication. Indian peacekeepers have made significant sacrifices, with 182 personnel laying down their lives while serving under the UN flag which is the highest amongst the TCCs. Their commitment underscores India's dedication to global peace.

Advocacy for Innovation and Reform. India has supported reforms to make peacekeeping more efficient and responsive to modern challenges. It has championed the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative, emphasizing partnerships, performance and the protection of civilians. India has also highlighted the importance of a framework for Protection from Crimes against peacekeepers.

Humanitarian Efforts. Indian troops have often gone beyond their mandate, providing medical care, building schools and ensuring food security in conflict zones. Indian female peacekeepers have inspired local women and children, earning global recognition.

Medical and Engineering Units. Indian peacekeepers have been lauded for their engineering and medical expertise. They have also built roads, schools and hospitals in the conflict affected areas, significantly contributing to infrastructure development and community well being.

India's contributions to UN peacekeeping highlight its role as a responsible global actor committed to maintaining international peace and security. Its initiatives in training, women empowerment and capacity building have set high standards for peacekeeping operations worldwide.

IMPACT OF INDIAN PEACEKEEPING CONTRIBUTIONS

Global Peace and Stability. Indian peacekeepers have played a crucial role in preventing conflicts from escalating, protecting vulnerable populations, and facilitating post-conflict recovery. Their professionalism, discipline and dedication have

earned them respect and admiration globally.

Humanitarian Assistance. Beyond military duties, Indian peacekeepers have provided critical humanitarian aid, including medical care, education and infrastructure development. These efforts have significantly improved the quality of life for people in conflict affected regions.

Advancing Gender Equality. India is fully committed to make attempts to bring gender equality in the deployment of its forces within the service constraints. A large number of Women Peacekeepers are deployed who are performing wonderfully towards fulfilling the mandate.

Strengthening Multilateralism. India's active participation in UN peacekeeping reflects its commitment to multilateralism and the principles of collective security. It underscores India's belief in the importance of international cooperation to address global challenges.

FUTURE ROLE AND CHALLENGES

As conflicts continue to evolve, the role of UN peacekeeping is becoming increasingly complex. India's continued engagement will be vital in addressing these challenges:-

- (a) **Adapting to Modern Threats.** India must ensure its peacekeepers are equipped to handle emerging threats such as cyber warfare, terrorism and climate-induced conflicts.
- (b) **Promoting Inclusivity.** India should continue to advocate for greater representation of women in peacekeeping missions and support efforts to make peacekeeping more inclusive.
- (c) **Leveraging Technology.** Integrating advanced technology into peacekeeping operations can enhance efficiency and effectiveness. India's expertise in information technology can be a valuable asset.

- (d) **Strengthening Partnerships.** India should collaborate with other TCCs and regional organizations to share best practices and enhance coordination. Student & Instructors exchange programme with like minded TCCs should be encourage.
- (e) **Hostile Environments.** Peacekeepers often operate in dangerous conflict zones with limited resources and support. Indian troops have faced attacks from rebel groups and militias, resulting in casualties. Better surveillance capability to improve situational awareness is the need of the hour.
- (f) **Logistical and Operational Difficulties.** Deploying troops to distant locations and sustaining operations in remote areas pose logistical challenges. Limited funding and inadequate equipment often hinder peacekeeping efforts. Contribution of India towards developing communication network at bilateral level may help in generating goodwill in the Area of Operations as well as support logistic operations.
- (g) **Changing Nature of Conflict.** Modern conflicts are increasingly complex, involving asymmetric warfare, terrorism and non-state actors. This evolution requires peacekeepers to adapt quickly to new threats. Regular updation of training requirements and study of lesson learnt during pre-induction training needs to be continued.
- (h) **Political Complexities.** UN missions often operate in politically sensitive environments, where achieving consensus among stakeholders can be challenging. Peacekeepers must navigate these complexities while maintaining impartiality.

the jungles of the Congo to the deserts of Sudan, Indian peacekeepers have left an indelible mark on some of the world's most challenging conflict zones. Their sacrifices, dedication and humanitarian efforts have not only brought hope to countless lives but have also elevated India's stature on the global stage. As the world grapples with new challenges, India's role in peacekeeping will remain indispensable in shaping a more peaceful and secure world.



**Colonel
Vikram Shahaney**

Colonel SD-3A (UN)

Colonel Vikram Shahaney was commissioned into the Infantry on 09 December 2000. During his 22 years 09 months of distinguished service in the Army, the officer has had varied experience in command, staff and instructional appointments within India and abroad. He is currently tenanted the appointment of Colonel, SD-3A (UN), Army Headquarters, responsible for deployment, operations and personnel management of all Indian troops deployed in various UN missions and UN Headquarters.

CONCLUSION

India's contribution to UN peacekeeping operations is a testament to its unwavering commitment to global peace and security. From

CUNPK: ‘Centre of Excellence’- Annual Report

By **Colonel Samar Raghav, SM**
Colonel CUNPK

Introduction

The Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK), established in September 2000, embodies a collaborative initiative between the Ministry of External Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, and the three Service Headquarters. Renowned as a Centre of Excellence, its core mission is to prepare and validate military contingents, observers and staff officers for deployment in United Nations (UN) missions across conflict-stricken regions globally.

To achieve its objectives, CUNPK conducts meticulously designed pre-deployment courses annually, utilizing a training-of-trainers approach to enhance effectiveness and scalability. Additionally, it hosts international courses, welcoming military officers from various nations. These programs are thoughtfully curated, enriched by the practical experiences of officers who have served in UN missions, and bear the prestigious accreditation of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations in New York. The Centre is fortified by a diverse team of over 100 subject matter experts, representing the military, diplomatic corps and academia.

Expanding beyond its foundational training programs, CUNPK actively collaborates with think tanks and UN agencies to organize seminars and workshops that tackle pressing issues in peacekeeping and conflict resolution. These events, conducted both in India and at the UN Headquarters, underscore the Centre’s role as a thought leader in fostering innovation and dialogue.

In the past year, CUNPK has spearheaded an impressive range of activities, including impactful pre-deployment training for troops, specialized courses tailored for Indian Armed Forces officers and programs designed for officers from allied nations. Moreover, international seminars addressing contemporary challenges in peacekeeping and conflict management further exemplify the Centre’s unwavering commitment to advancing global peace and stability.

Women in Peacekeeping: A Global South Perspective

A two-day conference, “**Women in Peacekeeping: A Global South Perspective**,” was hosted at Manekshaw Centre in New Delhi from February 24–26, 2025. This landmark event united women peacekeepers from India and 35 other nations across the Global South, fostering dialogue on the evolving role of women in peacekeeping and advancing strategies to strengthen their involvement in challenging missions. Organized by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence and CUNPK, the conference reaffirmed India’s commitment to inclusive and impactful peacekeeping efforts.

The conference aimed to bring together women officials from the Global South to address contemporary peacekeeping challenges and exchange valuable insights. It highlighted the vital contributions of women to global peacekeeping operations, underscoring India’s leadership in promoting gender equity and

capacity building within these missions. Through curated discussions, the event provided avenues for networking, peer support, and professional development, enabling knowledge exchange and collaboration among participants.

Distinguished speakers included Lt Gen NS Raja Subramani, PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM (Vice Chief of Army Staff), Mr Jean-Pierre Lacroix (Under Secretary General for Peace Operations), and Mr Christian Saunders (UN Special Coordinator for SEA). Joining them were senior representatives from the Government of India, Global South countries, and the United Nations, as well as women officers and senior officials from military and civilian domains. Their insights enriched the



PRELIM SESSION: SETTING THE CONTEXT



GROUP PHOTO WITH VCOAS AND SECY WEST, MEA



GLOBAL SOUTH PARTICIPANTS WITH THE PRESIDENT



EAM ADDRESSING THE CONF

proceedings and emphasized the significance of women's roles in peacekeeping.

The conference served as a testament to India's leadership in championing gender-inclusive peacekeeping operations. It celebrated the

transformative contributions of women to global security, advocating actionable strategies to amplify their impact in future missions. The seminar culminated in a consensus emphasizing the indispensable role of women in peacekeeping, alongside recommendations for advancing technology-driven and gender-inclusive frameworks. These forward-looking proposals underscored the necessity of adapting peacekeeping efforts to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving security landscape, while reaffirming the leadership and dedication of the Global South in fostering sustainable global peace.

CUNPK-CLAWS Collaborative Seminar

A CUNPK-CLAWS Collaborative UN Seminar titled **"Adapting Modern Peacekeeping Strategies to Contemporary Threats"** was held at the Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi on January 20, 2025. This pivotal gathering brought together senior military leaders, diplomats, strategic

analysts, and subject matter experts to address the dynamic challenges confronting UN peacekeeping missions and identify innovative solutions to enhance preparedness. The seminar centered on leveraging modern technology, refining operational methodologies and fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders to effectively tackle emerging security threats.

A key outcome of the seminar was a unanimous consensus on the need for adaptive peacekeeping models that integrate data-driven decision-making and robust protection mechanisms for peacekeepers and civilian populations alike.

GROUP PHOTO AT THE SEMINAR



approach that emphasizes technological innovation and gender inclusivity. These strategies were recognized as essential for ensuring the continued relevance and effectiveness of peacekeeping initiatives in an ever-evolving global security environment.

International Courses : United Nations Peacekeeping Contingent Commanders Course (UNPKCCC - 02)

The Centre conducted the second edition of the United Nations Peacekeeping Contingent Commanders Course from August 19 to 30, 2024. This prestigious program brought together participants from 17 friendly foreign nations, nine Indian Army officers and eight interns from prominent Delhi based colleges. Carefully designed to enhance leadership capabilities, tactical proficiency, and operational effectiveness, the course also served as a platform for cross-cultural exchange and professional enrichment.

The curriculum was thoughtfully curated, offering a blend of dynamic workshops, scenario based tactical exercises and insightful lectures delivered by distinguished subject matter experts. Practical demonstrations of UN Peacekeeping drills further



PANEL MEMBERS

The discussions reaffirmed India's influential leadership in global peacekeeping efforts, with participants advocating for a forward-thinking





enriched the participants' understanding of mission dynamics. A notable feature of the course was the exhibition of "Made in India" equipment currently deployed in UN Missions, which highlighted India's strides in self-reliance under the "Atmanirbhar Bharat" initiative.

The diverse perspectives and experiences of the participants created an invaluable learning environment, fostering collaboration and the exchange of knowledge. Beyond the academic and tactical sessions, the attendees were introduced to India's rich cultural heritage through visits to iconic sites in Agra and Delhi, leaving them with a deeper appreciation of the country's history and traditions.

Online Training Capsule with Kyrgyzstan Armed Forces (KAF)

Demonstrating India's commitment to strengthening international partnerships in peacekeeping, CUNPK, New Delhi, conducted the second edition of its online training capsule for the Kyrgyzstan Armed Forces on January 15-16, 2025. This focused two-day program provided participants with an in-depth understanding of UN peacekeeping operations, addressing the complexities and challenges faced in volatile global hotspots where troops operate under the UN banner.



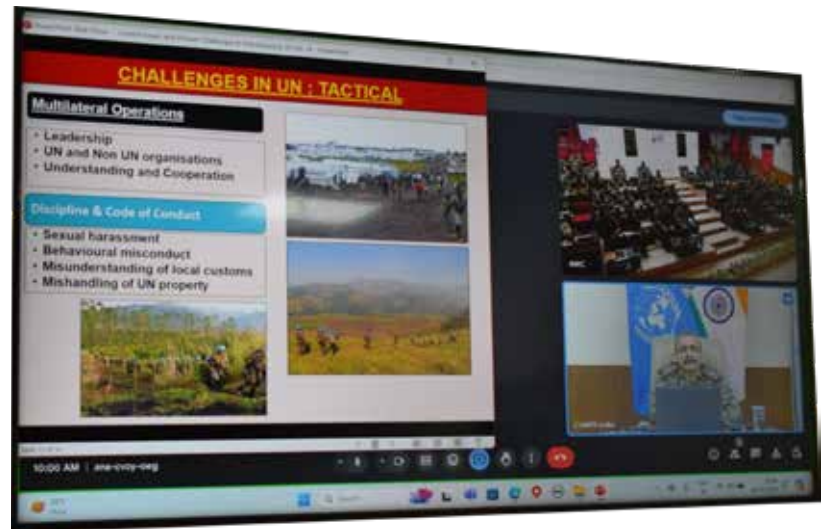


session covered a range of topics, including the Role, Charter, and Mandate of CUNPK, Current Issues and Challenges in Peacekeeping, the UN Logistics System and Mission-Level Support, and the Protection of Civilians, with a particular focus on Women and Children.

This initiative represents a significant step forward in fostering collaborative efforts to promote India's role in UN Peacekeeping and advancing military diplomacy on the global stage.

National Courses

CUNPK is entrusted with the critical responsibility of conducting pre-deployment training for all categories of peacekeepers, including observers, staff officers, and contingents assigned to UN Peacekeeping Missions. The primary objective of this training is to equip personnel with the necessary skills and competencies to operate effectively in mission environments, while simultaneously ensuring their units are fully prepared for deployment



UN Peacekeeping Operations Capsule for International Officers of Senior Command (SC) Course

On 04 Oct 2024 and 27 Dec 2024, the Centre conducted a one-day online capsule on UN Peacekeeping Operations for international officers attending the Senior Command (SC) Course at the Army War College, Mhow. The

Pre Deployment Training for National Contingents

As part of its mandate, CUNPK meticulously oversees and validates contingent training prior to deployment overseas. These training cycles are conducted with precision and diligence, supported by a specialized team of officers who assess readiness against strict, quantifiable benchmarks. Upon completion of this rigorous

process, contingents are certified as fully prepared, reflecting their operational readiness and adherence to the highest standards.

In addition to contingent preparation, CUNPK offers a customized program tailored specifically for the orientation and training of Unit Training Teams. This program encompasses Officers, Junior Commissioned Officers, and personnel from other ranks, aligning with the overarching philosophy of "Training the Trainers." By cultivating advanced skills and enhancing the capabilities of those tasked with training contingents, this initiative ensures that peacekeeping units are equipped to perform their roles with optimal efficiency and effectiveness.



Capsule for 18th Rotation of BSF Battalion for MONUSCO

Instructors from CUNPK conducted orientation lectures on “The Promotion of Gender Equality in UNPKO” and “An Overview of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence” for the 18th rotation of the BSF contingent undergoing pre-deployment training for MONUSCO on 21 Mar 2025 at their training location.

These lectures were highly appreciated and well-received by the contingent. Their insightful content is expected to play a significant role in preparing the soldiers for their responsibilities as part of the upcoming deployment. Such initiatives reflect a commendable effort to equip personnel with critical knowledge and awareness that align with the values of peacekeeping operations.

Internship Programme

CUNPK in India offers a dynamic internship program designed for college students pursuing studies in international relations or those deeply interested in multilateral global dynamics. Alongside its national and international UN courses, this program serves as a unique platform for students to gain hands-on experience and expand their understanding of peacekeeping and international affairs. Interns participate in specialized courses, collaborate with seasoned professionals, and contribute to research projects focusing on peacekeeping operations and global diplomacy. This immersive experience equips students with valuable skills, fosters essential networking opportunities for future careers in international relations and multilateral diplomacy and provides unparalleled insights into the complexities and challenges of global peacekeeping efforts.

Capsule for Operational and Tactical Field Commanders

Reaffirming its dedication to excellence in professional military education, CUNPK recently concluded the seventh edition of its Capsule on Negotiation Skills and Techniques. Hosted



INTERNS AT THE GLOBAL SOUTH WOMENS CONFERENCE

bi-annually, this flagship initiative was held across two sessions, from September 3-6, 2024, and February 4-7, 2025, bringing together Commanding Officers, Brigade Commanders and senior staff officers from diverse operational domains nationwide.

The program featured thought-provoking presentations by experts from the diplomatic corps, armed forces and academia, seamlessly integrating strategic insights with actionable negotiation tactics. A standout element of the Capsule was the syndicate gaming exercise held on the final day, where participants engaged in interactive, real-world simulations to hone their negotiation acumen in a dynamic and collaborative environment.

This initiative remains a cornerstone of CUNPK's efforts to prepare military leaders for the complexities of modern peacekeeping operations. By blending theoretical knowledge with practical

application, the Capsule underscores the Centre's commitment to cultivating adaptive, capable and forward-thinking leaders equipped to navigate the nuanced demands of international diplomacy and conflict resolution.



Multilateral Engagements : VINBAX-2024

VINBAX-2024 was conducted from November 4-7, 2024, in Ambala, in collaboration with the Vietnam People's Army. The exercise, designed as a Table Top Exercise, focused on the intricacies of UN peacekeeping operations and was led by a specialized six-member panel of instructors from CUNPK. Key activities included training the trainers, classroom sessions, scenario-based tabletop exercises and open-house discussions.

During the orientation phase, the team of instructors trained a total of 11 officers and 36 other ranks (ORs) from Vietnam, along with 5

officers and 42 ORs from the Indian Army. This initiative showcased a commitment to enhancing collaboration and preparedness for peacekeeping operations, fostering mutual learning and professional growth.

Visit of Vietnam Delegation

In another significant step towards fostering global collaboration for peace and security and strengthened partnerships, CUNPK hosted a Vietnamese five member military delegation led by the Commandant Vietnam Peacekeeping Centre, on 19 Sep 2024 which was visiting India for the Final Planning Conference for Vietnam India Bilateral Exercise (VINBAX 2024). The delegation was briefed by Col CUNPK on the role and charter of CUNPK.



Visit of Armenian Peacekeeping Brigade Delegation

A delegation from the Armenian Peacekeeping Brigade visited CUNPK on March 17-18, 2025. The delegation included Col Hamlet Levonyan, Head of the Military Unit for Peacekeeping and Maj Armine Abrahamyan from the Military Political Cooperation Division.

During their visit, the delegation observed the INDBATT contingent undergoing pre-deployment training in preparation for their induction to UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon). They were briefed on the history, selection process and preparatory procedures of the unit prior to its deployment. Additionally, the delegation was given a live demonstration of the drills associated with the Maintenance of the Blue Line and buffer zones, as outlined in the mission's mandate.



Visit of Tanzanian Delegation

A three-member delegation from UNPKTC, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania visited CUNPK at the Manekshaw Centre on January 11, 2025. The delegation consisted of Brig Gen GM Itang'are, Commandant, Col DJ Mulishi, Chief Instructor and Maj AR Matingas, Staff Officer.



Mongolian Delegation Visit

A five-member delegation from the Mongolian Armed Forces, led by Brig Gen Gankhuyag Davagdorj, visited CUNPK on February 6, 2025. The delegation was given a comprehensive briefing on the role and charter of CUNPK by Col CUNPK, outlining the Centre's key functions and its contributions to peacekeeping training and operations.



Briefing of Japanese Delegation

A six-member delegation from the Japanese Armed Forces, led by Maj Gen Normichi Shirakawa, Director General of the Policy & Programs Department, Ground Staff Office, Japan, visited CUNPK at the Manekshaw Centre on March 7, 2025. The delegation was briefed on the role and charter of CUNPK by Col CUNPK, who provided an overview of the Centre's key functions and its contributions to peacekeeping training.





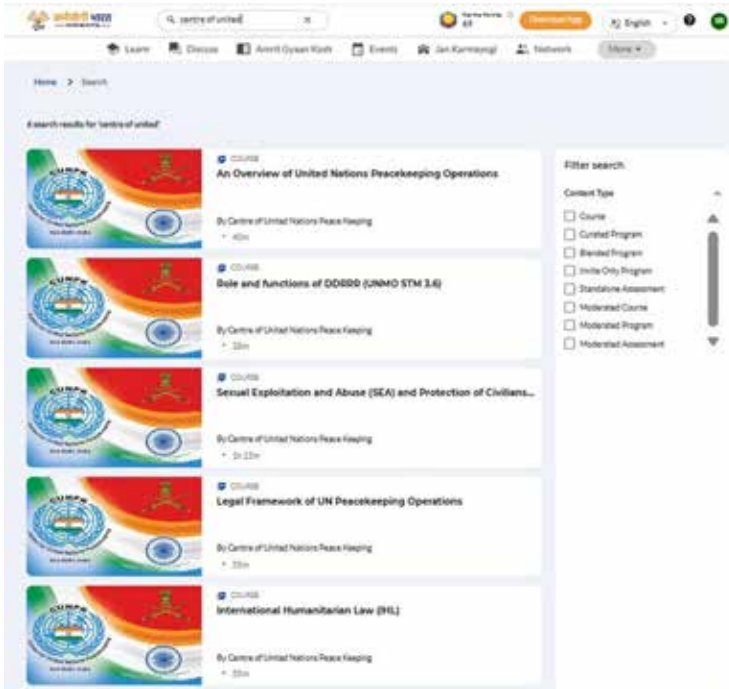
Visit of Permanent Representative to PMI, New York to CUNPK

Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish, Permanent Representative of India visited CUNPK on 07 Jan 2025 at Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi. PR to PMI interacted with DCOAS (IS&C) and DG SD during his visit and was briefed on role & Charter of CUNPK by Col CUNPK.

CUNPK on Social Media

We are excited to announce our presence on social media! With approval granted, we have officially launched our accounts on **X**, **Instagram** and **Facebook**. We look forward to your continued support through likes, retweets and follows as we engage and share updates on our social media platforms.





iGOT Karmayogi Platform

The following five CUNPK basic courses are active on iGOT Karmayogi Platform and are being subscribed in large numbers:-

- (a) An Overview of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations.
- (b) Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Protection of Civilians.
- (c) Role and Functions of Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Reintegration and Resettlement (DDRRR).
- (d) International Humanitarian Law (IHL).
- (e) Legal Framework of UN Peacekeeping Operations.



**Colonel
Samar Raghav, SM**

Colonel CUNPK

Colonel Samar Raghav, SM was commissioned into Infantry on 10 Dec 2002.

The officer is an alumnus of Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, prestigious Defence Services Staff College, Wellington and Naval War College, Goa. Officer has varied experience in Command, Staff and Instructional duties in various challenging appointments. Officer is a graduate in English and Commerce and has also done his Masters in Defence Strategies, PGDBM(HR) from Symbiosis University and M Phil in Strategic Studies from University of Mumbai.

Officer has served as Chief Operations Officer of INDBATT in UNMISS from 2014-16.

He was awarded Sena Medal (Gallantry), Chief of Army Staff Commendation Card (Gallantry) and twice General Officer Commanding in Chief Commendation Cards for exceptional service to the organization and Nation.

The Role of Logistics in Rapid Deployment and Mission Readiness

By **Colonel Siddharth Pant**
Colonel SD-3B (UN Lgs)

Logistics is the backbone of United Nations peacekeeping operations, ensuring the deployment and sustainment of troops in complex and often dangerous environments. Whether establishing base camps, maintaining supply chains, or responding to humanitarian crises, logistics plays a pivotal role in mission readiness and operational success. Given the diverse challenges of peacekeeping ranging from geographical barriers to political complexities, logistics must be flexible, innovative and collaborative. This paper explores the broader global perspective on logistics in UN peacekeeping, illustrating its importance and offering solutions for improvement.

Logistics in Peacekeeping

Logistics in peacekeeping encompasses a wide range of activities, including the transportation of personnel and equipment, supply chain management, infrastructure development, and the establishment of operational bases. It ensures peacekeepers are equipped, sustained and prepared to respond effectively to dynamic situations.

Core Functions of Logistics

- (a) **Rapid Deployment.** Ensuring timely mobilization of forces to conflict zones.
- (b) **Sustainment.** Providing continuous support, including food, fuel, and medical supplies.

- (c) **Infrastructure Development.** Building and maintaining operational facilities, such as airstrips, roads and shelters.
- (d) **Crisis Response.** Facilitating humanitarian aid during emergencies, such as natural disasters or displacement crises.

Components of Logistics in Peacekeeping

- (a) **Pre-Deployment Logistics.**
 - (i) **Strategic Planning.** Coordination between contributing nations and the UN to prepare troops and equipment.
 - (ii) **Transportation Capabilities.** The use of air and sea assets, such as C-17 Globemaster aircraft or naval vessels, for transporting personnel and heavy equipment.
 - (iii) **Training and Readiness.** Pre-deployment training, including cultural awareness and terrain-specific strategies, ensures troops are well-prepared for missions.
- (b) **Operational Logistics.**
 - (i) **Supply Chain Management.** Ensures timely delivery of essentials like rations, fuel and medical supplies, often in regions with poor infrastructure.
 - (ii) **Field Engineering.** Construction of roads, helipads and camps to support operations in remote or conflict-affected areas.

(iii) **Medical and Humanitarian Aid.**

Establishing field hospitals and providing care for both peacekeepers and local communities.

(c) **Sustainment Logistics.**

(i) **Maintenance Operations.** Regular servicing of vehicles, communication equipment and infrastructure to ensure uninterrupted operations.

(ii) **Base Operations and Security.** Managing and safeguarding operational bases to provide a stable environment for peacekeeping activities.

Challenges in Peacekeeping Logistics

(a) **Geographic and Environmental Barriers.** Conflict zones often present harsh environmental conditions, including deserts, jungles, or mountainous terrains. For example, in Mali's MINUSMA mission, logistical operations face extreme heat, poor infrastructure and vast distances.

(b) **Security Risks.** Supply lines in conflict zones are vulnerable to ambushes, theft and sabotage. In missions such as MONUSCO, peacekeepers often require armed escorts for logistical convoys.

(c) **Bureaucratic Delays.** The UN's procurement clearances are tedious resulting in delaying the deployment of essential equipment. Troop Contributing Countries often bear the burden of logistical challenges due to delayed reimbursements.

(d) **Resource Constraints.** Peacekeeping missions often operate on limited budgets, requiring careful resource allocation. In many cases, logistical demands exceed the financial and material resources available.

Innovations to Revolutionize Peacekeeping Logistics in a Rapid Deployment

The incorporation of cutting-edge innovations

in logistics has the potential to dramatically improve the efficiency and effectiveness of UN peacekeeping missions. By leveraging modern technologies and innovative practices, peacekeeping forces can overcome long-standing logistical challenges, including delays, resource mismanagement and operational inefficiencies.

Strengthening Strategic Capabilities

(a) **Expand Strategic Airlift and Naval Assets.**

(i) The United Nations should invest in heavy-lift transport aircraft, such as the Boeing C-17 or Airbus A400M, and naval vessels capable of transporting large quantities of troops and equipment quickly.

(ii) Establishing dedicated rapid deployment brigades equipped with logistical support capabilities will ensure immediate responses to crises.

(b) **Pre-Positioning Resources in Regional Hubs.**

(i) Creating regional logistical hubs, stocked with pre-positioned supplies, equipment, and vehicles, will reduce response times. These hubs should be strategically located in proximity to high-conflict regions (e.g., East Africa for missions in the Congo or South Sudan).

(ii) Partnerships with host nations can facilitate the development of these hubs while bolstering local economies.

(c) **Enhance Interoperability.**

(i) Develop standardized protocols and equipment to ensure smooth cooperation among diverse national contingents.

(ii) Conduct regular joint exercises between nations to test and improve logistical coordination.

Reforming UN Procurement and Administrative Processes

(a) **Streamline Procurement Systems.**

(i) The current UN procurement process is cumbersome and prone to delays.

- A digitized, transparent system with automated approval processes can expedite resource acquisition.
- (ii) Decentralizing procurement authority to regional UN offices will further reduce delays.
- (b) **Ensure Timely Reimbursements.** Many troop-contributing nations face financial strain due to delayed reimbursements for logistics related expenses. The UN must establish a mechanism for faster disbursement of funds, ensuring these nations can sustain their commitments without compromise.
- (c) **Simplify Decision-Making Structures.** Overly bureaucratic chains of command slow down logistical decisions. Creating dedicated logistical task forces with clear mandates can accelerate responses to urgent needs.

Leveraging Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

- (a) **Engaging Private Logistics Firms.**
 - (i) Partnering with companies experienced in large-scale logistical operations (e.g., DHL, FedEx) can optimize supply chain management and distribution.
 - (ii) Outsourcing specific tasks like warehousing, transportation, and inventory management can free up UN resources for strategic operations.
- (b) **Technology Transfers from the Private Sector.** Incorporate private sector innovations such as blockchain for secure and transparent supply chain tracking or drones for last-mile delivery in remote areas.
- (c) **Strengthen Local Sourcing Networks.** Collaborate with local businesses in host countries to source materials and services. This reduces transportation expenses and supports the local economy, fostering goodwill with local populations.

Building Logistical Resilience and Adaptability

- (a) **Enhance Training Programs.**
 - (i) Comprehensive training for peacekeepers

in logistical management, including inventory control, technological tools, and crisis response, should be mandatory.

- (ii) Incorporate simulations of real-world scenarios into training curricula to prepare peacekeepers for complex logistical challenges.
- (b) **Promote Sustainability.**
- (i) Training should emphasize eco-friendly practices such as waste reduction, renewable energy use and water conservation.
 - (ii) Nations should develop and deploy modular systems powered by renewable energy for field operations, reducing reliance on fuel-based systems.
- (c) **Encourage Knowledge Sharing.**
- (i) Regular forums or workshops where troop-contributing nations share logistical strategies and innovations can improve overall efficiency.
 - (ii) Documentation of lessons learned from past missions should be institutionalized and made accessible to all nations participating in peacekeeping efforts.
- ### Promoting Collaborative Frameworks
- (a) **Strengthen Regional Partnerships.**
 - (i) Regional organizations such as the African Union (AU) or Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) can collaborate with the UN to provide logistical support tailored to their respective regions and negotiate safe passage through conflict zones or politically unstable regions.
 - (ii) Deploy diplomatic teams to work with local governments and tribal leaders to secure guarantees for safe transportation routes.
 - (iii) These partnerships can also facilitate capacity-building initiatives, such as joint training programs and shared

infrastructure.

(b) Develop a UN Logistical Reserve Corps.

- (i) Establish a dedicated logistical reserve team comprising experts from various nations, ready to deploy at short notice.
- (ii) This corps can focus on setting up operational bases, managing supply chains and addressing immediate logistical bottlenecks during the initial phases of a mission.

Expanding Financial and Human Resource Commitments

(a) Increase Funding for Logistics.

- (i) The UN and its member states should allocate a higher percentage of peacekeeping budgets to logistical operations, recognizing their foundational role in mission success.
- (ii) Encourage voluntary contributions from wealthier nations specifically for logistical support.

(b) Develop Specialized Logistical Units.

- (i) Nations contributing troops should consider forming specialized units trained exclusively in logistics.
- (ii) These units can act as force multipliers, enhancing the operational efficiency of peacekeeping missions.

Conclusion

Addressing logistical challenges in UN Missions is essential for the success of UN peacekeeping missions. By leveraging innovative technologies, fostering international collaboration, and focusing on regional solutions, the UN can ensure timely and efficient deployment of peacekeeping forces. Strengthening logistical frameworks not only enhances mission readiness but also builds trust and goodwill among host nations and communities, ultimately contributing to global peace and security.



Colonel Sidharth Pant

Colonel SD-3B (UN Lgs)

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United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO)

By **Colonel Kamakhya Singh**
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Overview

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is Central Africa's second-largest country, with an area of nearly 2.345 million square kilometers, comparable to Western Europe. The DRC is endowed with abundant natural resources, including valuable minerals like cobalt and copper, extensive arable land and the world's second-largest rainforest. Kinshasa, the capital and largest city, serves as a key cultural and economic centre. With a population of approximately 111 million, the DRC is the most populous French-speaking country in the world. The region has a rich history, having been home to influential kingdoms such as the Kingdom of Kongo and the Luba and Lunda empires. Colonized by Belgium in the late 19th century, the DRC gained independence in 1960. Since then, the country has faced numerous challenges, including political instability and conflicts, especially in its eastern regions. Despite inheriting an estimated \$24 trillion

in mineral wealth, the country has struggled with corruption, ethnic strife and external interference, leading to its status as one of the poorest nations globally.

The country has made efforts to contain conflicts, particularly in the eastern region, with the help of United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) erstwhile MONUC, established in 1999. India has contributed significantly to the mission, providing troops, equipment and specialist manpower since 2005. In its present form, 301 Infantry Brigade (Central Sector) comprises two Infantry Battalions (one Indian and one Moroccan) and a Brigade Headquarters with Signal & Support Detachment. MONUSCO is now in its final phase with plans for a phased withdrawal from DRC. The Indian contingent is represented by 1200 Peacekeepers to including Military Staff Officers/ Military Observers and Indian Field Hospital (Level III).

Environmental Scan

Great Lakes Region of Africa. The regional geopolitical landscape in Africa is marked by a complex interplay of internal conflicts, external interventions and strategic competition among global powers. The Horn of Africa, encompassing countries like Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan, remains a hotspot of instability due to ongoing conflicts and ethnic tensions. Meanwhile, the Sahel region grapples with insurgency and terrorism, further exacerbating security challenges. The region has experienced prolonged conflicts, particularly in eastern DRC, where armed groups, including March 23 Movement (M23) and other militias, have destabilized the area. Tensions between Rwanda, Uganda and the DRC have influenced regional security, with allegations of external support for rebel groups.

Security Situation in North Kivu (Eastern DRC) Region.

In early 2024, the security situation in North Kivu, DRC, drastically deteriorated, marked by a significant escalation in violence and territorial gains by the M23 rebel group, allegedly supported by Rwanda. M23 began building up its forces around Goma and Sake, aiming to encircle these key cities by capturing critical positions. By April 2024, M23 had disrupted vital supply routes (RN2 and RP1030) with fortified positions and check posts. Their advances included the capture of major mining towns like Rubaya, Ngungu and Luzirantaka, strengthening their hold over the region. Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC), the national military of the DRC counteroffensives struggled to push M23 back, as the rebel group continued to expand its control across Rutshuru and Masisi territories. In July, the USA brokered a truce under the Luanda Peace process which temporarily reduced skirmishes. However, the ceasefire failed to deliver peace as M23 used the lull to reorganize and fortify its strongholds. By October 2024, they captured the towns of Kalembe and Mpeti and threatened logistically critical areas such as Pinga. The Luanda Peace Process collapsed, as the DRC government, led

by President Tshisekedi, refused to negotiate with M23, accusing them of being supported by Rwanda and undermining Congolese sovereignty. This deadlock intensified political tensions, with the President proposing controversial constitutional amendments, including extending his term, which further divided the nation. By December 2024, M23 had



advanced to strategic locations near Kirumba, Kanyamohoro, Masisi and along the RN2 axis, threatening Lubero, Pinga, Masisi Center and the provincial capital of Goma. In Goma, lawlessness worsened, with frequent conflict related violence displacing thousands. The humanitarian crisis deepened as FARDC failed to restore control. M23's territorial expansion appears to be aimed at pressurising the DRC government into negotiations, underscoring the urgency of international intervention to prevent further escalation.

Regional Conflict Resolution Mechanism. The African Union (AU), the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have undertaken several regional initiatives to address the ongoing conflict in the DRC. The AU has facilitated high-level diplomatic engagements and peace processes, including support for the Luanda and Nairobi peace frameworks, aimed at fostering dialogue

between the DRC government and armed groups. The EAC had deployed the EACRF (East African Regional Force) to stabilize conflict-affected areas and mediate between warring factions, particularly in the eastern DRC.

UN Resolution for Conflict Resolution. United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2765 adopted on 20 Dec 2024 extends the mandate of the MONUSCO until 20 Dec 2025, emphasizing protection of civilians, support for the DRC government and regional cooperation to address armed groups threats.

M23 Resurgence and Capture of Goma. In Jan 2025, the UN estimated that 3,000 to 4,000 Rwandan soldiers had crossed into eastern DRC to support the M23. The UN and the United States have accused Rwanda of directing, arming, funding, and supporting the M23, which has been observed deploying advanced military equipment, including modern weapons, surface-to-air missiles, anti-tank weapons, helicopter gunships, artillery and armoured vehicles. Throughout 2024, M23 and Rwandan forces expanded their control in North Kivu Province. In late Jan 2025, they besieged and captured Goma, the provincial capital with an estimated population of one million, marking a significant escalation. Reports indicate that 25 peacekeepers lost their lives and at least 3,000 civilians were killed during the week-long battle, while over 7,00,000 were displaced. Since then, M23 and Rwandan forces have consolidated their control in North Kivu and advanced into South Kivu, with M23 leadership declaring their intent to march to Kinshasa and overthrow the DRC government.

Current Security Situation of Goma. The occupation of Goma by the M23 rebel group has precipitated a complex and destabilizing crisis, with far-reaching consequences for the city and the broader eastern region of DRC. The consolidation of M23 control has engendered pervasive insecurity, a severe humanitarian emergency and substantial infrastructural damage. The prevailing security environment

remains highly volatile, with the civilian population increasingly subjected to the conflict dynamics between M23, FARDC and various armed groups, including the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and Wazalendoes militias. The feasibility of a successful FARDC counteroffensive to reclaim Goma is currently uncertain. FARDC's inability to effectively impede the M23 advance, characterized by significant tactical retreats and the collapse of defensive positions in critical areas, underscores the challenges faced. The military's capacity for coordinated resistance is severely compromised by fragmentation and demoralisation within its ranks. The strategic significance of Goma, coupled with the M23's entrenched presence, presents formidable obstacles to any potential military operation. While a counteroffensive remains a possibility contingent upon reinforcement and external support, its success is contingent upon a fundamental transformation in military strategy and enhanced internal cohesion within the FARDC. Moreover, the substantial risks of civilian casualties and further infrastructural damage pose significant impediments to any immediate efforts to retake the city. The United Nations faces substantial operational challenges in Goma under M23 control. As a critical logistical hub for UN peacekeeping and humanitarian missions in the region, Goma's current status jeopardizes the safety of UN personnel and assets, severely restricting the UN's ability to provide assistance to displaced populations and maintain operational continuity. The ambiguous stance of the M23 towards international organisations further complicates the UN's mandate in eastern DRC.

Operational Challenges

Vast Area of Responsibility and Poor Lines of Communications. The Central Sector's (CS) Area of Responsibility (AOR) spans approximately 30,000 square kilometers and is currently covered by the deployment of only two Rapidly Deployable Battalions (RDBs). The situation is further complicated by the poor state of surface communication within the area. The RN2 Axis is the sole all-weather road axis in the AOR,

rendering large portions of the region inaccessible by vehicle for extended periods.

Lack of Operational Intelligence. The intelligence dissemination network is heavily dependent upon the information provided by Language Assistants (LA) and Community Liaison Assistants (CLA), which is prone to manipulation as also is heavily dependent upon the ethnic fault lines, thus, susceptible to inaccuracies.

Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) Capability. As has been the trend worldwide, eastern DRC has also seen proliferation of the armed drones/UAS in the battlefield. Indian Rapidly Deployable Battalion (INDRDB) blocking positions were subjected to Kamikaze kind of attacks in the month of Apr 2024. This necessitates provision of C-UAS capability with INDRDB for the purpose of self defence and protection of UN assets.

Restrictions on the Freedom of Movement. M23 occupies the majority of the area in North Kivu and has imposed restrictions on MONUSCO's movement within its controlled territory. This has significantly hindered the implementation of the Protection of Civilians (PoC) mandate by CS contingents, particularly the Moroccan Rapidly Deployable Battalion (MORRDB). The majority of the CS area of operations has been classified as a 'High Threat' area due to reports of Anti-Aircraft weapons with M23. This has adversely affected the flying of rotary wing assets. Large areas of the AOR remain inaccessible, which seriously affects the capability of the force to implement the mission strategy of 'Protection through Projection' for PoC and sustain them logistically.

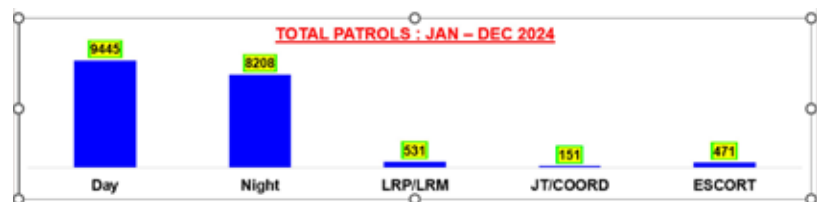
Deconfliction of Battlefield. There are multiple stakeholders deployed in the CS area of operations especially in the vicinity of Goma-Sake axis which include FARDC, Burundian Armed Forces, SADC Mission in the DRC (SAMIDRC), Private Military Contractors (PMC), Wazalendos and Voluntaries de la Defense du Peuple (VDPs) which entails detailed operational coordination. The amalgamation of Armed Groups with local security forces by the

Government of DRC (GoDRC) has blurred the lines between the identification of Local Security Forces and the armed groups. Any joint operations now need to be viewed through the prism of the guiding principles of the UN. GoDRC employing mercenaries also brings in complications of participation in joint operations by MONUSCO.

Anti-MONUSCO Sentiments. Anti-MONUSCO sentiments are prevalent among some segments of the Congolese population, who view the mission as ineffective, biased and responsible for various abuses. Criticisms include MONUSCO's perceived failure to protect civilians, its alleged support for the government against rebel groups, and accusations of human rights abuses, including sexual exploitation and abuse. A faction of the Congolese population also resent the mission's presence, viewing it as a symbol of foreign interference and a hindrance to national sovereignty. Protests and demonstrations against MONUSCO have occurred in various parts of the country, with some calling for the mission's withdrawal.

Contribution of Indian Peacekeepers Pre-Capture of Goma

- (a) **Protection through Projection.** Since Jan 2024, with an average of 38 missions per day, CS has conducted over 18,000 operational missions to include the Static Combat Deployment (SCD), Long-Range Missions (LRMs), Long-Range Patrols (LRPs) & Area Domination Patrols (ADPs)/Night Surveillance Patrols (NSPs). Largely proactive in nature it ensured that the multifaceted security challenges are addressed pre-emptively and proactively towards the larger aim of fulfilling the mandate.
- (b) **Operation Springbok III.** The sector implemented Operation Springbok III to



deter and prevent M23 advance towards Goma and Sake. It showcased operational readiness for Goma Integrated Security Plan and secured MONUSCO aviation assets at Goma Airport. Despite operational constraints, it maintained two Permanent Operating Bases in M23 controlled areas ensuring PoC as per the UN standards.

(c) **Operation Iron-Sweep.** CS successfully executed Operation Iron-Sweep; a critical task aimed at enhancing civilian safety. This operation resulted in the neutralization of 26 unexploded ordnances (UXOs) and the comprehensive clearance of a 46 square kilometers area, thereby mitigating the risk of accidental detonation and facilitating the safe return of displaced populations.

(d) **Protection of Personnel and Bases.** Despite prevailing anti-MONUSCO sentiments, the CS has effectively managed highly volatile situations, prioritizing the protection of UN personnel and the safeguarding of UN assets and premises across numerous locations.

(e) **Goma Airport Security.** CS has been providing security to the MONUSCO Aviation Complex and Airframes at the Goma Airport, thus deterring criminal activities and enabling aviation operations.

(f) **Training FARDC Personnel.** CS provided FARDC personnel, Operational and Tactical training as part of Security Sector Reforms and actively engaged in Coordination and Conduct Centre Operation (CCCO) meetings for enhanced cooperation with FARDC, SAMIDRC, PMC and other security agencies.

(g) **Support to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).** The recurrent clashes between armed groups have precipitated multiple waves of displacement across the region. The CS has actively facilitated the establishment of humanitarian corridors to ensure the safe passage of displaced populations and has

undertaken measures to secure IDP camps, providing necessary protective measures.

(h) **CIMIC Activities and SEA Cases.** The CS has also excelled in CIMIC initiatives with 48 Key Leader Engagements promoting a peaceful environment whilst strictly adhering to the Zero Tolerance Policy with nil SEA cases and nil operational casualties.

Post Capture of Goma.

(a) **Establishment of Humanitarian Corridor.** On 22 Jan 2025, INDRDB secured a humanitarian corridor to safeguard civilians fleeing amidst conflict between FARDC and M23. The corridor secured by INDRDB enabled safe passage for IDPs from Nzulu IDP Camp to Lushagala and Goma. By engaging with local communities, the INDRDB Mixed Engagement Team helps to build trust and reassurance, essential components of lasting peace and security.

(b) **INDRDB provided Medical assistance amidst conflict to RSAQRF at Sake Garrison.** In the



face of intense crossfire during the M23 advance towards Sake on 23 Jan 2025, INDRDB exemplified the Indian Army's core values of selfless service and camaraderie. With unwavering resolve, they swiftly provided critical medical support to the South African Quick Reaction Force (RSAQRF), evacuating two casualties to the INDRDB Level 1 Hospital at POB Sake. Displaying exceptional courage and professionalism amidst the ongoing hostilities, the medical team stabilized the condition of soldiers.

(c) **INDRDB facilitates CASEVAC of RSAQRF.** On 24 Jan 2025, INDRDB provided escort support for injured troops of RSAQRF and SAMIDRC from Sake Garrison to Indian Field Hospital Level III at Goma. Despite being assigned only escort duty, INDRDB went above and beyond, providing an Ambulance APC for the transfer of four injured RSAQRF soldiers. The convoy faced intense attacks from heavily armed personnel, resulting in vehicle damage and deflated tyres. However, INDRDB executed



the mission flawlessly, safely transporting the injured to the hospital, without any injury to the peacekeepers.

(d) **Escort to Pakistan Artillery Battery (PAB).**

On 24 Jan 2025, amidst intense hostilities, the INDRDB executed a critical mission as part of Operation Springbok-III, escorting the PAB Observation Post (OP) crew to a new location at Kibati. Launched from POB Sake, the INDRDB escort column, navigated through artillery shelling and mortar fire to safely reach Goma Airport. This successful mission, achieved under extreme duress, demonstrated exceptional precision and unwavering professionalism of INDRDB QRF, thus ensuring the secure movement of vital personnel within an active conflict zone.

(e) **Central Sector solidarity with Jordan Aviation Unit (JORMUHU).** Following the Jordan Aviation Unit's rapid deployment to Goma on 25 Jan 2025, their unpreparedness for the M23 invasion prompted an immediate and supportive response from the Central Sector. Demonstrating unwavering solidarity, the Acting Commander visited their camp, assuring comprehensive assistance and promptly providing essential supplies and escort missions for logistics, alongside enhanced security arrangements. This swift

and comprehensive support underscored commitment of CS towards fostering collaboration among peacekeeping forces, even during unforeseen and challenging circumstances.

(f) **INDRDB ensures safety of civilians amidst escalating violence.** On 28 Jan 2025, a



suspicious boat approached the INDRDB perimeter at Himbi and 22 civilians notably, among them were 10 FARDC soldiers who reached the lakeside, the INDRDB QRF swiftly assessed and verified their unarmed status, providing immediate protective measures. This act of INDRDB demonstrated exceptional professionalism and humanitarian commitment by safeguarding displaced civilians near POB Himbi amidst escalating violence.

(g) **Escort of Logistics Resupply Vehicles of Sake Garrison by INDRDB.** On 28 Jan 2025, amid reports of M23 patrols near POB Himbi and a deteriorating security situation, a QRF of INDRDB led a resupply escort support





and stability. This effort is part of MONUSCO mandate to promote peace, security and trust in conflict-affected areas.

- (j) **Operation Connect: Restoring of Critical Communication System.** On 31 Jan 2025,



operation. The patrol confirmed the presence of scattered dead bodies, looted shops and abandoned weapons including UXOs. Despite the risks of UXOs and remnants of unruly Wazalandoes on RN2 route, INDRDB ensured the safe escort of five vehicles to POB Sake, which was highly appreciated by Force HQ.

- (h) **Humanitarian Engagement Patrol by INDRDB.** On 30 Jan 2025, INDRDB undertook a humanitarian engagement patrol to Lushagala IDP Camp. In a heartening development, many locals were gradually moving back to their respective villages, rekindling hopes for a return to normalcy

following the invasion of Goma by the M23 Rebel Group and the subsequent looting of the airport by locals, Force elements experienced a critical communication outage, resulting in disconnected Internet connectivity. In response, a QRF was dispatched from HQ Central Sector to conduct a route assessment and escorted the Field Technical Support (FTS) Team, facilitating the successful restoration of Communication services on the same day.



- (k) **Execution of Logistics Supply Collection.** On 31 Jan 2025, HQ CS showcased its operational prowess, by successfully coordinating and executing a logistics supply collection (including food, FOL and water) from the RVA



Site and Lava Site in Goma. It demonstrated Headquarters CS's unwavering commitment to providing exceptional logistical support to peacekeeping forces, including NEPBATT and JORMUHU troops stationed at the Goma Airport Transit Camp.

- (l) **Headquarter CS Outreach for NEPBATT.** Between 25 Jan to 03 Feb 2025, troops from Nepal Battalion (NEPBATT) were stranded at the Goma Airport Transit Camp due to the unexpected invasion of Goma by the M23 Rebel Group, which also led to the closure of Goma Airport. Despite the challenging circumstances, HQ CS swiftly responded to provide all necessary assistance, including



rations, water and security, to the NEPBATT troops. To ensure their safety amidst heavy firing, containers were earmarked for their protection. As a gesture of goodwill, a farewell tea was also organized for their officers and troops.

- (m) **Operation Reassurance: Indian Army's Outreach efforts in Goma.** A team from HQ CS, connected with the Indian Diaspora in and around Goma. The objective was to reassure and restore faith among the community, while also verifying their safety and well-being. This proactive outreach effort demonstrated the Indian Army's commitment to protecting and supporting its citizens abroad.



- (n) **Security of Goma Airport Bulk Fuel Facility (BFI).** On 03 Feb 2025, INDRDB assumed responsibility for the security of MONUSCO BFI at Goma Airport. Two platoons of INDRDB have been safeguarding the crucial fuel storage facility, integral to maintaining operations in the region. INDRDB's



commitment to secure the vital fuel supply and preventing potential sabotage or looting is a crucial part of MONUSCO's ongoing mission.

- (o) **Security of Unarmed FARDC Soldiers.** Post invasion of Goma by M23 armed group, 785 FARDC soldiers surrendered seeking for shelter and security. A company of INDRDB has been deployed to ensure the safety and security of MONUSCO personnel and unarmed FARDC in the airport area, while also improving living conditions to reduce the risk of unsanitary conditions and prevent the

continuing to execute routine tasks such as providing a secure environment for other mission components, the force's relevance would diminish significantly. Its operational scope would be largely reduced to static deployments, limiting its ability to proactively address the evolving security landscape. This de facto partition would undermine the mission's broader objectives, effectively relegating the force to a containment role rather than an active participant in conflict resolution or civilian protection, thus significantly reducing its overall functionality and strategic impact.



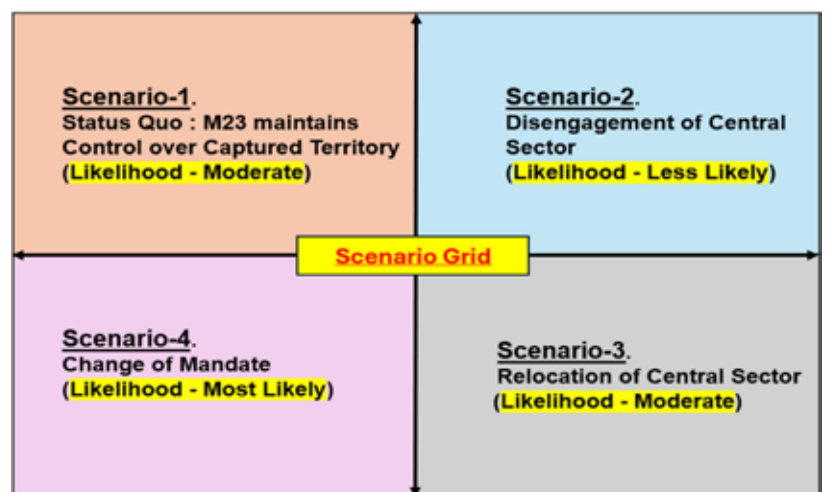
- (b) **Scenario - 2: Disengagement of CS.** In a disengagement scenario forced upon MONUSCO by M23's continued occupation and a mandated withdrawal timeline within CS, two distinct options present themselves: a hasty or deliberate disengagement. A hasty withdrawal with a timeline of 45 days would necessitate the abandonment of substantial MONUSCO and contingent assets, resulting in significant financial losses. Conversely, a deliberate disengagement with a timeline of 90 days, while allowing for the recovery of assets, would represent a profound symbolic setback, effectively nullifying 25 years of peacekeeping efforts in the region and inflicting a severe blow to the mission's credibility. Both options underscore the strategic vulnerability imposed by M23's

spread of diseases.

Assessment of Future Scenarios

The security situation in DRC remains volatile, with multiple scenarios unfolding that could significantly impact MONUSCO's operations and effectiveness. As the mission continues to navigate this complex environment, it is essential to consider the potential implications of various scenarios on its ability to protect civilians, support stabilization efforts and achieve its mandate. The under mentioned prognosis outlines four possible scenarios, each with its unique challenges and opportunities for MONUSCO:-

- (a) **Scenario - 1: Status Quo.** In the context of 'status quo' scenario, M23 retains control over its captured territory and establishes a parallel governance structure, the role of CS would become increasingly constrained. While



actions, forcing a choice between substantial material loss and the erosion of long-term peacekeeping legitimacy.

- (c) **Scenario - 3: Relocation of CS.** In a relocation scenario within Central Sector, amidst M23's continued control of occupied territories, MONUSCO faces the choice of partial or full relocation. A partial relocation would involve deploying a battalion to the Northern Sector to augment its operational capacity, while retaining a battalion in Goma to safeguard MONUSCO assets and ensure a secure environment for the remaining force components. However, this fragmented approach presents significant challenges to the future viability and operational effectiveness of the CS, potentially leading to a diminished and strategically compromised presence.
- (d) **Scenario - 4 : Change of Mandate.** A revision of the current mandate from Chapter VII to provisions pertaining to ceasefire monitoring and civilian protection under Chapter VI would yield a more advantageous operational framework for CS. This strategic realignment would afford the mission an enhanced mandate, potentially extending its Area of Operation to include South Kivu and facilitate an augmentation of troop strength. By transitioning from a robust enforcement posture to a monitoring and protection paradigm, the mission would operate within a diminished threat environment, fostering a more conducive working atmosphere. This would enable an expanded operational footprint, thereby amplifying the mission's capacity to deliver effective civilian protection and contribute to enduring regional stability.

Recommendations

Mandate vs Capability: The Operational Gap. The over expectation of UN mandates, particularly in complex conflict zones like the DRC, frequently clashes with the on-ground capabilities of UN

forces. Mandates often encompass a broad spectrum of responsibilities, from targeted offensive operations to the PoC and the delivery of humanitarian aid, creating an unrealistic burden for a single force. This is further exacerbated when armed groups, supported by conventional armies, possess modern weaponry, advanced night-fighting capabilities, and readily available reinforcements, significantly outmatching UN contingents that are often outnumbered and face limitations in advance heavy weapons, reinforcement and equipment. Consequently, the disparity between the ambitious mandate and the practical limitations of UN forces on the ground creates a significant operational gap, hindering effective mandate implementation and leaving civilians vulnerable. The mandate may be subjected to revision to ensure the effective fulfillment of its stated objectives.

Conflict Classification and Deployment under Chapter VII.

The persistent threat from heavily armed groups in the DRC, resulting in possible casualties among Indian troops, necessitates a reconsideration of deployment under a Chapter VII mandate. This mandate, which authorizes the use of force, clashes with the Indian Army's core doctrine of force preservation in the UN Mission. Furthermore, the evolving nature of warfare, particularly the rise of hybrid threats, demands specialised capabilities that are not inherently vested within the Indian contingent's current operational framework. Transitioning to a Chapter VI mandate, focused on monitoring and peacekeeping, would align more closely with the Indian Army's strategic priorities, reduce the risk of casualties, and enable a more effective contribution to stability in the region.

Plan for Sustained Engagement. Given the protracted nature of modern conflicts, UN Peace Operations must adopt a dual-track strategy, focusing on achievable short-term goals while developing long-term strategies. Short-term priorities like civilian protection are crucial, but sustainable peace requires addressing root causes through collaboration with diverse

UN actors, including political missions and development agencies. This holistic approach ensures immediate gains contribute to durable peace, rather than merely addressing conflict symptoms.

Implement Multi-Level Strategies. Effective peace operations must be designed to address the intricate, interconnected networks of local, national and regional conflict dynamics. This necessitates a shift from siloed approaches to integrated strategies that recognize the symbiotic relationships between various conflict drivers. Integrating roles across different UN entities and specialized agencies is crucial, fostering a cohesive response that addresses the multifaceted nature of conflict. Furthermore, enhancing mandate clarity is essential to ensure that all actors operate within a unified framework, preventing duplication of efforts and fostering synergistic action. By recognizing the interdependence of conflict dynamics and promoting integrated, clearly mandated operations, the UN can enhance its ability to deliver sustainable peace and stability in complex environments.

Create clearer, uncompromising Operational Guidelines. To enhance the effectiveness and accountability of UN peace operations, the development of clearer, uncompromising operational guidelines is paramount. Firstly, robust guidelines must be established to explicitly delineate the parameters of UN engagement with conflict parties, specifying acceptable interactions and establishing clear red lines. These guidelines should address issues such as information sharing, negotiation protocols, and the use of force, ensuring consistency and predictability in UN responses. Secondly, integrated human rights components within peace operations must be strengthened to ensure comprehensive monitoring and impartial reporting of abuses committed by all parties involved in the conflict. This includes establishing robust mechanisms for data collection, analysis and public reporting, thereby promoting transparency and accountability while reinforcing the mission's

commitment to protecting human rights.

Develop and Deploy New Capabilities. To address the complexities of modern conflicts, UN peace operations must develop and deploy new capabilities. This requires strategic investments to tackle root causes, including economic inequality, social marginalization and gender-based violence, while fostering community resilience through locally driven security initiatives. Strengthening civilian capacity is also essential, with a focus on conflict analysis, mediation and community engagement. By enhancing these capabilities and prioritizing community-based security strategies, UN peace operations can take a more holistic and sustainable approach towards building peace and security.

Adaptable Resource Allocation. To optimize operational effectiveness, UN peace operations must adopt flexible approaches to resource allocation, enabling the rapid scaling of specialised capacities in response to evolving mission needs. This involves establishing mechanisms for the swift deployment and redeployment of personnel, equipment and expertise, ensuring that missions can adapt to fluctuating demands and emerging challenges.

Enhanced Political Engagement Skills. Recognizing the critical interplay between operational support and political dynamics, UN personnel must develop specialised skill sets for engaging with the political dimensions of their work. This includes training in dialogue facilitation, enabling effective communication and negotiation with diverse stakeholders, and proficiency in political economy analysis, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the underlying factors driving conflict and instability.

Stabilizing the Security Environment in Goma. To address the prevailing security crisis in Goma and facilitate a return to stability, the following are submitted:-

(a) **Immediate and Unconditional Cessation of**

Hostilities. An immediate and unconditional ceasefire, accompanied by a comprehensive cessation of all hostilities, is paramount to de-escalate the current conflict and establish a foundation for sustained peace.

- (b) **Provision of Humanitarian Assistance and Maintenance of Essential Services.** The urgent provision of humanitarian assistance to affected populations, coupled with the restoration and maintenance of essential services, is critical to alleviate suffering and support the basic needs of the civilian population.
- (c) **Reopening of Supply Routes and Establishment of a Green Air Corridor.** The immediate reopening of main supply routes and the establishment of a secure Green Air Corridor are essential to facilitate the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid and the resumption of essential commercial activities.
- (d) **Revision of the Integrated Security Plan for Goma.** A comprehensive revision of the integrated security plan for Goma is required to address the evolving security dynamics and ensure a coordinated and effective response to emerging threats.
- (e) **Systematic Destruction of UXOs.** A systematic and prioritised program for the destruction of unexploded ordnance (UXOs) is essential to mitigate the risk of accidental detonation and ensure the safety of civilian population.
- (f) **Reopening of Goma Airport.** The immediate reopening of Goma Airport is critical to restore essential logistical capabilities, facilitate the movement of personnel and supplies and support the resumption of economic activity.

challenges. The CS efforts to enhance patrols, community engagements and capacity building for Congolese forces have been noteworthy. As MONUSCO continues to navigate the complex operating environment, sustained international support and cooperation will be crucial in achieving lasting peace and stability in the DRC.



Colonel Kamakhya Singh

**Deputy Commander &
Chief of Staff
Infantry Brigade Group,
MONUSCO (DRC)**

Colonel Kamakhya Singh was commissioned into the Infantry in December 2003. He has served extensively in diverse terrain and operations. He has held various command and staff appointments in his service to include command of a Rashtriya Rifles on the Line of Control. A graduate of DSSC, Wellington and CDM, Secunderabad, he has previously served in MONUSCO (DRC) as part of a contingent. The Officer is presently tenating the appointment of Acting Commander of Infantry Brigade Group in Democratic Republic of Congo.

Conclusion

The MONUSCO Mission in the Congo has made significant strides in maintaining stability and protecting civilians, despite persistent security

Peacekeeping in South Sudan - UNMISS 2024

By **Brigadier Dinesh Singh, VSM**
Sector Commander, Sector South, UNMISS

Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding.

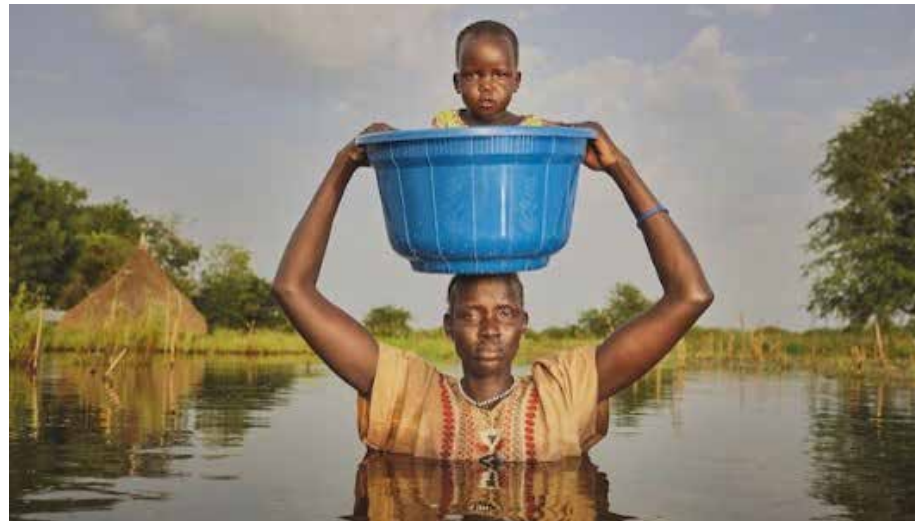
ALBERT EINSTEIN

Youngest Country is Born

Ending almost five centuries of subjugation mostly by Egypt and lately by the British Egyptian colonialists, Sudan gained independence in 1956. The present-day South Sudan, inhabited mostly by Christians, revolted against the dominating Arab-Islamic North for political power soon after independence and finally on 9th of January 2005 a historic Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed between the Government of Sudan and Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) paving way for creation of the youngest country on earth on 9th of July 2011.

Inception of UNMISS

Immediately, post-independence, inter communal clashes and jostling for political power amongst the ethnic groups, resulted in continuing cycle of insecurity and violence. Apprehending this situation by the international community, United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) was established simultaneously with the independence of South Sudan on 9th of July 2011. Despite the best efforts by UNMISS and the international community, South Sudan continues to remain on the boil driven primarily by political instability, inter communal violence, economic strain, lack of institutions, primitive infrastructure, starvation, massive floods and



above all, perhaps the political will to consolidate its strengths and meet these challenges head-on. The continuing violence, lack of institutional capacities of the Government of South Sudan and the resultant threat to peace has led to the Security Council extending the UNMISS mandate every year with the latest extension being granted till 30th of April 2026.

UNMISS Mandate and Vision

The renewed UNMISS Mandate is woven around its four pillars, namely, protection of civilians; creating conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance; supporting the

Implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) and the peace process; and monitoring, investigating, and reporting on violations of humanitarian and human rights law. Anchored in the four pillars of its mandate, a three-year strategic vision has been framed, viz, UNMISS ought to cooperate with all stakeholders as well as regional and international partners to stymie escalation of violence and recurrence of civil war; nurture an empowering environment to progress the pending benchmarks of the R-ARCSS in a timely manner; and lay the foundation for peaceful co-existence, state and nation building, and sustainable development in South Sudan.

The Indian Peacekeepers

The UNMISS Force, as mandated under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, is to support and assist in creating a safe and secure environment that will facilitate the successful implementation of the UN mandate and promote conditions required for stability in South Sudan. UNMISS is one of the largest UN Peacekeeping Missions currently deployed with overall sanctioned force levels of 17,000 military personnel. As of December 2024, India is the second largest contributor in the mission providing 2,329 peacekeepers organized into seven contingents. In addition, India boasts of having a Force Commander, a Sector Commander, a Deputy Sector Commander, a Deputy Police Commissioner, 57 Staff Officers (SO), 18 Experts on Mission and 13 Police Personnel including



female peacekeepers. Currently, Lieutenant General Mohan Subramanian, PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, is commanding the UNMISS Force. Indian Army's presence across South Sudan includes two Indian Infantry Battalion (INDBATT) Groups (3 JAK RIF in Northern and 10 DOGRA in the Eastern part of the country), 115 Horizontal Military Engineering Company (HMEC), Indian Force Signal Unit (Ind FSU), Indian Field Hospital (IFH) Level-II, IFH Level-II Plus, Indian Petroleum Platoon (Ind Pet Pl), all undertaking myriad activities towards ensuring peace and tranquility in the country.

Headquarters Sector South

Brig MC Tamang, YSM, VSM handed over the command of Sector South and Senior National

Handing / Taking Over Command of Sector South



Representative (SNR) to Brig Dinesh Singh, VSM in September 2024. This Sector has the distinction of having the sixth Indian Sector Commander in succession, a feat rare to the Force. Sector South is one of the most challenging Sectors responsible for three states of Greater Equatoria Region out of the total of ten states of South Sudan. Plagued with vicious cycle of inter communal clashes, the Sector has been provided 32 SOs, three Infantry Battalion Groups, and enabler units, represented by peacekeepers from more than 15 nationalities.

Force Commander on Operational Visit

INDBATT-I

The battalion group under Sector North has a five-point deployment in the state of Upper Nile, the most active region in South Sudan and Juba.



In the short time spent in the region the Battalion has commendably managed influx of refugees and violent groups across the porous Sudan Border, saved thousands from getting inundated in devastating floods, conducted numerous veterinary camps for the local herders which

has been appreciated by the UN Headquarters as a pioneering effort. The Indian Female Engagement Team (FET) inducted for the first time as part of this INDBATT which represents a significant milestone in Indian peacekeeping efforts and have now become an integral part of gender-neutral operations in the region, strengthening the operational capability of INDBATT-I and promoting greater inclusivity & sensitivity in peacekeeping mission. INDBATT-I has been touching lives of the people in South Sudan with community outreach activities. In 2024 alone INDBATT-I veterinary team has treated approx 6800 animals, the medical team has provided assistance to more than 1200 civilians, distributed stationery to schools and sanitary hygiene packages to girl children. To add to their achievements INDBATT-I has won four trophies in various sports competitions held in Juba and Malakal.

FET Engaging with local Women in Malakal Town



FET in Action



Veterinary Team in Action

INDBATT-II

10 DOGRA Infantry Battalion Group is spread over 50,000 sq km in Jonglei State and is deployed at three different locations. Each location has different ethnic domination resulting in turbulent security situation. The Battalion has undertaken multiple operational tasks and CIMIC activities as per UNMISS mandate and ensured stable security situation. The Battalion displayed exemplary professionalism in providing force protection to the Korean Engineers tasked to repair the lines of communication and to the World Food Program convoys delivering logistics in remote areas of the country where in a number of attempts of looting of the convoy by miscreants were thwarted by the brave troops.



Rehab of Main Supply Route



Riverine Patrol

IND HMEC

Notable achievements of 115 IND HMEC deployed in the Northern part of the country include the swift recovery of a crash-landed aircraft at Malakal Airport and constructing a 4.8 km drainage system to mitigate flooding. The unit also constructed a police post to enhance security for IDPs willing to relocate from POC Camp to Malakal Town and has revived vital roads after heavy rains. Additionally, the unit empowered local youth through vocational training programs and achieved another



Recovery of Aircraft

milestone by initiating resuscitation of the flood-affected Malakal-Paloich Main Supply Route being the first HMEC of the mission to start the rehabilitation work.

IFH Level II Plus & IFH Level II

The IFH Level II Plus at Juba is the apex hospital of UNMISS & provides medical support to UNMISS staff. It is a 20 bedded multi-specialty hospital with most basic specialties. Casualty evacuation / medical evacuation have been the front work of the hospital. The IFH Level II, Malakal is a multi-specialty hospital which has performed credibly & has been assisting humanitarian NGOs for the definitive management of their patients. The Indian hospitals have been on the fore front in providing quality medical aid to UNMISS persons



AMET Team in Action



Flight following of UN Flights by Ind FSU



Treating a Local Boy

digital database prepared by them using Google Earth software of all Communication Zones which is facilitating patrolling in all patrol routes.

IND Pet Pl

The IND Pet Pl, UNMISS is an integral part of the Fuel Unit from Sep 2011. Members of the Platoon are meant to assist the fuel unit in its routine POL management and contract administration functions. In addition, the Petroleum Platoon members carry out inspection of fuel sites and Outstation Posts periodically to ensure correct accounting & management of POL as also to ensure quality and Health Safety & Environment (HS&E) standards.

as well as locals in distress. The Air Medical Evacuation Teams (AMET) of the Indian hospitals have proven their mettle during air medical & casualty evacuations.

IND FSU

The Indian Force Signal Unit as part of UNMISS has deployment in 11 locations across South Sudan, tasked to provide Radio Communication and tracking to all military and civilian components of the Mission. The unit uses latest radio tracking software to track all UN patrols and Inland water transport (Barge) across UNMISS. IND FSU also maintains a Flight Following Detachment tasked for real time Radio Communication with Pilots for Landing/Takeoff and tracking of flights. Their pioneering efforts have resulted in a GIS based



Trg of TCCs in Refuelling



Supervising Refuelling Ops

HMEC. The event was marked by an impeccable drill routine, the acrobatic Physical Training Display and the diverse martial cultural events form various parts of India including the Khukri Dance, the Jhanj & Gatka performances and finally the Fusion Band Display.

Road to Elusive Peace

The elections having been postponed for couple of years has fueled increasing political uncertainty in the country. The security situation remains fragile and drivers for conflict remain unaddressed. UNMISS, therefore will continue to

Medal Parade Ceremony at Malakal

It was a momentous occasion for the Indian Contingents deployed in Malakal on 11 Dec 2024 when a total of 1182 Indian Peacekeepers were awarded the prestigious UN medal for their service in UNMISS. Marking a significant milestone in India's commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women in leadership roles, the Medal Day Parade was led by Maj Divya Tyagi of 115 IND



remain relevant in its applicability and mandate. The road to elusive peace in South Sudan remains challenging and requires political will. If this transitional period is not utilized gainfully by the country to build its institutions, build trust among communities, empower grass root democracy and ensure financial inclusion, the road to peace will remain elusive.



Cultural Events



Brigadier Dinesh Singh, VSM

Brigadier Dinesh Singh, VSM was commissioned into the Infantry and has commanded an Infantry battalion and later served as Brigade Commander of a Mountain Brigade in Sikkim. Currently, he serves as Sector Commander Sector South and Senior National Representative UNMISS.

Mission Brief: UNIFIL

By **Colonel Ajit Singh Negi**

CO Infantry Battalion Group UNIFIL

“Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal.”

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Introduction

The year 2024 marked the worsening of the security situation in Lebanon following the Gaza massacre on 07 Oct 2023, when Hamas launched a large-scale attack on Israel. The conflict generated kinetic response across Syria, Yemen & Lebanon via the components of the Iran’s Axis of Resistance against Israel. Specific to Lebanon, this escalation triggered heightened tensions between Hezbollah and Israel, with southern Lebanon becoming a flashpoint for cross-border violence. Hezbollah, aligning with Hamas, intensified its operations against Israel, resulting in regular rocket attacks from Lebanon and retaliatory Israeli airstrikes. These hostilities caused civilian casualties, widespread displacement and significant infrastructure damage in South Lebanon.

UNIFIL, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, has been actively monitoring and attempting to de-escalate tensions, but its role has been hindered by both security risks and operational limitations. The Indian Contingent deployed as part of UNIFIL witnessed these escalations and carried out its mandated tasks as per the mission directives.

The Indian contingent received the coveted UNIFIL Force Commander’s letter of appreciation for the exemplary service during their first rotation in Lebanon. The letter of appreciation



**Geographical
Map of
Lebanon**

serves as a testament to the effective collaboration and operational success achieved by the Indian contingent.

Background

Lebanon, located on the Eastern Mediterranean, borders Syria to the North and East and Israel to the South. Following the 1948 Arab Israel war, many Palestinians sought refuge in Lebanon. In 1970, after being expelled from Jordan, the

Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) regrouped in Lebanon, contributing to the civil war that erupted in 1975 due to internal divisions over their presence.

In response to Israel's 1978 invasion aimed at dismantling PLO military infrastructure, UNIFIL was established under UNSC Resolutions 425 and 426 to facilitate peace between Lebanon and Israel, confirm Israeli troop withdrawal and assist the Lebanese government in asserting authority in the south. UNIFIL began downsizing after Israel's withdrawal on May 25, 2000. However, the 2006 Israel-Lebanon war led to a revised mandate and an increase in UNIFIL forces under UNSC Resolution 1701.

Today, UNIFIL consists of around 10,000 peacekeepers from over 50 countries, tasked with monitoring ceasefire violations, mediating between Lebanese and Israeli forces and supporting the Lebanese army in the South. Its activities include daily patrols, observations and reporting violations of UNSC Resolution 1701, which calls for the disarmament of non-state groups like Hezbollah.

History of INDBATT in Lebanon

The Indian Battalion, referred to as INDBATT, has been stationed as the eastern most battalion of the UNIFIL area of operations since 1998. It is located at the tri-junction of Lebanon, Syria and Israel, on the foothills of the Golan Heights, having succeeded the Norwegian Battalion. As of 20 May 2024, INDBATT-XXV has taken on operational responsibilities, commemorating 25 years of Indian presence in the region.

Deployment Overview

INDBATT is part of Sector East, a brigade-sized formation with headquarters support from Spain and staff officers from various countries, including India, Nepal, Brazil, Serbia, El Salvador and Indonesia.

The Area of Operations (AO) is highly sensitive due to its location at the tri-junction of Lebanon,

Syria and Israel, particularly around the disputed Cheeba Farms, which is a potential flash point. INDBATT oversees 16 km of the Blue Line, which remains un-demarcated, contributing to ongoing tensions. The local population is predominantly Sunni muslim, with many Syrian refugees, further complicating the situation. The hilly terrain experiences harsh winters, making it a strategic location for potential military operations.

Operational Structure

INDBATT effectively manages its AO through a network of static United Nations Positions (UNPs), Observation Posts (OPs) and Check Points (CPs) :-

UNPs. Six UNPs, the highest occupied by any contingent, are organized in three tiers across the AO. The Battalion Mobile Reserve is positioned in the third tier for quick reaction capabilities. UNP 4-7A, at 4,500 feet, is the highest position in UNIFIL.

OPs. Five permanent OPs are manned daily from dawn to dusk, ensuring visual control over the Blue Line. OP 1, at 5,840 feet, is the highest OP in the UNIFIL area.

CPs. Three CPs are established daily at critical ingress/egress points from the Bekaa Valley. Two

Area of Operations: UNIFIL



CPs are jointly manned with the Lebanese Armed Forces 24/7, while one CP operates for six hours each day.

The Dynamics of the Third Lebanon War

Following the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, Hezbollah launched rocket attacks on Israel's northern borders on October 8, 2023. Subsequently, tensions between Hezbollah and Israel escalated dramatically, leading to frequent exchanges of fire along the Blue Line. In the INDBATT AO, over 1,600 rockets were fired into Northern Israel, alongside approximately 3,000 artillery rounds and 107 airstrikes by the IDF. A significant incident occurred on September 17-18, 2024, when an Israeli strike targeted Hezbollah's communication equipment, resulting in catastrophic explosions that killed at least 42 people, including 12 civilians and injured over 3,000. This tragedy exacerbated the humanitarian crisis and inflamed regional tensions. Iran's involvement intensified the conflict, with missile attacks on Israel during "Op True Promise-I" in April 2024 and again on October 1, 2024, during "Op True Promise-II." These actions were perceived as support for the Axis of Resistance, raising alarms across the region.

Third Lebanon war began with a significant air offensive targeting major urban areas, including Tripoli, Beirut, Sidon and Tyre. This marked a dramatic escalation in hostilities, resulting in the death of Hezbollah Supreme Leader Hassan Nasrallah on September 27 due to a precision strike on Hezbollah's headquarters in Beirut.

In retaliation for the October 1 missile attack, Israel launched "Days of Repentance" airstrikes on October 26, targeting nearly 20 strategic sites in Iran, further escalating tensions and drawing international attention to the ongoing violence between Israel and Hezbollah.

Third Lebanon War

On 23 Sep 2024, Israel launched Operation

"Northern Arrows," with an air campaign against Hezbollah strongholds. Following the airstrikes, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) concentrated their forces in Kiryat Shemona and commenced a ground offensive on 01 Oct, deploying five divisions along the Lebanese border. The IDF utilized heavy engineering equipment to breach fortified positions and destroy Hezbollah strongholds, leading to increased clashes with Hezbollah, particularly near UN peacekeeping positions, resulting in injuries to over 30 peacekeepers. The conflict led to a humanitarian crisis, with Israel issuing evacuation warnings that displaced approximately 1.3 million people from Southern Lebanon. The INDBATT, tasked with peacekeeping, faced significant challenges, including threats from stray bullets, blast splinters and debris due to IDF strikes and Hezbollah's shortfall of munitions.

The ongoing military operations caused extensive damage to UN infrastructure and property, complicating the battalion's ability to fulfill its mandate amid rising tensions and violence. On 26 Nov 2024, Israel and Lebanon signed a ceasefire agreement mediated by France and the United States, which went into effect on 27 Nov. Following the ceasefire, the situation showed signs of improvement, with reduced firing incidents reported in the UNIFIL

Indian Peacekeepers overcome Supply Chain challenges in conflict zones



AO. However, tensions remained as IDF tanks and earth- moving activities were observed near the Blue Line. Local villagers began returning to assess the extensive damage to infrastructure, livestock and public services in the area. Despite the ceasefire, both sides remained vigilant, with concerns about potential future escalations and the long-term stability of the region.

Indian Patrols navigating through villages



Medical, Dental and Veterinary Camps. Regular free camps provide essential healthcare services to the local populace and their livestock, addressing critical needs in rural areas.

Infrastructure Support. The battalion has repaired and renovated schools and community centers, improving local infrastructure and access to basic services.

Inspiring Young Minds. Distribution of school supplies and awareness campaigns promote education and support for local educational institutions.

Humanitarian Aid. Regular distribution of essential supplies, such as blankets and mattresses assists displaced individuals, particularly during crises.

Cultural and Community Engagement. INDBATT has organized cultural events and engaged with local leaders to build strong relationships and mutual trust within the community.

Empowering Communities: INDBATT's Strategic Civil-Military Cooperation(CIMIC)

Despite the challenges of conflict in South Lebanon, INDBATT peacekeepers have persevered, often at great personal risk, to provide vital humanitarian assistance to the local population. Recognized as a beacon of hope, INDBATT has actively engaged in CIMIC activities aimed at fostering goodwill, supporting socio-economic development and enhancing regional stability. The dedicated CIMIC team, which includes the Public Information Officer (PIO) and medical, dental and veterinary officers has been instrumental in maintaining positive relations with the local community. Key CIMIC activities include:-



Indian CIMIC Teams in action

Peacekeeper's Journey in South Lebanon

The UN peacekeepers in Lebanon have been vital in maintaining peace and stability in South Lebanon since their establishment in 1978.

Their primary objectives include overseeing the withdrawal of Israeli forces, restoring international peace and security and assisting the Lebanese Government in regaining control over the area. UNIFIL's commitment to not vacating its positions, even amid intense fighting that endangered peacekeepers' lives, has sent a strong message globally, enhancing its credibility in Lebanon. The resilience and determination of UNIFIL peacekeepers symbolize humanity's fight for peace, regardless of the dangers involved.

Throughout the conflict, UNIFIL has played a crucial role in facilitating negotiations among all parties, enabling ceasefire agreements to remain within reach. While questions about its credibility and legitimacy have persisted, the selfless actions

of peacekeepers have partially addressed these concerns. UNIFIL has consistently adapted its peace efforts to the evolving challenges, maintaining relevance in the region's dynamics.

During the Third Lebanon War, UNIFIL's presence increased accountability among warring parties, compelling them to justify their actions to the international community. In the post-ceasefire era, UNIFIL's role in rehabilitating South Lebanon is essential for restoring stability and helping the Lebanese people return to their lives with hope for a brighter future.

By preventing cross-border violence and ensuring the integrity of the Blue Line, UNIFIL contributes to broader regional stability in the Middle East, underscoring the international community's commitment to lasting peace in this geopolitically sensitive area.

Way Ahead

The ceasefire agreement signed by all parties must be upheld to facilitate a delicate peace process in Lebanon. Despite ongoing Israeli actions in Lebanese territory, the Lebanese

*Indian
Peacekeeper
on the watch*



side has shown restraint, aided by UNIFIL and international mediation, allowing the ceasefire to hold. Lebanon's recovery and stability after the Third Lebanon War depend on a multi-faceted approach involving domestic reforms, regional diplomacy and international support.

Political and Governance Reforms. Lebanon recently conducted presidential elections, after two years of political deadlock to consolidate state authority, efforts should be undertaken to select the parliament members and Prime Minister. The state must encourage political dialogue among diverse sectarian groups to reduce internal divisions and ensuring that non-state actors like Hezbollah operate under state control.

Economic Reconstruction. Significant investment is needed for post-conflict recovery, focusing on rebuilding homes, schools, hospitals and infrastructure. The government must implement measures to stabilize the Lebanese pound.

Security Reforms. Strengthening the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) to assert control over all territories is crucial, as it is the sole legitimate armed force. Dialogue and gradual reforms are necessary for the integration or disarmament of Hezbollah and other non-state actors to prevent future conflicts.

Conclusion

The ongoing conflict in Lebanon highlights the indispensable role of UNIFIL and the Indian Battalion in fostering peace and stability in a region marked by volatility. Despite facing significant challenges, including escalating tensions and a humanitarian crisis, INDBATT has demonstrated unwavering commitment to humanitarian assistance and community engagement. Their efforts in providing medical care, infrastructure support, and essential supplies have not only alleviated suffering but also built trust and goodwill among the local population. This dedication underscores the importance of peacekeeping missions in mitigating the impacts of conflict and promoting stability.



Colonel
Ajit Singh Negi

CO, Infantry Battalion Group UNIFIL

Colonel Ajit Singh Negi was commissioned into Infantry on 13 Dec 2008. He has attended all Army courses showcasing an exceptional all-round performance. He has been an Instructor Class 'C' at the Indian Military Training Team, Bhutan from 2012 to 2014 and has attended the prestigious Defence Services Staff College at DSSC, Wellington. He has also tenanted the appointment of General Staff Officer (Equipment) responsible for capital procurements, at the Army Headquarters, New Delhi from 2021 to 2023. He has been awarded with the Chief of Army Staff Commendation Card for professionalism & dedication to duty. The Officer is presently commanding the Infantry Battalion Group deployed in UNIFIL since May 2024.

Mission Update : UNISFA

By Colonel Kalicharan Gopalan
CO, INDBATT UNISFA



The transition of United Nations Interim Security Force in Abyei (UNISFA) from Ethiopian contingent force to a multi-national force in April 2022 marked a crucial phase for this mission tasked with managing the highly contested region at the intersection of Sudan and South Sudan. The mission currently comprises of battalion sized contingents from four Troop Contributing Countries (TCC) viz India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Ghana alongwith company sized contingents from four other countries viz China, Nepal, Nigeria and Vietnam in addition to a Chinese Utility Helicopter Unit. A Chapter VII mission, UNISFA, mandated for Protection

of Civilians (PoC), maintaining security and ensuring freedom of movement along the Main Supply Route (MSR) and preventing inter-communal and tribal violence is a complex mosaic of inclement weather conditions, poor lines of communication, extended supply chain and Status of Force Agreement violations. Strategically located on the contested border, Abyei is characterised by a predominantly flat landscape with seasonal variations. The region is often inaccessible during the rainy season (June to October), while the dry season (November to May) sees increased human activity, particularly the seasonal migration of herders. The terrain

consisting of sandy, clay and swampy soil that becomes waterlogged during the monsoons, making troop movements and logistics more difficult. The region's biodiversity, including open woodlands and rangelands, is crucial for the livelihood of the pastoralist communities, yet also adds to environmental challenges due to overgrazing and resource competition. Water bodies, such as the Kirr and Nyomora Rivers are vital for local communities, but their control has

become a point of contention, affecting both military mobility and civilian access to resources.

Abyei is home to two primary communities - the Ngok Dinkas and Misseriyas, whose historical, cultural, and environmental ties to the land have been source of ongoing conflict. The Ngok Dinkas, numbering between 1,20,000 to 1,50,000 are primarily pastoralists with a deep cultural connection to Abyei. The Misseriya seasonal herders numbering around 40,000 migrate from Sudan and compete with the Ngok Dinka for land and resources, particularly during the dry season. Additionally, the recent claims of Twic Dinka community (mainly residing in Warrap State of South Sudan) up to river Kiir has further complicated the region's demographic profile, leading to increased competition for land and grazing areas. Last but not the least are the mercenaries belonging to Nuer community who are known for their notorious behaviour and work for the highest bidder for creating instability in the region.



The socio-political landscape of Abyei is also shaped by various clans, each with distinct governance structures. The Ngok Dinkas are organized into nine chiefdoms, while the Misseriyas are divided into sub-clans, with one eighth of them migrating with their cattle into the green pastures of Abyei during the dry season followed by a reverse migration before

the onset of wet season. The migration patterns of the Misseriya, particularly the Fayyarin, Awlad Kamil, Mezaghna, Fadilya sub clans, influence the region's politics. The conflict in Abyei has deep historical roots, dating back to ethnic identities, territorial disputes and resource competition.

The discovery of oil in the late 1970s further exacerbated tensions, leading to violent clashes. Abyei holds significant geopolitical importance due to unresolved territorial claims and valuable natural resources, particularly oil, which have intensified tensions between the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities. The 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) envisioned a referendum to resolve the region's status, but this process was thwarted by disagreements. Although CPA sought to resolve issues, Abyei's status was left undecided, fueling further discord. In 2009, the Permanent Court of Arbitration's ruling on the borders, while clarifying some aspects, only intensified local grievances, particularly among the Misseriya. Despite various agreements, including the 2011 Sudan-South Sudan deal which failed to resolve Abyei's status due to disputes over voter eligibility. The failure of the 2011 referendum, which aimed to determine whether Abyei would join Sudan or South Sudan, highlighted the deeply entrenched divisions within the region. Resource-based conflicts, particularly over oil and grazing lands, have persisted and tensions over oil revenues have further fueled the conflict. The Sudanese governments rejection of revenue-sharing until borders were defined has only added to the complexity of the situation.

In response to these challenges, UNISFA was established in 2011 to maintain peace in Abyei following Sudan's bifurcation. The mission initially operated under Ethiopian leadership until 2022 and thereafter transitioned into a multinational force. This shift was necessary to address the evolving security dynamics, fueled by Sudan's civil war and the increasing footprint of armed groups alongside associated weapon proliferation in the region. UNISFA operates under a Chapter VII mandate, with forces deployed across Abyei's

three operational sectors: the Northern sector, managed by PAKBATT (Pakistani Battalion); the Central sector, overseen by INDBATT (Indian Battalion); and the Southern sector, controlled by GHANBATT (Ghanaian Battalion). The Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism is supported by BANBATT (Bangladeshi Battalion).

One of the most pressing issues identified by INDBATT, has been the widespread proliferation of weapons in Abyei. This issue has worsened owing to unstable political environment in both Sudan and South Sudan, where armed youth often backed



SCR 2760 / 2024 Para 17 Urges the relevant authorities of both Sudan and South Sudan to take all necessary steps to ensure that Abyei is effectively demilitarized, including through disarmament programmes as necessary

by local leaders, have resorted to weaponised self-defense. Reports indicate that armed groups in the region are equipped with a range of weaponry, including heavy arms, further complicating this peace enforcement mission with limited resources to contest well organised Armed groups and forces backed by host nation(s). Despite UN Security Council Resolutions calling for the establishment of a weapons-free Abyei, no clear Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) strategy has been developed. The absence

of police units and a defined DDR framework has left a significant gap in the missions ability to address this challenge. The UN's Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS) provide a useful framework for addressing the complex issues associated with DDR in post-conflict regions. However, lessons from other peacekeeping missions, such as MONUSCO, UNMISS and UNMIL, demonstrate that DDR success depends on community engagement, vocational training and sustained reintegration efforts.



A well laid out DDR programme for Abyei is the need of the day. At the outset, it would involve providing formal assurances of confidentiality to individuals who surrender their weapons, ensuring their safety. INDBATT has made significant strides in engaging local youth, leading to the voluntary surrender of weapons by some individuals. These individuals have expressed a desire to reintegrate into society, particularly through employment opportunities. While women have not been observed carrying weapons, their role in influencing local attitudes toward disarmament is crucial and their involvement in DDR initiatives could prove pivotal.



Status of Force Agreement (SOFA) forms the bedrock of a mission's continued mandate implementation since it intertwines the host nation(s) requirements of economic and social growth with UN's peacekeeping initiatives. UNISFA unfortunately is marred by SOFA violations in Sector South, wherein a considerable amount of its territory is under occupation by South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF). South Sudan's recent efforts to settle the Twic Dinka in Abyei have contributed to instability, with violent clashes occurring in 2023 and 2024. The region's resource-based conflicts, particularly over grazing rights, remain unresolved and the situation continues to evolve. In the North, the failing hold of recognised governance in Sudan has further complicated the need for stability.

technological integration and community engagement, the TCCs have made significant contributions to the prevention of inter-tribal violence and the facilitation of peace negotiations. The force component has also played a key role in preventing cattle rustling and resolving criminal incidents in absence of Formed Police Units (FPU), further cementing its role as a neutral peacebuilding force.

Additionally, Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) initiatives have been central to the missions operations, fostering goodwill through medical assistance, infrastructure development and educational programs

A TCC's role in Abyei extends beyond traditional peacekeeping. Through rapid response,

The Female Engagement Team (FET) as part of the TCCs have been particularly effective in advancing gender inclusion and empowering women and girls in the region. Educational initiatives, such as the establishment of the Ek Onkar Learning Centre and Dokura School in Central Sector and



Iqra School in Sector North with a total footprint of 600 plus women and children; UNISFA have further promoted community building, civic responsibility and skill-building among local communities alongwith.

INDBATT in UNISFA has taken the lead strides towards advancing technology driven initiatives for peace keeping. A host of state-of-the-art equipment inducted beyond those laid down in the wet lease agreement include low light aerocams and night enabled close circuit televisions for surveillance, personnel body and helmet cameras along with vehicular dashboard cameras for improved incident monitoring and reporting, remote mine clearance vehicles for safe foot based patrolling in mined areas and early warning infra-red sensor with alarms for enhanced base defence.

The evolving conflict dynamics in Abyei, particularly the rise of intra-tribal tensions between Twic and Ngok Dinkas, underscore the need for a coordinated military, political and diplomatic approach to stabilize the region.



**Colonel
Kalicharan Gopalan**

CO, INDBATT UNISFA

Colonel Kalicharan Gopalan, Commanding Officer of Indian Battalion in UNISFA is a serving Army Officer with a rich experience in varied challenging terrains. An alumnus of National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla, the officer has undergone the coveted Defence Services Staff Course at Wellington, India. Col Kalicharan underwent the United Nations Peacekeepers Course at New Delhi in Mar 2023, Regional Sr Msn Leadership Course at PCSS, Nairobi in Feb 2024 and went on to assume the role of Central Sector Commander at UNISFA on 01 May 2024.

Indian Peacekeepers: Engineering Excellence in South Sudan

By **Lieutenant Colonel Shekhar**
UNMISS

As India celebrates 75 years of its unparalleled contribution to United Nations peacekeeping operations, it stands tall as one of the largest and most steadfast contributors to these missions. Indian peacekeepers have been a beacon of hope and resilience in some of the world's most volatile regions, their legacy characterized by courage, professionalism and humanitarian values.

Among the shining examples of India's peacekeeping prowess is the remarkable contribution of the **115 Horizontal Military Engineering Company (HMEC) Ex 115 Engineer Regiment**, currently deployed in **Malakal, South Sudan**, under the banner of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). The unit's contributions, spanning disaster recovery, infrastructure development and skill



empowerment epitomize the nation's enduring commitment to global peace.

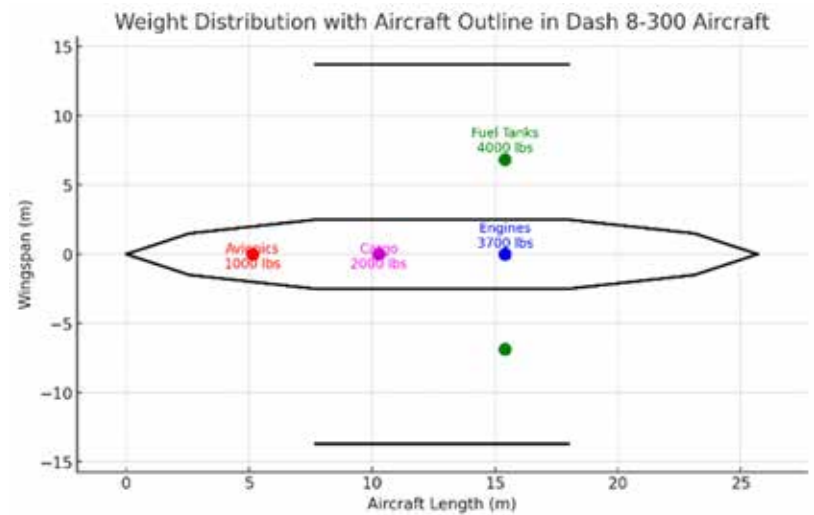
Rising to Challenges in South Sudan

South Sudan, a young nation emerging from years of conflict, poses unique and formidable challenges. Persistent inter-communal violence, a fragile socio-economic landscape and a harsh natural environment hinder development and stability. The region around Malakal faces perennial flooding, which devastates communities and critical infrastructure.

For 115 HMEC, operating in such an environment required extraordinary resilience and resourcefulness. The Unit's primary mission involves constructing and maintaining infrastructure essential for the UN's operations and for the benefit of local communities. Yet, the Unit has consistently gone above and beyond these duties, embracing challenges as opportunities to create lasting impact.

The Aircraft Recovery Operation: A Case Study In Ingenuity

Among the most notable achievements of the 115 HMEC was the **recovery operation of an aircraft** that crash-landed at **Malakal Airport**. The incident, which severely disrupted air operations in a region heavily reliant on aerial connectivity, posed an immediate challenge to the Indian engineers. The swampy terrain surrounding the



SOUTH SUDAN Floods Snapshot

As of 15 November 2024



1.4M
people affected by floods¹



379K
people displaced by floods¹



44
counties and Abyei affected by floods



22
counties and Abyei reporting flood displacement



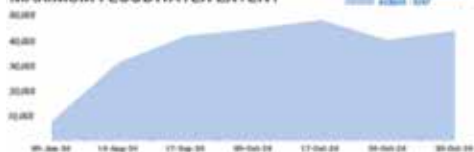
SITUATION UPDATE

As of 15 November, about 1.4 million people remain affected by flooding across 44 counties and the Abyei Administrative Area. More than 379,000 people are flood-displaced across 22 counties and Abyei. In Upper Nile State, recent assessments identified over 32,000 flood-affected people in Renk County and 6,000 people in Maban County. In Renk and Malakal counties, humanitarian partners have reported a substantial rise in cholera cases due to inflows from Sudan, limited access to clean water and sanitation and ongoing flooding.

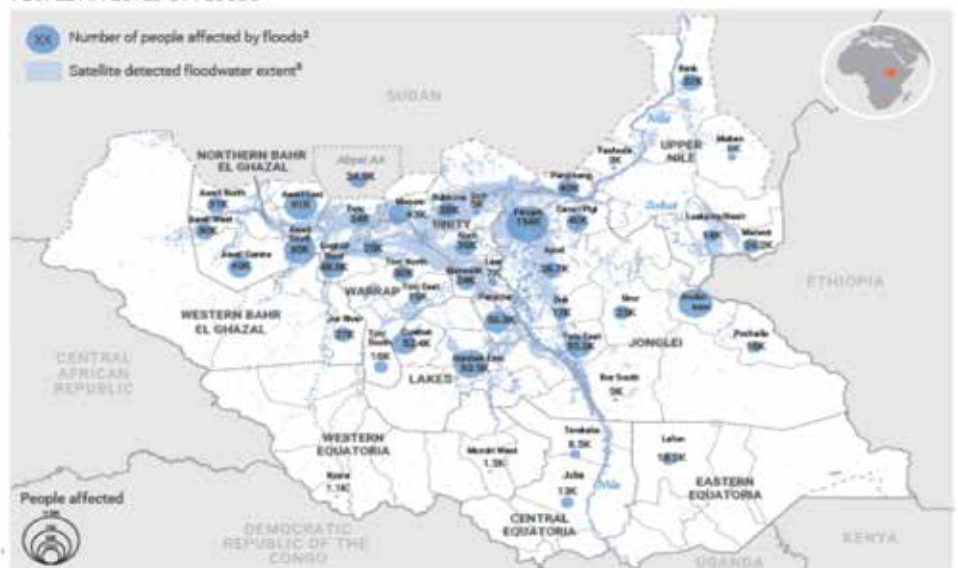
PEOPLE AFFECTED AND DISPLACED BY FLOODS²

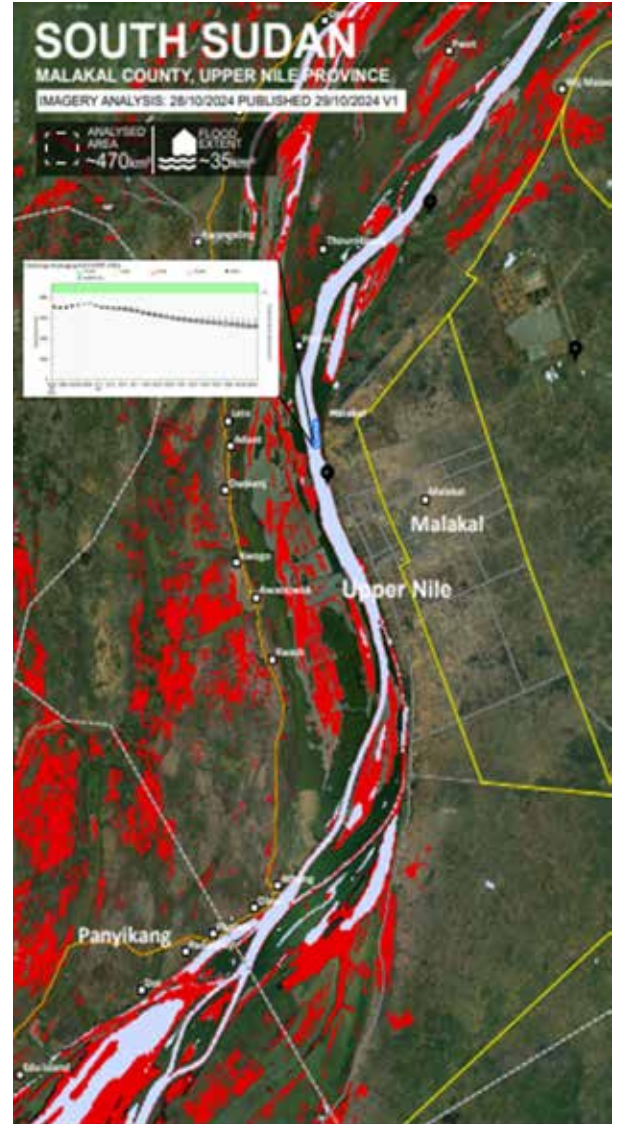
STATE	PEOPLE AFFECTED	PEOPLE DISPLACED
Jonglei	433,323	153,793
Northern Bahr el Ghazal	285,308	-
Unity	199,024	144,935
Warrap	150,545	-
Lakes	145,854	-
Upper Nile	118,408	47,530
Western Bahr el Ghazal	26,830	4,000
Abyei Administrative Area	24,468	24,468
Central Equatoria	21,823	1,720
Eastern Equatoria	18,178	-
Western Equatoria	2,655	2,655

MAXIMUM FLOODWATER EXTENT



PEOPLE AFFECTED BY FLOODS






ADG PI - INDIAN ARMY @ad... · 10 Aug

#IndianArmy committed towards #Peacekeeping & #HumanitarianSupport.

An unscheduled Air Dash B-300 (5Y-SMI) aircraft landed at Malakal Airport, #SouthSudan without its landing gear and crash landed at the runway after losing the gear post-takeoff from Maban. [Show more](#)



18 117 922 23.1K

Followed by some accounts you've liked

Mohan Subramanian @MohanUNMISS


Replying to @adgpi

Well done, UNMISS Indian Contingent at Malakal, for rising to the occasion and handling the emergency efficiently!

7:03 pm · 10 Aug 24 · 422 Views

UNMISS @unmiss

Peacekeepers from #India #ServingInPeace in #SouthSudan demonstrated their dedication and effectiveness by swiftly clearing the Malakal airport runway to ensure it is fully functioning after a plane made an emergency landing.



airstrip, coupled with logistical constraints and limited heavy equipment, presented significant obstacles.

The HMEC team conducted a meticulous technical analysis to determine the weight distribution and structural integrity of the aircraft. Heavy engineering equipment (HEE), including cranes and winches were deployed to lift and reposition the aircraft while minimizing damage to the runway and surrounding areas. This high-risk operation not only restored the airport's functionality within just four hours but also

underscored the technical acumen and ingenuity of Indian peacekeepers. The recovery effort was widely lauded by officials and local authorities, further cementing India's reputation as a leader in peacekeeping operations.

Flood Mitigation: Building Resilience

Malakal's geographical location along the Nile River renders it highly susceptible to seasonal flooding, which devastates homes, displaces communities, and disrupts economic activity. Recognizing the urgency of flood mitigation, 115 HMEC has undertaken a series of engineering projects aimed at minimizing the impact of floods on local population.



One of the Unit's most significant contributions has been the **construction of robust drainage system**, spanning over 4.8 kilometers in Malakal Town, to protect vulnerable areas from

inundation. The system has been designed to withstand the region's unpredictable weather patterns, incorporating both traditional engineering techniques and innovative materials.

In addition, the unit has carried out extensive **desilting of drainage systems**, which had been rendered ineffective by years of neglect and sediment accumulation. By restoring water flow through these critical channels, HMEC significantly reduced the risk of waterlogging and associated health hazards in the recently concluded rainy season.

Strengthening Security: Police Post for IDPs in Malakal

Another significant milestone in the 115 HMEC's deployment in South Sudan was the **construction of a strategically located police post in Malakal Town**, aimed at providing security to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) settled in the nearby



#PeaceBegins with ensuring the safety and well-being of the local community! #UNMISS peacekeepers from #India 🇮🇳 & @UNPOL, the @EUinSouthSudan, and humanitarians jointly inaugurated a new police post in Hai-Matar in Malakal 🇸🇸, #SouthSudan.

👏 This initiative aims to provide a secure environment and facilitate the safe return of residents from the @UN Protection of Civilians site to their hometowns. #A4P



9:49 am · 06 Nov 24 · 9,962 Views



with **Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for skill development**. Recognizing the potential of Malakal's youth as agents of change, HMEC launched training programs aimed at equipping them with technical and vocational skills.

Workshops on basic construction techniques, painting, and carpentry have provided young men and women with the tools to rebuild their communities and improve their livelihoods. These initiatives have fostered goodwill and created a foundation for sustainable development, leaving a legacy that extends beyond the immediate mandate of the UN Mission.

Protection of Civilians (PoC) Camp. This initiative addresses a critical need for enhanced safety in a region marked by instability and inter-communal tensions.

The police post was formally handed over by the **Head of Field Office, UNMISS Malakal** to the **Governor of Upper Nile State**, symbolizing a collaborative effort to strengthen local law enforcement and governance. This post not only offers immediate security for the vulnerable populations but also supports the broader objectives of the UN Mission to restore peace and stability in the region.

115 HMEC's work in constructing the police post reflects the unit's ability to align technical expertise with the humanitarian priorities of the mission. By creating a secure environment, the post provides a foundation for rebuilding trust, fostering community resilience and ensuring that the rights and dignity of displaced communities are upheld. This achievement reinforces India's enduring commitment to advancing the UN's mandate in one of the world's most challenging conflict zones.

Skill Development: Empowering Local Youth

Beyond engineering tasks, 115 HMEC has also prioritized capacity-building initiatives that align



UNMISS @unmissmedia
 #PeaceBegins with a promising future!
 🇮🇳 #UNMISS peacekeepers from #India organized a two-day training for 283 youths at the @UN Protection of Civilians camp in Malakal 🇸🇩, #SouthSudan, to equip them with skills in carpentry, masonry, and painting, setting them on a path toward greater self-reliance.
 #A4P



UN Peacekeeping and 9 others

Overcoming Challenges Through Innovation

The deployment of 115 HMEC in South Sudan is a testament to the power of innovation in overcoming seemingly insurmountable challenges. Operating in remote areas with limited access to resources has necessitated creative problem-solving and adaptability.

The unit's ability to innovate under pressure reflects the training and ethos instilled in Indian peacekeepers, who are often tasked with bridging gaps in resource availability and infrastructure.

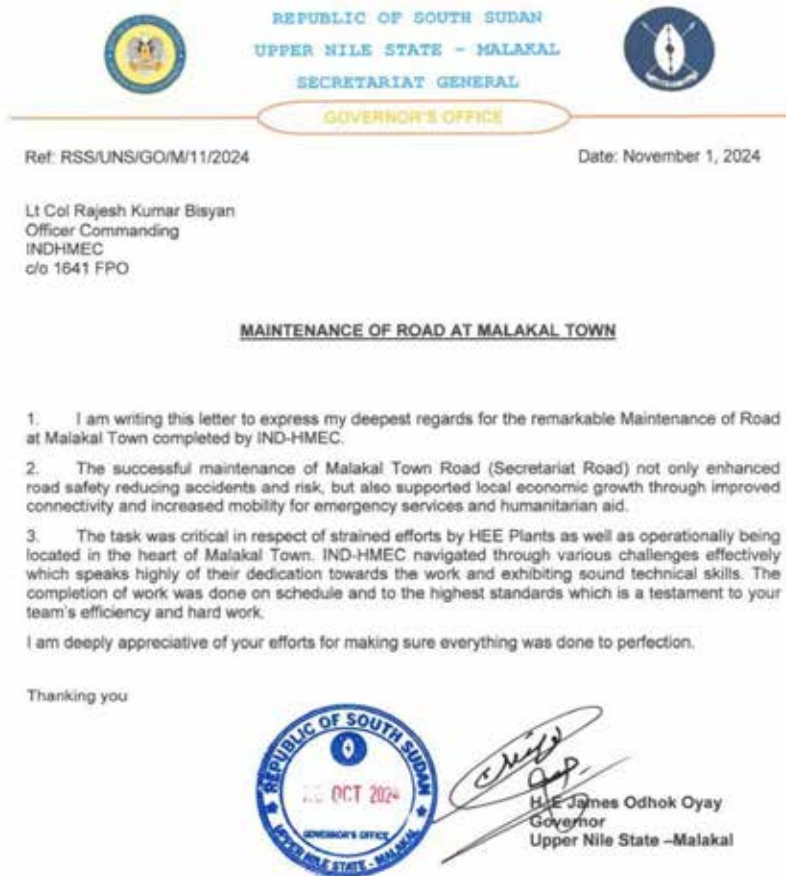
The exemplary work of the **115 HMEC** in Malakal has garnered widespread appreciation from senior functionaries, including the **Head of Field Office, Malakal**, and the **Governor of Upper Nile State**. The efforts of unit in constructing vital infrastructure, such as the strategically located



police post and flood mitigation systems, have been lauded as pivotal contributions to the region's stability and development. The acknowledgment by these high-ranking officials underscores the impact of the 115 HMEC's initiatives in enhancing security, supporting displaced populations, and fostering resilience in conflict-affected communities. This recognition not only highlights the professionalism and dedication of Indian peacekeepers but also reaffirms India's commitment to the core values of the UN Mission in South Sudan—promoting peace, safety and sustainable progress.

Reviving Connectivity: Resuscitation of Roads by 115 HMEC

In the aftermath of relentless rains, 115 HMEC undertook the critical task of resuscitating key roads in Malakal Town and the UNMISS camp, restoring essential connectivity within a week. Building on this achievement, the unit initiated work on the Main Supply Route from Malakal to Akoka, a lifeline connecting South Sudan with Sudan. Recognizing the recurring threat of



UNMISS @unmissmedia

#PeaceBegins with connecting communities!
 #UNMISS peacekeepers from #India 🇮🇳 are beginning work to repair the main road between Malakal and Paloch 🇸🇩, damaged by intense flooding 🌊, so that communities can access food and other vital supplies and services.
 #A4P #SouthSudan



UN Peacekeeping and 7 others

inundation during floods, height is being raised to increase the road's elevation to ensure year-round usability. This route holds immense strategic and humanitarian significance, as its reopening will facilitate the flow of essential goods into Malakal, reducing the risk of inter-tribal clashes over scarce resources. The project exemplifies UN's commitment to creating sustainable infrastructure that not only addresses immediate needs but also fosters long-term peace and stability in the region.

Future Directions: Engineering for Peace

As India looks ahead to the future of its peacekeeping commitments, the role of engineering unit like the 115 HMEC is poised to become even more critical. The integration of advanced technologies such as **geospatial mapping** and **drone-based surveys** will enhance HMEC's ability to address complex challenges.



Initiatives to strengthen collaboration between UN missions and local governments will ensure that infrastructure projects are sustainable and aligned with the long-term needs of the host country. The emphasis should also be on fostering greater participation of women in engineering roles, reflecting India's broader commitment to gender equality in peacekeeping.

A Legacy of Service

The contributions of 115 HMEC in South Sudan embody the spirit of service and innovation that has defined India's 75-year journey in UN peacekeeping. From rescuing a stranded aircraft to flood mitigation measures and empowering local youth, the Unit has gone far beyond the traditional peacekeeping mandates.

As the Platinum Jubilee of Indian peacekeeping is celebrated, the deployment of 115 HMEC stands as a shining example of the nation's ability to adapt, innovate, and inspire. The unit's efforts not only uphold the values of the United Nations but also showcase India's unwavering commitment to building a more peaceful and prosperous world.

Conclusion

The efforts of 115 HMEC in South Sudan is a reflection of resilience, ingenuity, and hope. It is a reminder of the critical role that Indian peacekeepers play in addressing the most pressing challenges of our time, from climate change to conflict resolution.

As the world grapples with an increasingly complex array of crises, the legacy of Indian peacekeeping rooted in the philosophy of "**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**" (the world is one family) will continue to guide efforts to create a safer, more inclusive future for all.



Lieutenant Colonel
Shekhar

Lieutenant Colonel Shekhar, an alumnus of the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, was commissioned into the 115 Engineer Regiment on June 12, 2010. Over his distinguished career, he has gained extensive experience in counter-insurgency operations, high-altitude areas and desert environments. He has also made significant contributions to disaster relief, including leading rescue efforts during the Kerala floods and successfully saving a 4-year-old child from an abandoned borewell. Currently, he serves as the Chief Operations Officer of the 115 HMEC, deployed in Malakal, South Sudan under UNMISS.

UNDOF Peacekeeping: A Kaleidoscope of 51 Years

By **Major Sourav Mishra**
UNDOF

Historical Perspective

On 06 Oct 1973, War erupted in the Middle East between Egyptian and Israeli forces in the Suez Canal area and the Sinai, and between Israeli and Syrian forces in the Golan Heights. On 24 Oct, as fighting between Egypt and Israel reached a critical stage, the Security Council decided to set up a second United Nations Emergency Force II (UNEF II). The Force was immediately moved into place between the Israeli and Egyptian armies in the Suez Canal area and its arrival effectively stabilized the situation. However, no new peacekeeping operation at that time was established on the Syrian front.

In the Israel-Syria sector tension remained high and from March 1974 the situation became increasingly unstable. Against this background, the United States undertook a diplomatic initiative, which resulted in the conclusion of an Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian forces. The Agreement provided for an area of separation and for two equal zones of limited forces and armaments on both sides

*Lowering-of-
flag ceremony
by the Israeli
Armed Forces*



*UNDOF
supervising
withdrawal of IDF
- 24 Jun 1974*



of the area and called for the establishment of a United Nations Observer Force to supervise its implementation.

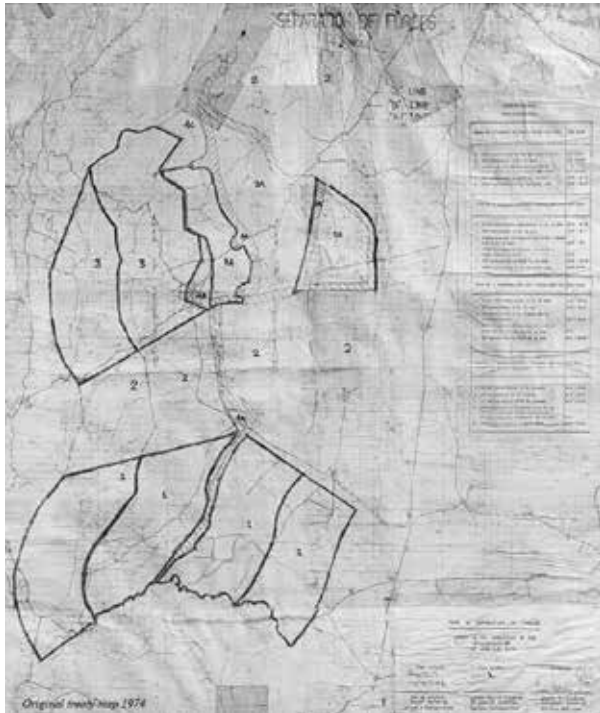
1st Convoy from Sinai



The Agreement was signed on 31 May 1974. On the same day, the Security Council adopted resolution 350 (1974) by which it set up the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF).



Newspaper Cutting – 31 May 74



Original Treaty Map - 1974

UNDOF was set up with a six-month mandate, subject to concurrence from the Security Council, Israel and Syria. Its role was to supervise the disengagement of Israeli and Syrian forces; also to maintain the ceasefire and supervise the Agreement and Protocol with respect to the areas

of limitation and separation. UNDOF personnel were to comply with Syrian laws and regulations and not hamper the local Syrian civil authorities. UNDOF personnel were to enjoy freedom of movement and communication and were only permitted to carry the firearms necessary for self-defence.

The agreement established an Area of Separation (AOS) and an Area of Limitation (AOL). The former is a demilitarized zone controlled by UNDOF, approximately 80 km long and from 200 m wide in the South to 8 km wide in the North. The latter is an area of Israeli or Syrian territory in which the number and type of military personnel and equipment is restricted. The Agreement also allows Syrian civilians to return to their homes in the Area of Separation.

The initial UNDOF elements from Austria started to arrive on 03 Jun 1974, followed the next day by elements drawn from the Canadian and Polish



logistics units of UNEF II. The 1200 strong force became operational on 06 Jun 1974. By 26 Jun the four phases of the disengagement agreement had been completed smoothly and on schedule. The new UN force had taken up positions in a buffer zone extending from Mount Hermon in the North to the Jordanian border in the South. The force was made up of some 90 observers from the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), which has been serving in the area since the truce of 1948 and some 500 Austrians, 350 Peruvians and 250 Canadians along with Polish logistics personnel. Once in place, UNDOF's observers were quickly employed observing the disengagement of the two forces, which occurred between 14 to 27 Jun. UNDOF undertook the delineation and marking of the boundaries to the area of separation. This was completed by July 1974. Checkpoints and observation posts were also established with two base camps, one on each side of the area of separation.

Annual commemorative ceremony at the location where a motorized patrol hit a mine in 1974



The AOL has three zones, 0-10km; 10 - 20km and 20 - 25km wide. UNDOF ensures the agreed limitations in armaments and forces are being observed in these areas. The terrain is hilly and is dominated in the North by Mt Hermon, the highest permanent manned UN position sitting at an altitude of 2,814 m. The AOS is delineated and marked on the ground by barrel lines.



Austrian Battalion soldiers raise UN flag on Mt Hermon following withdrawal of IDF - 25 Jun 1947

UNDOF Peacekeeping & its Importance

UNDOF was established to maintain the ceasefire between Israel and Syria following the Yom Kippur War. Key Roles and responsibilities are as under:-

- (a) **Ceasefire Supervision.** UNDOF monitors the ceasefire line and ensures that both Israeli and Syrian forces adhere to the disengagement agreement. This helps prevent the escalation of hostilities.
- (b) **Buffer Zone Maintenance.** The force oversees the buffer zone, known as the Area of Separation, which is a demilitarized zone between the two countries. This area is crucial for reducing direct military confrontations.
- (c) **Conflict Prevention.** By maintaining a presence in the region, UNDOF acts as a deterrent against potential violations of the ceasefire, contributing to regional stability.

UNDOF plays a crucial role in maintaining peace and stability between Israel and Syria. Its presence acts as a deterrent against potential violations, contributing significantly to regional stability. By ensuring adherence to the disengagement agreement, UNDOF helps reduce the risk of renewed conflict, providing a sense of security for local populations and facilitating humanitarian aid and development efforts. Additionally, UNDOF exemplifies international cooperation and the United Nations' commitment to peacekeeping and conflict resolution, highlighting the importance of global efforts in maintaining peace in volatile regions.

UNDOF Medal

The ribbon contains a central stripe of UN blue



with a red line down the middle representing the UN patrolled Area of Separation; two narrow stripes of black, representing the volcanic rock of the Golan region appear on either side with two narrow bands of white, symbolic of the snow on Mt. Hermon, outside these. At either end are wide bands of burgundy, symbolizing the purple haze at sunset and the native thistles of the Golan.

UNDOF Operations – Core tasks

UNDOF uses UN Positions, Observation Posts (OPs) as well as foot and mobile patrols to carry out its mandated tasks. Patrols keep to established paths and roads due to the threat of unexploded ordnance and mines. Observer Group Golan (OGG) unarmed observers, under operational control of UNDOF, carry out fortnightly inspections of each

side's military forces in the AOL. From time to time in the initial stages of the mission, UNDOF arranged the transfer of prisoners of war and the bodies of those who died in the war between Israel and Syria. For a period from 1976 to 1982 UNDOF supervised the periodic reunion of Druze families who were separated by the border running through the area of separation. Although there have been some major incidents over the past 50 years, UNDOF has been successful in resolving problems along the border between occupied Golan and Syria. There have been occasional restrictions placed on UNDOF's operations. However, these have not seriously hindered



UNDOF TIMELINE 1974-2024

- 1974 - Contingents from Austria, Peru, Poland and Canada were deployed from UNEF II in Sinai to UNDOF Syria.



- 1979 - The Finnish Battalion was deployed to the Golan and replaced the outgoing Iranian Battalion.
- 1993 - Poland redeployed to Golan and replaced the Finnish Battalion.
- 1996 - Japanese Contingent joined Canada to form LOGBATT.
- 1998 - Slovakia replaced 3rd Coy in AUSBATT.
- 2006 - In March, the Indian Contingent replaced Canada.



- 2011 - Syrian Civil War begins.
- 2013 - Austria departs the UNDOF mission. Fiji, Nepal, and Ireland deploy.
- 2014 - UNDOF HQ re-deploys to CZ.
- 2016 - Camp Faouar is reoccupied by a small number of troops. This commenced the incremental reoccupation on the B side (Syria).
- 2024 - UNDOF marks 50 years in the service of peace on Golan Heights.
- 07 Dec - Armed rebels took the Syrian city of Damascus.
- 08 Dec - IDF enters AOS.

Key Indian Personalities



Lieutenant General Iqbal Singh Singha served as the Head of Mission and Force Commander of UNDOF from August 2012 to December 2014. With nearly four decades of experience in conflict resolution and management; Lt Gen Singha brought extensive expertise to the role. His tenure was marked by his efforts to maintain peace and stability in the Golan Heights, a region of significant tension between Israel and Syria. He worked closely with the governments of both countries and the international diplomatic community, representing over 60 nations. Lt Gen Singha's leadership was instrumental during a period when several Troop-Contributing Countries withdrew from the mission area, leaving the remaining peacekeepers to navigate a highly sensitive and crucial period.

Major General Jai Shankar Menon served as the Head of Mission and Force Commander of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) from February 2016 to October 2017. He brought extensive command experience and a deep understanding of peacekeeping operations to his role. Prior to his appointment, Major General Menon served as the Additional Director General of Equipment Management in the Indian Army. During his tenure at UNDOF, he was instrumental in maintaining peace and stability in the Golan Heights, a region marked by significant tension. His leadership was crucial in navigating the complex dynamics of the area, ensuring the safety and effectiveness of the peacekeeping mission.



Brigadier General Kuldip Pathak served as the Deputy Force Commander (DFC) of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) from 2020 to 2022. His leadership during this period was crucial in maintaining peace and stability in the Golan Heights. Brigadier Pathak's leadership and strategic acumen were instrumental in navigating the complex dynamics of the area, ensuring the safety and effectiveness of the peacekeeping mission. He worked closely with both military and civilian staff, fostering a collaborative environment to achieve the mission objectives.

Brigadier General Amitabh Jha served as the Deputy Force Commander of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) from April 2023 until December 2024. During his tenure, he also acted as the Force Commander in challenging circumstances following the fall of the Assad government in Syria. Brigadier Jha was highly regarded for his leadership and unwavering commitment to peacekeeping. Brigadier Jha's contributions to UNDOF were significant, particularly in maintaining peace and stability in the Golan Heights, a region marked by geopolitical tension between Israel and Syria. His dedication to military diplomacy, geopolitics and unconventional warfare was well recognized, and his loss was deeply felt by the international peacekeeping community.



INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO UNDOF

India has made significant contributions to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), which was established in 1974 to monitor the ceasefire between Israel and Syria in the Golan Heights. Indian peacekeepers have been part of this mission, providing essential support in maintaining peace and stability in the region. Specifically, India has provided **two Force Commanders** for UNDOF. Additionally, India has contributed **one Deputy Force Commander** to this mission.

UNDOF's effectiveness.

Indian Contingent (INDCON) Logistics Company (LOGCOY)

The INDCON (LOGCOY) in UNDOF plays a vital role in ensuring the mission's operational effectiveness. With a strength of 188 personnel, it performs following tasks:-

- (a) **Camp Security.** The INDCON LOGCOY in UNDOF plays a crucial role in ensuring the security of the camps. They are responsible for implementing comprehensive security measures to protect personnel and assets within the mission area. This includes maintaining perimeter security through regular patrols, surveillance and the use of advanced security systems. INDCON LOGCOY also conducts regular drills and training sessions to prepare for potential security threats, ensuring that all personnel are well-equipped to respond effectively. Their efforts are vital in maintaining a safe and secure environment, allowing peacekeepers to focus



on their primary mission of monitoring and maintaining peace in the Golan Heights.

(b) **Supply and Distribution.** The LOGCOY is tasked with the crucial responsibility of managing the supply chain within the UNDOF mission. This involves the procurement of essential supplies such as food, water, fuel and medical supplies. Once procured, these supplies need to be stored in a manner that ensures their safety and accessibility. LOGCOY then oversees the distribution of these supplies to various units and personnel within the mission area, ensuring that everyone has

the necessary resources to carry out their duties effectively.

(c) **Transportation.** Efficient transportation is vital for the success of any peacekeeping mission. LOGCOY manages the transportation of personnel, equipment and supplies across the mission area. This includes operating and maintaining a fleet of vehicles, which can range from trucks and jeeps to specialized transport vehicles. The transportation team ensures that all movements are coordinated and executed safely and efficiently, enabling



peacekeepers to reach their destinations and supplies to be delivered where they are needed most.

- (d) **Maintenance and Repair.** The operational readiness of vehicles, equipment, and infrastructure is essential for the smooth functioning of the mission. LOGCOY is responsible for the regular maintenance and repair of all these assets. This includes routine checks, servicing and fixing any issues that



arise. By keeping everything in good working order, LOGCOY ensures that there are no disruptions to the mission's operations due to equipment failure or infrastructure problems.

- (e) **Infrastructure Support.** LOGCOY plays a key role in the construction and maintenance of the mission's infrastructure. This includes building and maintaining camps, observation posts and communication systems. These facilities are crucial for the day-to-day operations of the mission providing accommodation, workspaces



and communication networks for the peacekeepers. LOGCOY ensures that these facilities are built to standard and maintained properly, providing a safe and functional environment for all personnel.

- (f) **Medical Support.** Providing medical services is a critical task for LOGCOY. This involves ensuring that there are adequate medical supplies and equipment available at all times. LOGCOY also supports the establishment and maintenance of medical facilities within the mission area. These facilities provide essential healthcare services to the peacekeepers, including routine medical care, emergency



treatment, and medical evacuations if necessary. By ensuring that medical support is readily available, LOGCOY helps maintain the health and well-being of all mission personnel.

- (g) **Coordination and Planning.** Effective logistics operations require careful coordination and planning. LOGCOY is responsible for coordinating logistics activities with other units within the mission. This involves planning for the procurement and distribution of supplies, scheduling transportation and ensuring that maintenance and repair activities are carried out efficiently. LOGCOY also plans for contingencies, ensuring that there are backup supplies and alternative routes available in case of emergencies. This level of planning and coordination is essential for maintaining the operational readiness and effectiveness of the mission.



- (h) **Training and Capacity Building.** The



contingent has also been involved in training programs aimed at enhancing the skills and capabilities of UNDOF personnel. This includes specialized training in logistics management, emergency response and technical skills.



(j) **Community Engagement.** INDCON LOGCOY has actively engaged with local communities, fostering goodwill and cooperation. Their efforts in community outreach programs have helped build trust and support for UNDOF's mission.

Recognition

In recognition of good service of INDCON in testament to their crucial role in ensuring the operational success of military missions the unit has been conferred with Force Commander's Unit Appreciation in the month of Dec 2024. 68 individuals of 9th Rotation were awarded Force Commander's Appreciation. Acknowledging



the contribution not only boosts morale but also underscores the importance of logistics in military operations, ensuring that these unsung heroes receive the appreciation they deserve for their tireless efforts in supporting and sustaining the force.

Challenges

UNDOF has navigated through following challenges over the past five decades:-

- (a) **Geopolitical Tensions.** The volatile nature of the Middle East, particularly the Syrian conflict, has posed significant risks to peacekeepers and complicated their mandate. The region's complex political landscape requires UNDOF to maintain neutrality while effectively monitoring the ceasefire between Israel and Syria.
- (b) **Security Threats.** Peacekeepers have often found themselves in hostile environments, facing threats from various armed groups. The rise of extremist factions and the spillover of violence from neighboring conflicts have increased the risks to personnel and operations.
- (c) **Operational Constraints.** Limited resources and logistical challenges have sometimes hindered the mission's effectiveness. The rugged terrain of the Golan Heights, coupled with harsh weather conditions, makes it difficult to maintain supply lines and ensure the safety of peacekeepers.
- (d) **Political Pressures.** UNDOF operates under the scrutiny of international and regional powers, each with their own interests and agendas. Balancing these pressures while adhering to the mission's mandate requires diplomatic finesse and strategic planning.

Mitigation Strategies

Despite these challenges, UNDOF has implemented underlisted innovative strategies to enhance its operations:-

- (a) **Technological Advancements.** The use

of advanced surveillance systems has improved monitoring capabilities and situational awareness. These technologies allow peacekeepers to conduct real-time assessments of the security situation, reducing the risk of ambushes and enhancing response times.

- (b) **Community Engagement.** Building strong relationships with local communities has been crucial for gathering intelligence and fostering trust. UNDOF has initiated various outreach programs to support local populations, including medical assistance, educational initiatives and infrastructure development.
- (c) **Training and Capacity Building.** Continuous training programs for peacekeepers have ensured they are well-prepared to handle complex situations. These programs focus on conflict resolution, cultural sensitivity and the use of non-lethal force, equipping peacekeepers with the skills needed to navigate a challenging environment.
- (d) **Environmental Sustainability.** UNDOF has adopted sustainable practices to minimize its environmental footprint. Initiatives such as solar energy installations, water conservation measures and waste management programs contribute to the mission's long-term viability and positive impact on the local ecosystem.

Way Ahead

With ever deteriorating security situation in the region, UNDOF must adapt to the evolving landscape of peacekeeping. Following can help UNDOF in fulfilling its mandate:-

- (a) **Enhanced Collaboration.** Strengthening partnerships with regional organizations and other UN Missions can provide a more comprehensive approach to peacekeeping. Collaborative efforts can enhance information sharing, resource allocation and coordinated responses to emerging threats.

- (b) **Sustainable Practices.** Incorporating sustainable practices in operations can reduce the environmental footprint and promote long-term stability. Emphasizing eco-friendly technologies and practices will not only benefit the environment but also improve the mission’s relationship with local communities.
- (c) **Focus on Innovation.** Continued investment in technology and innovative solutions will be essential to address emerging threats and improve operational efficiency. Exploring new tools for surveillance, communication and logistics can enhance the mission’s effectiveness and adaptability.
- (d) **Capacity Building.** Investing in the training and development of peacekeepers is crucial for maintaining an elevated level of preparedness. Expanding training programs to include cyber security, counterterrorism and advanced medical care will equip peacekeepers with the skills needed to address modern challenges.
- (e) **Community-Centric Approaches.** Prioritizing the needs and concerns of local communities can foster a more supportive environment for peacekeeping operations. Engaging with community leaders, addressing grievances and providing tangible benefits can build trust and cooperation.
- (f) **Policy Advocacy.** UNDOF can play a role in advocating for policies that support peace and stability in the region. By engaging with international stakeholders and promoting dialogue, the mission can contribute to broader efforts aimed at resolving underlying conflicts and fostering long-term peace.

maintain peace in a region fraught with conflict. By addressing challenges head-on, embracing innovation and charting a forward-looking path, UNDOF can continue to play a pivotal role in ensuring peace and stability in the Golan Heights for years to come.

The journey of UNDOF over the past five decades highlights the importance of adaptability, collaboration and innovation in peacekeeping. As the mission evolves to meet new challenges, its commitment to peace and security remains unwavering. The lessons learned and the progress made serve as a foundation for future success, ensuring that UNDOF remains a beacon of hope and stability in the Golan Heights.



Major Sourav Mishra
UNDOF

Major Sourav Mishra was commissioned into the Regiment of Artillery in Jun 2015 from Indian Military Academy, Dehradun. He has attended Young Officers, Quarter Master, Advanced Gunnery, Long Gunnery Staff Course and Junior Command Courses. Presently the officer is deployed as Deputy Contingent Commander (DCO) in UNDOF at Golan Heights, Israel/Syria from 27 Feb 2024.

Conclusion

As UNDOF celebrates its 50th anniversary, it stands as a testament to the resilience and dedication of peacekeepers who have worked tirelessly to

Glimpses of Peacekeeping Activities



MONUSCO

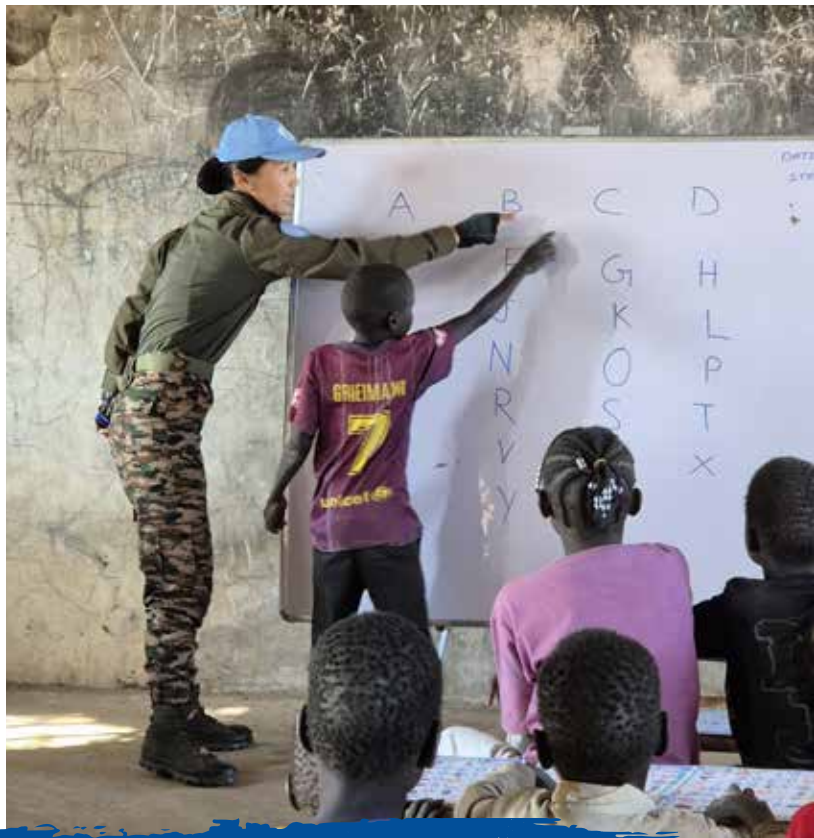






UNIFIL





UNISFA





UNMISS





UNDOF





Training & Visits





Training & Visits





Training & Visits







Training & Visits





Training & Visits



Lest We Forget



We pay solemn tribute to Brigadier Amitabh Jha, SM, VSM and Havildar Sanjay Singh, our two exemplary Indian peacekeepers who made the supreme sacrifice in the pursuit of peace under the United Nations flag.

Brigadier Jha, serving with the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), was entrusted with the vital task of maintaining calm and stability along the sensitive Golan Heights. His leadership and commitment were a beacon of resolve in one of the world's most fragile region.

Havildar Sanjay Singh was deployed with the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO). He served with quiet courage and resilience amidst the perils of conflict in Africa.

Their lives reflected the noblest ideals of service, honour, duty and the unwavering belief in peace beyond borders.

Brigadier Amitabh Jha and Havildar Sanjay Singh were posthumously awarded the prestigious Dag Hammarskjöld Medal on 29 May 2025. Let's not only, remember them as our fallen heroes, but as eternal sentinels of peace whose legacy will continue to inspire generations to come.



In Memoriam

Lieutenant Ved Prakash Trehan

Maha Vir Chakra (Posthumous)



Lieutenant Ved Prakash Trehan was born on 14th December 1937 in Gurdaspur, Punjab. He was commissioned into the Rajputana Rifles regiment on 14 December 1958.

UN Operation: 29 Dec 1962

Lieutenant Ved Prakash was part of the Indian contingent deployed in Congo in Africa in 1962. The Indian contingent was part of the UN force tasked to defend the UN mandate in the conflict ridden Congo. The armed rebels in DRC posed a serious threat to UN forces and the civilian population.

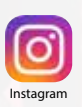
On 29 December 1962, Lieutenant Ved Prakash Trehan was in command of a special patrol prior to an attack by the Fourth Battalion of Rajputana Rifles on an enemy position at a road junction in Congo. Lieutenant Trehan pushed forward with his patrol through dense jungle and reached about 100 yards from the enemy trenches, where he came under intense machine gun and rifle fire. The officer tried to manoeuvre to the right flank, but the patrol came under heavy enemy fire from the same direction.

Lieutenant Trehan realising that the troops had been surrounded, decided to launch an all out daring attack on the enemy positions. In an act of great courage and determination, Lieutenant Trehan managed to silence the enemy positions. However, during the heavy exchange of fire, Lieutenant Trehan got seriously wounded and later succumbed to his injuries. The supreme sacrifice and devotion to duty displayed by Lieutenant Ved Prakash Trehan were in the best traditions of the Indian Army, for which he was awarded the nation's second highest gallantry award "**Maha Vir Chakra**" posthumously.



For India, “One Earth, One Family, One Future” is a commitment. This commitment is also reflected in our initiatives such as “One Earth, One Health”, and “One Sun, One World, One Grid”. India will continue to work in thought, words and deeds to protect the rights of all humanity and for global prosperity.

-Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India at the UN Summit of the Future-2024



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