



**United Nations Association of Australia**

# UN PEACEKEEPING

United Nations Peacekeeping operations are a crucial mechanism to assist the delivery of the UN's core mandate to maintain international peace and security. The first operation of this nature occurred in 1948 when the Security Council authorised the deployment of UN military observers to the Middle East. Since then, 69 peacekeeping operations have been deployed by the UN involving hundreds of thousands of military personnel, tens of thousands of UN police and other civilians from more than 120 countries.

## > WHAT IS PEACEKEEPING?

UN Peacekeeping is administered by the UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). The DPKO's primary work is in conflict torn areas to restore and maintain fundamental peace and security, facilitate political processes, protect civilians, assist in the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants, support the organisation of democratic elections, promote and protect human rights and assist in restoring the local rule of law. UN Peacekeeping is guided by three basic principles: the consent of the conflicted parties; impartiality, and non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mission mandate.

Working in physically and politically difficult post-conflict environments means success is never guaranteed. However, UN peacekeeping missions have a very good track record, indeed the overall UN Peacekeeping Forces won the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize as public recognition.

## > HOW ARE PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS FORMED?

Under the United Nations Charter the UN Security Council is the organ that has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Security Council therefore determines when and where a UN Peacekeeping operation should be deployed.

This process begins with initial consultation to determine the most appropriate response to an armed conflict that is developing, worsening or approaching resolution. During this initial phase the UN Secretary-General may request an assessment to identify all possible options for UN engagement. This assessment analyses and assesses the security, political, military, humanitarian and human rights situation in the afflicted area, and its implications for a possible operation. This report will present options for the establishment of a peacekeeping operation as appropriate including its recommended size and resources.

If the Security Council decides that deploying a UN Peacekeeping operation is the best way to deal with the conflict it will adopt a Security Council Resolution setting out the operation's mandate, size, and details of the tasks it will be responsible for performing. The budget and resources needed for the operation are then subject to General Assembly approval. The appointed Head of Mission, DPKO and the Department of Field Support (DFS) lead the planning for the political, military, operational and support aspects of the peacekeeping operation. Throughout the mission, the Secretary-General provides regular reports to the Security Council on the implementation of the mission mandate.

## > HOW ARE PEACEKEEPERS DEPLOYED?

The DPKO and the DFS are responsible for staffing the civilian components of a peacekeeping operation. The UN has no army or police force of its own per se, instead it relies on Member States to donate military and police personnel for each operation. Civilian staff of peacekeeping operations are recruited and deployed by the UN Secretariat as international civil servants. These personnel proceed as quickly as possible, taking into account the security and political conditions on the ground.

Over 120 countries currently contribute to the UN Peacekeeping forces. As of August 2016, the total size of the uniformed peacekeeping force is 100, 019 police, troops and military observers. Ethiopia is currently the top contributor of all UN Member States to the peacekeeping force, with 8,326 peacekeepers contributed. Australia currently contributes only 39 personnel.

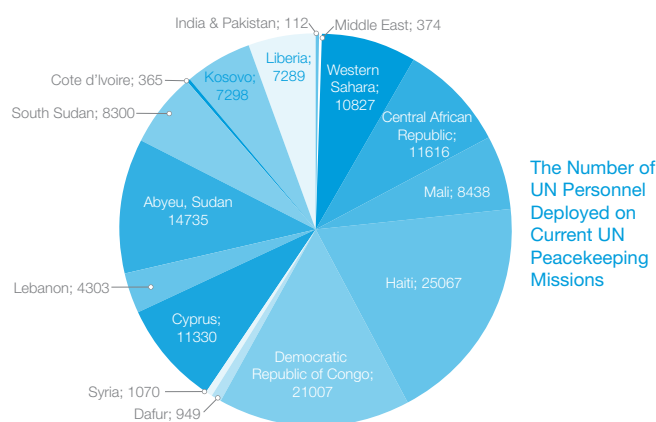
The secondment of military person to UN Peacekeeping forces is generally considered a positive experience for all that delivers real world training in a reduced risk environment (compared to open warfare); increases moral and engagement; and, provides positive global outcomes,

## > CURRENT OPERATIONS

There are currently 16 peacekeeping operations, across 4 continents, led by the DPKO. These include missions in the Western Sahara, Central African Republic, Mali, Haiti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Darfur, Syria, Cyprus, Lebanon, Abyei (Sudan), South Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, Kosovo, Liberia, India and Pakistan, and the Middle East. The approved budget for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 equals about \$7.87 billion, comprising less than 0.5% of total global military expenditure.



Locations of the 16 current UN peacekeeping deployments



The Number of UN Personnel Deployed on Current UN Peacekeeping Missions

## > AUSTRALIA AND PEACEKEEPING

Since 1947 Australia has provided over 65,000 personnel to more than 50 United Nations peacekeeping operations. Australians are currently serving in the Middle East (UN Truce Supervision Organisation, UNTSO) and in Cyprus (UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, UNFICYP). Australian personnel are also currently deployed to the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) and the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

Australia has also assisted in peacekeeping within our own region, including missions in Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Bougainville, Papua New Guinea. Australia was also instrumental in the diplomacy that led to the Cambodian Peace Settlement and contributed to the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia, including sending the first military contingent and providing the commander of the military component of the mission.

## > INTERNATIONAL DAY OF UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPERS

International Day of UN Peacekeepers is recognised on the 29 May every year. The day was established to honour the memory of the UN peacekeepers who have lost their lives in the cause of peace and pay tribute to all the men and women who have served and continue to serve in UN peacekeeping operations for their high level of professionalism, dedication and courage.



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