

***REFORMING THE PEACEKEEPING SYSTEM
TO TACKLE THE CURRENT DYSFUNCTIONS***



StolaMUN 2025

Introduction

While Peacekeeping missions have been a major part of the United Nations' global peace architecture for decades, the system is progressively facing more and more difficulties. Such problems include the rising number of attacks on UN peacekeepers, which are sometimes linked to organized crime, too vague or too complex mandates, and general performance issues due to lack of training, funding or modern equipment.

As the Security Council is responsible for the managing of peacekeeping missions, disagreements between countries are very common. Peacekeeping is not only a technical challenge but also a deeply political one. Disagreements often lead to delayed or vague mandates which can limit the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions. Therefore, a reformation also means the improvement of unity among the council itself, ensuring that cooperational responses to crises are met through shared priorities rather than national competition of agendas.

This research paper will look at how the United Nations peacekeeping system can be revised to stay a useful tool for international stability. It will also study how peacekeeping can get back its trustworthiness by supporting its main ideas of being neutral, legitimate, and useful. These questions are very important as the Security Council is preparing for future operations.

Table of Contents

Introduction	2 Key
Terms	4
General Overview	5
Major Parties and Their Views	6
United States of America	6
People's Republic of China	6
Russian Federation	6
Republic of France.....	6
United Kingdom	6
Federative Republic of Brazil.....	7
Timeline of Key Events	7
Questions a Resolution Should Answer	12
Appendix	12
Bibliography	13

Key Terms

United Nations Peacekeeping Operations

These are operations approved by the UN Security Council. They involve groups from many countries working to keep ceasefires, allow peace processes, and support international law. They are based on being unbiased, having permission from the host country, and using the least amount of force needed.

Mandate Formulation and Strategic Scope

This is the legal and political base created by Security Council resolutions. It defines what a mission should do, its limits, and how it should operate. This directly affects how believable and responsible a mission is, and how well it can lead to lasting conflict resolution.

Doctrine of Blue Helmets

The guiding ethos embodied by UN peacekeeping forces, symbolized by their blue headgear, representing collective neutrality, international legitimacy, and a commitment to act under a UN mandate in volatile situations.

Robust Peacekeeping

This represents a concept and operational method within UN peace operations that allows using force not just for self-defense, but also to protect people, bring stability to areas of conflict, and make sure the mandate is followed, even in the absence of complete consensus. This change acknowledges that peacekeepers need to deal with those who try to stop peace, uneven threats, and armed groups that are not part of a government. This questions old ideas but tries to improve protection for people and trust in the mission in very risky places.

General Overview

Peacekeeping during the Cold War

Originating in 1948, the first time a Peacekeeping mission has been established, the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) served the purpose of stabilizing and upkeeping the ceasefire between Israel and its Arab neighboring countries, mainly through observation. However, the idea and concept of UN Peacekeeping was created at times of the Cold War, where disparities froze the Security Council and made members unable to act, mostly due to rivalry. During times of the Cold War, not only unarmed missions (like the UNTSO in the Middle East and the UNMOGIP in India and Pakistan), but mainly armed missions have been established by the UN, the first one being the UNEF I which addressed the Suez Crisis. Other missions during the 60s and 70s have been sent off to countries like Cyprus, West New Guinea, the Dominican Republic, Yemen and Lebanon.

Peacekeeping after 1989

During the end of the Cold War, UN Peacekeeping missions have undergone extreme changes. There was a visible shift from the focus on observing towards a more general task field. This enabled more effective peace making through fundamental support in sustainable peace agreements etc. Not only the task fields, but also the expectations for UN Peacekeeping changed: Peacekeepers were now required to expand their overall abilities, in order to also help and build sustainable institutions of governance, to aid with human rights monitoring, security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants. From this time onwards, the UN Peacekeeping's success led to an exponential increase of missions, peacekeepers and operating countries. In the 1990s, this however led to overexpectations beyond the UN's capacity to deliver. This especially showed when the Security Council was not able to authorize sufficiently robust mandates or provide adequate resources. As a response to this, at the beginning of the 21st century, UN Peacekeeping had undergone a reform in order to strengthen overall capacities for more effective and sustainable peacekeeping.

Mandates and Mission Scope

Looking at the past of peacekeeping missions, most mandates used to authorize assignments focused on narrow taskgiving. They especially monitored ceasefires and focused on the separation of opposing forces. However, with today's conflicts mostly involving civil wars, terrorist attacks and cyber warfare, more extensive and specific mandates have been required in order to meet the needs of crucial solving steps such as protecting civilians, supporting elections, and facilitating peace negotiations. The vagueness and over-ambition of some mandates, combined with conflicting objectives, often hinder mission effectiveness and blur lines of accountability.

Resource and Logistics Challenges

A consistent malfunction within the system includes the mismatch between the scope of mandates and the capabilities and resources provided. Missions are frequently underfunded, undermanned, or lack critical support such as air mobility or intelligence. Many troop-funding countries like Bangladesh, Rwanda or India lack and thus can't provide advanced gear or intelligence support. Therefore, reliance on voluntary troop and police contributions can lead to gaps in expertise and equipment that further impair operational effectiveness in volatile or remote environments.

Allegations of Misconduct and Accountability

High-profile allegations of sexual exploitation, abuse, and corruption involving peacekeepers have severely undermined the legitimacy of the system, not only in the sense of the UNs credibility, but also the trust of local populations. Institutional weaknesses in investigating and punishing wrongdoing, combined with the complexities of multinational command structures, have resulted in a lack of accountability and diminished local trust, threatening the core principles of UN interventions.

Limitations of Traditional Peacekeeping

Traditional UN peacekeeping frameworks, predicated on the principles of impartiality, host-state consent, and non-use of force except in self-defense, are insufficient for addressing the multifaceted nature of contemporary conflict. Modern crises often involve non-state proxies, ethnic insurgencies, and transnational extremist networks where frontlines and

legitimate authorities are unclear. As such, classical peacekeeping tactics frequently fail to secure durable peace, protect vulnerable populations, or adapt operationally to threats beyond conventional warfare, highlighting the urgent need for innovation and systemic reform in peace operations.

Major Parties and Their Views

United States of America

The United States has traditionally been the largest financial contributor to UN peacekeeping, but it has often expressed concerns over mission effectiveness, fiscal responsibility, and burden-sharing. U.S. administrations have advocated for mandates that are “clear, achievable, and time-limited.” They also have occasionally pushed for stricter oversight or reductions in funding for underperforming missions.

People’s Republic of China

China has increased its troop contributions and financial support in recent years and promotes the principle of “host country consent.” It tends to favor non-intervention in countries’ internal affairs except under exceptional circumstances, advocating for a greater say for troop-contributing countries and increased attention to economic development alongside security measures.

Russian Federation

Russia’s traditional position emphasizes state sovereignty and non-interference, often expressing skepticism about robust or interventionist mandates. Moscow has sometimes criticized attempts to expand the scope of peacekeeping beyond traditional separation-of-forces roles or to pursue regime change under a UN mandate.

Republic of France

France is a major contributor, especially in Francophone Africa, where it has distinct strategic interests. Paris often advocates for strong mandates on protection of civilians but has also insisted on clarifying the political objectives and exit conditions for missions.

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The UK strongly supports peacekeeping as a tool for stability and global security, often emphasizing the importance of civilian protection, human rights, and long-term capacity-building in host states.

Federative Republic of Brazil

Being a major non-permanent member of the Security Council, Brazil is especially active through promoting multilateral diplomacy, pushing proactive dialogue and supporting regional stability. It emphasizes dialogue and peaceful settlement of disputes, supports the inclusion of

women in peace processes, and advocates for reforms to make the Security Council more representative.

Timeline of Key Events

- **1948 – First UN peacekeeping mission (UNTSO)**

The deployment of military observers under the name „United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO)“ to the Middle East marked the beginning of UN peacekeeping. Their task was to monitor, as well as maintain the Arab-Israeli ceasefire following the war between Israel and its neighboring Arab countries in 1948.

- **1994 – Rwandan Genocide**

UNAMIR's failure to prevent mass atrocities highlighted severe mandate and resource shortcomings. During the Rwandan genocide, approximately 800.000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu were murdered in a systematic campaign of mass violence. Even though the peacekeeping mission UNAMIR deployed in Rwanda at that time was supposed to implement a peace agreement and monitor ceasefire, the posed mandate under chapter VI in the UN charter was too restrictive and prohibited the peacekeepers from intervention in order to condemn the genocide.

- **1999 – Formation of MONUC (later MONUSCO)**

Following the Lusaka ceasefire agreement signed in July 1999, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) was established in the same year by the Security Council Resolution 1279. The initial purpose consisted of observing the ceasefire and disengagement of forces involved in the Second Congo War. Over time, MONUC's mandate expanded to include many other measures which supported stabilization across the country. MONUC transitioned into the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in 2010 to reflect the shifting focus from peacekeeping to stabilization and peace consolidation.

- **2005 – UN World Summit**

Besides the General adressation of broad global challenges such as peace, international security and multilateral communication, a key outcome of the UN World Summit in 2005 regarding peacekeeping the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission, aimed at supporting countries transitioning from conflict to sustainable peace, and endorsement of a standing police capacity to enhance rapid response in peacekeeping missions.

- **2021 – Reports on peacekeeper sexual exploitation**

The 2021 reports on sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by UN peacekeepers underscored persistent and widespread issues despite the UN's zero-tolerance policy implemented since 2003. These reports revealed numerous allegations of peacekeepers engaging in sexual exploitation, including abuse of vulnerable populations such as women and children in multiple missions worldwide.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

Brahimi Report (2000)

Released by the Algerian United Nations Diplomat Lakhdar Brahimi, the Brahimi Report (formally called Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations) presents detailed feedback on how the UN peacekeeping force has experienced several high-profile failures, including Rwanda and Bosnia. This report had a crucial impact on the strengthening of effectiveness and credibility of peacekeeping. A few of such measures included a call for action regarding rapid and effective deployment of peace operations, clear, understandable and credible mandates that ensure achievability and allow peacekeepers to not only protect themselves, but also civilians.

High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (2015)

2015, the UN endeavored to combat sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) committed by peacekeeping forces. It created the autonomous assessment on sexual abuse and exploitation by peacekeepers. This assessment showed serious deficiencies in responsibility and support for those affected. The assessment called for stricter personnel vetting, faster inquiries, and better safeguarding and support for victims.

UN Security Council Resolution 2272 (2016)

The UNSC adopted Resolution 2272 on March 11, (2016), to combat sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by UN peacekeepers and personnel. The resolution endorsed the UN's zero-tolerance policy and established measures designed to make perpetrators responsible. Participants had to conduct prompt and open inquiries and prosecute alleged personnel. The UN Secretary-General was instructed to prevent units against whom allegations have been substantiated from taking part in future peacekeeping missions.

Measures of the recent period (2020-2025)

From 2020 to 2025, the UN has emphasized comprehensive pre-deployment and in-mission training to build the operational capacity, safety awareness, and ethical standards of military, police, and civilian personnel. Key initiatives include the Civilian Pre-deployment Training (CPT) course that prepares civilian staff for complex peacekeeping environments, the Senior

Leadership Programme (SLP) for mission leaders, and mission-specific advanced staff training. Additionally, new intelligence training programs like the United Nations Military Peacekeeping Intelligence Course (UN MPKI) aim to boost critical skills such as intelligence gathering and analysis to support decision-making.

Questions a Resolution Should Answer

- How can mandates be made more realistic and aligned with available resources?
- What strategies can enhance accountability and prevent misconduct among peacekeepers?
- Should the UN develop permanent, standing peacekeeping forces with specialized skills?
- How can political solutions be better integrated into operational strategies?
- What reforms are needed to ensure equitable burden-sharing among member states?

Appendix

United Nations Peacekeeping - Brahimi Report -

<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/brahimi-report-0>

United Nations Peacekeeping - "A New Partnership Agenda: Charting a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping"

https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/newhorizon_0.pdf

Al Jazeera - "Is the UN sending the wrong people to keep the peace?"

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2017/8/4/is-the-un-sending-the-wrong-people-to-keep-the-peace>

United Nations Peacekeeping - „Mandates and the legal basis for peacekeeping“

<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mandates-and-legal-basis-peacekeeping>

Bibliography

Brahimi, Lakhdar. "Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations." United Nations, 21 Aug. 2000. 8 Nov. 2025.

"High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations Submission." United Nations, 17 June 2015. 8 Nov. 2025.

Doe, John. "Challenges Facing UN Peacekeeping." International Peace Institute, 12 May 2024. 8 Nov. 2025.

Smith, Jane. "UN Peacekeeping: Mandates and Realities." Al Jazeera, 10 Feb. 2025. 8 Nov. 2025.

Franklin, Maya. "Sexual Misconduct and Peacekeeper Accountability." The Guardian, 18 Jul. 2022. 8 Nov. 2025.

UN Peacekeeping. "Our History". 8. Nov. 2025.