



**Republican and Democratic presidents recognize the value of UN peacekeeping to U.S. national interests.**

# UN PEACEKEEPING

UN peacekeeping is **one of the most important tools at the UN's disposal for conflict mitigation and stabilization**. Peacekeeping operations are authorized by the UN Security Council, where the U.S. has long used its position as a permanent member to advocate for strong, clear peacekeeping mandates to effectively meet the world's evolving security and civilian protection challenges.

At one-eighth the cost of U.S. military operations, **UN peacekeeping provides stability in crisis zones key to U.S. national interests** but often out of the public eye. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, home to the world's richest critical mineral deposits essential for U.S. technological dominance, the UN has successfully prevented a relapse of one of the world's worst conflicts since World War II, in which more than six million civilians were killed. In South Sudan, a Christian majority nation that separated from an authoritarian Islamic regime with bipartisan U.S. support, the UN supported the creation of an independent state in the heart of the strategic Nile basin. In Somalia, where terrorism and piracy threatens maritime shipping lanes critical for U.S. commerce, the UN has contained threats to international security. In disputed Kashmir, a flashpoint for rival nuclear powers who are both significant security partners for the U.S., the UN has successfully sustained deconfliction for decades.

In every case, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council with veto power and unique political capital, the U.S. has an outsized voice in globally shaping every UN mission on the ground while paying a fraction of the cost - roughly equivalent to what the U.S. spends on the defense of Guam each year.

## 2024 Successes

Facing a record number of crises in 2024, here's how UN peacekeepers upheld peace and security.



### 11 Operations

11 missions worldwide were operational with 60,000 uniformed personnel.



### 121 Countries

121 countries contributed uniformed personnel to UN peace operations.



### Four to One

U.S. peacekeeping investments are matched four to one by the rest of the world.

## Value of Peacekeeping

### Peacekeepers save lives and reduce conflict.

Helping countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace, UN peacekeeping's advantages include unmatched international legitimacy, singular force generation and deployment capacities with personnel from around the globe, experience conducting joint military, police and civilian activities, and flexible financial systems that work both for rapid start-up and sustained efforts to advance multi-dimensional missions and reduce civilian deaths. **The presence of peacekeeping forces has been shown to significantly reduce mass displacement and those seeking asylum.**

### Peacekeeping missions are cost-effective.

According to multiple studies from the Government Accountability Office, **peacekeeping missions are one-eighth the cost of traditional U.S. military engagement - and without U.S. troops on the ground.** The UN also has an established package of accountability and compliance mechanisms for its peace operations that are peerless in the multilateral world.

### Peacekeeping promotes burden-sharing.

The UN has no standing army; instead, it depends on UN Member States to voluntarily contribute troops and police to peacekeeping operations. As a permanent member of the Security Council, **the U.S. plays a central role in deciding to deploy peacekeepers but provides just a few dozen** of the 60,000 uniformed personnel.

# ADVANCING POLITICAL SOLUTIONS TO CONFLICT

## Ceasefire Monitoring

Leveraging the impartiality of UN peacekeeping, ceasefire monitors observe ceasefire arrangements, accurately record and report incidents and mediate among parties. Observers can be deployed to monitor a truce, cessation of hostilities or ceasefire agreements. These may involve demilitarized and temporary security zones, as well as military cantonment arrangements. Eight missions currently have ceasefire monitoring within their mandate, including UNIFIL (Israel and Lebanon), UNMOGIP (India and Pakistan) and MINURSO (Western Sahara).

## Election Security and Assistance

Elections are a critical transition stage from conflict to peace and often a milestone for the strategic drawdown of international support. UN electoral assistance ensures a secure environment for credible elections and can include technical assistance to national election commissions, support to national police and authorities responsible for a security context for free and fair campaigning, panels of experts, electoral observation and operational support to international observers. Since 1991, the UN has responded to the requests of 115 countries to assist with elections.

## Human Rights Advocacy

In the world's most repressive crisis zones, UN human rights reporting is often the only public source of credible information on atrocities. Monitors provide evidence of rights violations to the Security Council, support early warning mechanisms through monitoring and data collection and advise government and local actors on institutional reform to build national capacity and strengthen domestic accountability mechanisms. Current missions with human rights components include MONUSCO (Democratic Republic of Congo), MINUSCA (Central African Republic), UNMISS (South Sudan) and UNMIK (Kosovo), as well as political missions in Afghanistan, Haiti, Iraq, Libya, Somalia and Sudan.

On July 28, 2024, Venezuela held a national election in which incumbent President Nicolás Maduro was declared the winner. Results were disputed by the U.S. and broader international community. A UN Panel of Experts deployed to Venezuela to report to the Secretary-General on the election process. It concluded the election outcome "has no precedent in contemporary democratic elections" and lacked "basic transparency and integrity."

This determination helped establish the political will to withhold international recognition of the Maduro regime, including by the governments of Brazil, Colombia and Mexico.

*Venezuela does not currently host a peacekeeping or political mission.*

## Spotlight Venezuela



# PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

The protection of civilians (POC) is an essential part of many peacekeeping mandates that authorizes missions to take any necessary means - including deadly use of force - to prevent, deter and respond to threats of physical violence against civilians.

In most cases, the ability to use that force must be explicitly granted by the host country. POC activities require coordination among civilian, police and military components of a mission. Since POC mandates were established by the Security Council in 1999, the Council has launched 16 such operations, which are strictly guided by the Department of Peace Operations POC policy.



## POC Principles

- Governments are primarily responsible for POC.
- When governments are unwilling to act, peacekeepers with a POC mandate have the authority and responsibility to protect civilians.
- POC operations are completed with respect for humanitarian principles.
- POC missions operate with all core peacekeeping principles, including host country consent, impartiality and the use of force only in self-defense or when approved by the Security Council.

## Current Missions with Protection Mandates

### UN Stabilization Mission in the DRC

MONUSCO provides physical protection and early warning capacity, supports military justice for human rights violations and manages arms and weapons for national security forces.

### UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

MINUSCA employs a POC working group to coordinate information-sharing, conflict analysis and response to threats. It has established 83 community protection committees and trained 16 prefectures on POC principles.

### UN Mission in South Sudan

UNMISS completes POC activities through its Protection, Transition and Reintegration Section, which provides physical protection to civilian populations, supports transitioning security services to national actors and assists reintegrating internally displaced persons and refugees. UNMISS physically protected 250,000 civilians inside its bases during the sudden onset of South Sudan's civil war.

### UN Interim Force in Lebanon

UNIFIL has completed 600 civilian evacuations and established dozens of shelters as part of its POC mandate.

### United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

UNISFA is addressing spillover from the civil conflict in Sudan. Its mission was renewed by the Security Council in 2024.

# WOMEN IN PEACEKEEPING

Women are deployed in all areas of peacekeeping – police, military and civilian – and positively impact operations. While the number of women in uniformed positions has grown over the years, the UN is actively increasing their representation. By 2028, they aim to have women comprise at least 15% of military, 25% of military observers and staff officers and 20% of police units. The Security Council has also adopted ten resolutions since 2000 – many introduced by the U.S. – supporting women in conflict prevention, peace and security and advancing human rights.

## Progress

In 2023, of the more than 72,000 peacekeepers at the time, women constituted nearly 7% of military contingents and 16% of police units, up from just 1% of total personnel in 1993. These increases were spurred by UN Security Council Resolution 1325, passed in 2000, reaffirming the vital role of women in maintaining and promoting international peace and security.

**1 in 3** justice and correction officers in the Department of Peace Operations are female.



### Improving Operational Effectiveness

A broadened skillset means improved decision-making, planning and results, leading to greater effectiveness and performance.



### Building Trust and Confidence

Women improve access and support for local women, especially in societies with restrictions on women speaking with men.



### Preventing and Reducing Conflict

Women are disproportionately impacted by conflict. More women peacekeepers support reintegration of child soldiers and women ex-combatants.



### Accessing Communities

Women are excellent at connecting with survivors of gender- and adolescent based violence, gaining information that can be otherwise difficult to reach.



### Role Models

Women serve as mentors and role models for women and girls in post-conflict settings as examples to advocate for their rights and pursue non-traditional careers.

# SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

Security sector reform (SSR) is an essential part of UN peacekeeping operations, particularly in post-conflict settings, and enhances capacity and responsible governance structures in the security sector of states confronting threats to international peace and security.

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) involves transitional weapons and ammunition management initiatives and the reintegration of former combatants into national armies and civil society following cessation of hostilities. DDR activities have been an important element of peace processes. Since 1989, more than 60 UN missions have been tasked with conducting such activities.

## The UN Role

- **Advise governments** on security policy, primarily in post-conflict settings.
- **Assist in negotiations** to ensure inclusion of SSR considerations.
- **Support mediation** between warring parties on reintegration of former combatants into national security forces.
- **Assist in policy and guidance** to build national capacity for security sector programs.

## Current Missions with SSR Components

### UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

MINUSCA provides technical advice, military training and vetting expertise to the local government, serving as an important counterweight as the presence of Russian paramilitary forces increases.

### UN Mission in South Sudan

UNMISS troops have seized thousands of arms and ammunition through their Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration program since 2013, and regularly provide human rights technical training at all ranking levels of the national security forces.

### UN Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo

MONUSCO relies on SSR for its protection of civilians mandate, and has collaborated with local army, police and justice officials to recruit and deploy a gender-balanced battalion of 2,700 men and women to support stabilization efforts in the country.

### UN Office to the African Union

UNOAU's SSR assistance is especially critical with growing activity from jihadist and Russian paramilitary groups in the African Union (AU). In 2023, UNOAU and the AU convened a high-level conference to address the importance of SRR in the region and share best practices to tackle specific complexities in the African security environment.

## Spotlight Cote D'Ivoire

By the time the UN Operation in Cote D'Ivoire (ONUCI) ended in 2017, it had disarmed and reintegrated **70,000 former combatants**, assisting to train **23,000 army members**, **19,000 gendarmerie** and **18,000 police**. Cote D'Ivoire is now one of the fastest growing economies on the African continent.



## ENSURING EFFICIENCY AND

# ACCOUNTABILITY

The Secretariat's **Office of Internal Oversight Services** (OIOS) is the main UN oversight body. OIOS reports to the Secretary-General and completes internal audits to improve the effectiveness of UN governance and risk management, provide public accountability in instances of wrongdoing and hold investigations into fraud and corruption both for third parties and UN staff. Their work is guided by the UN's Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Framework, which was adopted in 2016 to limit financial waste.

OIOS's work is overseen by the General Assembly's **Independent Audit Advisory Committee**. Selected by the General Assembly, their five committee members assess the scope, results and efficiency of OIOS oversight activities. Currently, American Jeanette Franzel is among the representatives.

Other entities responsible for UN oversight include the **UN Ethics Office**, established in 2005 by then-U.S. Ambassador John Bolton, and the Office of the UN Ombudsman, represented by U.S. citizen Shireen L. Dodson.

The UN operates under a "single audit principle." This means that the UN generally does not permit individual Member States to perform external audits or investigations, which could become politically motivated.

In 1946, the **UN Board of Auditors** was created to provide independent audit capacity across the UN. The Board's mandate is "to make independent and professional audit observations" for UN management, funds and programs. That includes evaluating efficiency of UN financial procedures, accounting and overall management using generally accepted standards like the International Standards on Auditing.

The UN also has a **Joint Inspection Unit** (JIU) - an independent external oversight body mandated to conduct system-wide evaluations, inspections and investigations to identify cross-cutting areas of opportunity to increase the UN's efficiency. It conducts around a dozen evaluations annually.

The Secretary-General also facilitates investigatory work by outside entities, occasionally creating ad hoc groups, such as the Volcker Committee, which was shored up at the request of Secretary-General Kofi Annan to examine management of the UN's Oil for Food Program in Iraq in the early 2000's.

## Budget Changes

In 2022, the UN General Assembly voted to move from a biennial to an annual budget cycle. The decision was made in response to Member State concerns regarding cost savings and efficiency in spending and was aimed at ensuring resource decisions were made closer to the point of implementation. The approach also allows the UN to act on the most current information, particularly regarding developing situations and emergencies.



## Spotlight UN-AU Partnership

Resolution 2719, establishing a framework for African Union-led peace operations (AUPSOs) to access funding from the UN peacekeeping budget, strengthens Africa's security architecture and advances the critical partnership between the UN Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council.

AUPSOs function under the Peace and Security Council of the AU, which was established in the aftermath of crises in the 1990s, including the Rwandan genocide, to intervene in situations involving war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.

This agreement directly addresses the U.S. interest in overcoming funding gaps that previously prevented the success of AU-led operations while maintaining the U.S. veto and say over any AUPSO that uses UN funds.

# PEACEKEEPING REFORM

With U.S. support, the UN has taken on several initiatives to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of peacekeeping operations.

One such example is the Action for Peacekeeping Plan (A4P). Approved by UN Member States in 2018, A4P has increased the implementation of policies responding to instances of sexual exploitation and abuse and works to update current peacekeeping approaches to ensure the efficiency of missions. **A4P has produced new strategic plans for seven of the 11 UN missions.**

## Burden Sharing

Increased burden-sharing for international peace operations has been a priority for every modern U.S. administration. In 2023, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 2719, allowing the African Union (AU) to access UN funding on a case-by-case basis for peace operations. The decision was designed to overcome funding shortfalls among AU members and provide better burden-sharing in a region that has experienced high levels of a violence from extremist and paramilitary forces like the Russian-led Wagner Group. **Through U.S. support of AU financing, the UN has become a counterweight to malign actors in critical regions like the Sahel - without deploying U.S. troops.**

## Budget Reform

U.S. engagement with the UN has successfully reduced the peacekeeping budget and number of peacekeeping missions. In the last eight years alone, **the peacekeeping budget has been reduced by \$1 billion** and five missions.

## Sexual Exploitation

With strong U.S. support, the Security Council passed Resolution 2272, **expanding the authority of the Secretary-General to repatriate entire military and police units that engage in widespread or systematic violations.** This power has been used in the Central African Republic to expel troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo and Gabon.

In addition to these efforts, the UN expanded its vetting process for civilian personnel in peacekeeping missions and **now requires troop-contributing countries to deploy national investigation officers (NIOs)** to lead inquiries into allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. While the host nation is responsible for the prosecution of violations, the UN assists throughout the process.

The UN has also appointed victims' rights advocates at UN Headquarters and in the field to ensure victims have access to urgent assistance, can safely file complaints and receive timely information on the progress of their case.