



**EU contribution to the review on the
‘Future of all Forms of United Nations Peace Operations’**

- **UN peace operations remain one of the most critical multilateral instruments** for preventing armed conflict, sustaining peace and security, and responding to a broader range of crises and threats to international peace and security. Despite challenges, UN peace operations in a large number of cases proved their effectiveness. UN peace operations remain a unique tool to foster international cooperation in favour of peace, as well as to generate multinational forces effectively. 134 Member States have recently renewed their commitment and support to this instrument at the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial 2025.
- The **increasingly multifaceted character** of conflicts, involving rapidly emerging new forms of warfare and conflict-related challenges (hybrid threats, mis/disinformation, terrorism and transnational organised crime, displacement, and a wide range of environment- and climate-driven factors), as well as crimes of aggression, and the particular conditions that define each conflict situation will continue to shape the ways peace operations function. UN peace operations are confronted with increasingly complex challenges, including a lack of political support. We welcome the Pact for the Future's call to **adapt peace operations to better respond to existing challenges and new realities**.
- Underscoring the Pact for the Future's strong focus on **prevention**, future peace operations should adopt a modular approach and flexibly draw on the full range of capabilities within the UN system, **bridging the existing divide** between **special political missions** (SPM) and **peacekeeping operations** (PKO). The full spectrum of peace operations – including peacebuilding – should be put to use.
- A template approach to peace operations, including through the categorisation of peace operations as either SPM or PKO encourages “silo thinking”. A more holistic approach to peace operations by removing the categorisation of SPM or PKO, bringing them under one umbrella and one leadership would make Peace Operations more adaptable to the given circumstances, optimise synergies between missions and allow utilisation of the entire UN toolbox, including capacities of the relevant UN Country Team.
- It is essential to **ensure coherence and consistency** between the different review and reform processes, including the **UN80 initiative** in order to have solid outcomes and ensure any proposed budget cuts are guided by a strategic vision. The synchronous reviews of UN peace operations and the Peacebuilding Architecture Review provide an opportunity to optimise coherence of the UN's peacebuilding and peacekeeping work as mutually reinforcing UN instruments. At the same time, it is essential to ensure that these processes do not affect the ability of Peace Operations to deliver on their mandates.
- Peacekeeping must be driven by clear, sequenced, and realistic mandates, achievable and tailored to context, with a solid financing structure and anchored in viable

political strategy, with defined exit strategies and well-designed integrated¹ stabilisation and transition plans, including SSR/DDR issues that are instrumental to ensuring medium and long-term stability. Exit strategies of newly-created PKOs must be planned from the start of the deployment, to enable shorter missions, better integrated in the local landscape, in partnership with other actors and UN agencies, and in close coordination with local authorities to define realistic and achievable objectives from the moment the mandate is established.

- The review should recommend that the United Nations develop, adopt, and institutionalise a standardised integrated mission-level planning process, applicable to all peace operations across the continuum of peacekeeping and special political missions. Such a process must:
 - Be codified in policy and implemented in mission headquarters, ensuring that each mission has an effects-based, cross-component mission plan grounded in an integrated mandate analysis that is regularly reviewed.
 - Assign dedicated planning roles within each mission component (civilian, police, military) to feed into and co-own the process, ensuring buy-in and whole-of-mission coherence.
 - Provide training and familiarization for mission leadership and planners so they understand and apply the process consistently from mandate formulation to implementation, transition, and drawdown.
 - Bridge the SPM/PKO divide by creating a planning architecture that is agnostic to mission type and adaptable to evolving contexts.
- Drawing on the EU's experience with flexible and modular mandates for EU missions, UN peace operations should prioritise **adaptability, increased local ownership, and partnerships** with relevant actors, including regional organisations. Operational success is directly linked to the contribution of peacekeeping operation's stakeholders. The UN Secretariat has a role in providing the Security Council with multidimensional, context-specific analysis and options for UN presence on the ground in response to evolving conflict dynamics. Advice from the Military Staff Committee (MSC) should be given more leverage and made more operational within the framework of the Security Council.
- Many contexts demonstrate the growing complexity of peace operations in environments marked by prolonged instability, weak state institutions and fragmented sovereignty, and regional power competition. These situations notably underline the need to **operationalise the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus** in mission design and implementation, in order to ensure a coherent and complementary engagement. The experience of UNIFIL in southern Lebanon illustrates the value of peacekeeping missions working in close coordination with local authorities, humanitarian and development actors to help stabilise sensitive security

¹ See the thematic paper "UN Transitions: Sustaining Peace and Development Beyond Mission Withdrawal", by the UN Transitions Project in consultation with the OECD DAC. It highlights the importance of the economic dimension and averting *financing cliffs* following the exit of UN missions.
https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/20200210_sg_report_on_pb_and_sp_-_transitions_thematic_paper_final_online_0.pdf

environments. Full engagement from the troop contributing countries is expected towards enforcing the mission's mandate.

- Given the increasingly multifaceted character of conflicts, involving organised crime, terrorism, and illicit financing, peace operations must have a strong rule of law perspective, with police and civilian components being considered core components of peace operations in the planning, implementation and transition phases.
- Since the effectiveness of a mission depends to a great extent on the cooperation and support of the host country, its consent and **involvement** from the inception and throughout the whole process is critical. Strengthening engagement with local communities, and regional actors will be key to enhancing effectiveness and sustainability.
- More robust, flexible and modular operations should be able to better **accompany and support local security and defence forces**, as well as to provide training and advice.
- **Peacekeeping training** is a shared responsibility for the UN and Troop Contributing Countries. It remains one of the most effective means to improve the security of peacekeepers and the performance of peace operations on the ground. Pre-deployment training should be enhanced based on thorough evaluations of needs to ensure all Troop and Police Contributing Countries adhere to the same standards. Peace operations should also strengthen the promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity in training, documentation and communication. Enhancing linguistic accessibility fosters local ownership and inclusiveness, and contributes to mission legitimacy, operational effectiveness, and meaningful engagement with local population.
- The UN should strengthen its role in mediation between state and/or non-state actors through better use of the “good office role”, while acknowledging the need for striking a balance between a “state-centric” and a “people-centric” role, depending on the context. It is better placed than many other actors to play the role of an impartial, credible and trustworthy mediator and should utilise this position. The UN should in addition strengthen its capacity for acting on early warning of crisis through early prevention and mediation.
- We support enhancing **regional ownership** in peace missions and conflict prevention, including collaboration between the UN and regional organisations on early warning. Regional organisations can play a key role in addressing crises, as they often are best placed to understand the dynamics and discuss with partners in the field. The trilateral EU-UN-AU partnership demonstrates well the role of regional organisations in peace and security.
- **UNSC resolution 2719** is a good example of a strategic rethinking of the multilateral peace and security architecture, where the African Union will have a more important role and will enable a better response to crises and conflicts in a comprehensive manner. The resolution opens new opportunities for **greater complementarity**, and the EU fully supports a **stronger UN-AU partnership**, including in **joint planning and oversight of operations**. The partnership should encompass the entire peace operations continuum, including mediation and peacebuilding involving all components of the APSA structure and the African Union as a political or strategic partner, thus avoiding a narrow framing of the African Union as a military service

provider. We regret that no consensus was found to implement resolution 2719 in Somalia this year to give a clear financing scheme to AUSSOM.

- In this context, **triangular cooperation** between the AU, UN, and EU will be essential to ensure that operations meet the standards of UN Financial Regulations and comply with the established peacekeeping budgetary process.
- It is also useful to reflect upon the **interoperability** between UN and missions and operations of other organisations in the field.
- **Full adherence to the UN Charter and compliance with UN standards** are essential for the credibility and success of a peacekeeping mission. They should underpin all peace operations and partnerships. As an example of supporting UN standards, the EU Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Due Diligence Policy establishes a framework to ensure that security sector support provided by the EU to third parties is consistent with human rights and international humanitarian law. Violations of international humanitarian law, attacks on the civilian population and other human rights violations, including conflict-related sexual violence, must always be condemned and followed up through judicial process.
- In a context where more and more people are affected by humanitarian emergencies and where an unprecedented number of attacks on humanitarian workers have been reported, the role of UN peace operations to **facilitate safe, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access, in full respect of the humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law**, is essential.
- On the role of partnerships in future peace operations, the **EU-UN Strategic Partnership on Peace and Security** provides a model for deeper collaboration - operationally, thematically, and politically. Joint efforts have shown the value of complementarity between EU missions and UN peace operations; this includes EU support and CSDP missions.
- The **EU-UN Joint Priorities on Peace and Security for 2025-2028** reflect a shared commitment to a more coherent, preventive, and multidimensional approach. The establishment of a Strategic Committee and staff-level coordination mechanisms between the UN and the EU provide a valuable governance structure to ensure sustained follow-up and joint implementation of peace and security objectives. These mechanisms can support the operationalisation of the review's recommendations and serve as a platform for continued dialogue and innovation.
- In the current geopolitical environment, the full implementation of the **Women, Peace and Security agenda** commitments is as relevant as ever, and is ~~mission~~ critical for the success of peace operations. A substantial increase in women leadership and full, equal and meaningful participation of women at all levels of peace processes, as well as achieving gender parity within missions and operations are essential for sustainable conflict resolution, including through the implementation of the **UNSG's Common Pledge** to Increase Women's Full, Equal, and Meaningful Participation in Peace Processes, signed by the EU. This includes ensuring targeted recruitment, robust protection frameworks, and enabling environments for women's leadership within missions and in host communities. That would effectively also contribute to the prevention of and response to conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). Moreover, strengthening system-

wide prevention and response mechanisms to address CRSV and SEA, enhancing accountability, and prioritising survivor-centred approaches, including accessible and confidential reporting, access to justice and specialised, comprehensive victim support, remain crucial in this regard.

- In this context, cooperation with international, regional and local organisations as well as with **civil society**, including women's rights organisations, women human rights defenders and peacebuilders is needed.
- Similarly, it is critical to advance the **Youth, Peace and Security agenda, as well as the Children and Armed Conflict agenda**, which should be streamlined across all peace and security efforts. Mainstreaming a gender and youth perspective in planning, implementation and evaluation of peace operations, as well as enhanced accountability mechanisms to combat conflict-related sexual violence and violations against children need to be taken into account.
- Peace operations should also take into account **mental health** aspects and **adopt trauma-sensitive approach**.
- **Digital tools** and emerging technologies can contribute to enhancing the responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency of UN peace operations.
- New technologies can promote the safety and security of mission personnel, including technologies such as unmanned aerial systems. Status of Force Agreements (and host states) should allow for the use of such systems and staff should be trained to use the systems before deployment.
- **Strategic communication** is key, as peace operations need to communicate to host countries and communities on the scope and limitations of their mandate. Fighting **disinformation, foreign information manipulation and interference**, is essential to preserve trust in UN missions at the local level, thus contributing to the implementation of peacekeeping mandates.
- Peace operations should systematically integrate **climate, peace and security** considerations in the planning and the enforcement of mandates and operational tools, and should be able to anticipate and address environmental fragility issues, including the interlinkages between insecurity, governance and climate change, and respond to environmental degradation and their consequences on UN personnel. It is equally important to sustain UN efforts to reduce the environmental impact of peacekeeping missions by introducing renewable energy systems, promoting sustainable practices, managing resources efficiently, and mitigating negative effects on ecosystems. The increasing global water insecurity and its implications on peace and security, human development, preservation of ecosystems and climate resilience should be equally taken into account.
- Besides political support, UN peacekeeping missions must be equipped with adequate **resources** to fulfil every aspect of their mandates. A mismatch exists between mandates, expectations, capabilities, and resources, which is exacerbated by the liquidity crisis. As the UN is facing an unprecedented liquidity crisis, regular, predictable and sustainable financing of peace operations is vital. EU Member States contribute over 4,000 personnel to current UN peacekeeping missions, as well as 23.5% of the UN peacekeeping budget in 2024, while one EU member state is hosting

a peacekeeping operation. We thus consider it especially important that all UN Member States meet their financial obligations in full and on time.

- Lessons learned show that **equipping host countries** – hand in hand with training efforts – with sufficient non-lethal and, where appropriate, lethal equipment to enable them to fulfil their mission, leads to better, more sustainable results and improved opportunities for follow-on efforts. The EU's support to military actors, through the European Peace Facility (EPF) or the NDICI-GE instruments, can be examples for how to organise this.
- The safety and security of peacekeepers must remain a top priority, requiring adequate training, equipment, operational standards and political support.
- UN peace operations should continue to play a critical role in assisting countries in the implementation of the **Responsibility to Protect**. The protection of civilians should always be considered when devising new mandates.
- In order to be efficient, peace operations should operate closely with the whole **peacebuilding** ecosystem, including with a view to support national capacities for conflict prevention. In line with the Pact for the Future, peacekeeping operations and peace support operations should be accompanied by inclusive political approaches and address the root causes and drivers of conflict, thus taking part in future prevention efforts and creating conditions for political processes, through which the needs of all segments of society are taken into account.
- In terms of the wider political picture, the UN Security Council should remain at the centre of the peace and security architecture. At the same time, the cooperation between the Security Council and the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies, including the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as the Economic and Social Council and regional and sub-regional arrangements, should be strengthened in line with the Pact for the Future.
- UN member states (5th committee) and the UN secretariat should reconsider administrative procedures related to the approval of staff positions in missions and devolution of responsibility to the field to obtain more flexibility and thus better match the sequencing of activities with the situation on the ground.
- There should be an independent review/ of the recommendations provided to member states in order to stress-test the recommendations of the review. This would give the review more credibility and counter-act internal disagreements in the secretariat.
- The UN system should continue to make use of its own internal reports, such as the OIOS reports on PKOs, including the audits, investigations and evaluations carried out by the Inspection and Evaluation Division, and the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. More emphasis on implementation of recommendations and documentation of impact is needed.