

Ireland's contribution to the Review on the Future of all Forms of UN Peace operations

The Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the United Nations and has the honour to refer to the Note Verbale, reference DPO/DPET/2025/01645, dated 24 June 2025, concerning the Secretary-General's review on the future of all forms of United Nations peace operations, as requested in Action 21, paragraph 42(b) of the Pact for the Future.

Ireland welcomes the opportunity to input to this review. We view this review as a critical exercise to ensure the continued relevance and effectiveness of UN peace operations, in an increasingly complex global security environment. We note that the review is taking place in parallel with the ongoing Peacebuilding Architecture Review (PBAR), and we underscore the importance of ensuring coherence between both processes, given the intrinsic link between peace operations and peacebuilding. Further and due to that same link between peace operations and peacebuilding, we underscore the importance of addressing transitions and transitions planning, in the context of all UN peace operations.

In response to the Secretariat's invitation for Member States to share their views, priorities, and recommendations, and considering the guiding questions provided, Ireland is pleased to offer the following initial inputs. We would be pleased to contribute further to the review through consultations, in due course.

1. What are the main challenges confronting peace operations today and what challenges are expected to be faced by peace operations in the future?

The current landscape of peace operations is marked by significant challenges that necessitate adaptive responses: Peace operations engage and operate in a difficult global environment of increased conflict, fragmentation and polarisation.

Challenges include increasingly complex conflicts involving diverse and often uncoordinated actors; resource and budgetary constraints; the emergence of new technologies, including technologies enabling the proliferation of misinformation and disinformation; accelerated transitions; and the growing impact of climate change on peace and security. Further, an environment in which breaches of international law, including threats to the safety and security of peacekeepers, go answered creates an extremely difficult working environment for UN peace Operations.

Challenges will continue to evolve, demanding continuous adaptation from UN peace operations. This exercise is key to ensuring that the UN is adequately equipped to do so.

2. How can United Nations peace operations adapt in response to current and future challenges (e.g., in terms of political and substantive work, mandates, operational and administrative requirements, capacities)?

Adaptation in response to current and future challenges must address the full range of challenges faced.

- **Political Solutions:**

Peace operations succeed when political solutions are actively pursued. There must be renewed political will from the UN and its Member States, in particular the members of the Security Council, to pursue political solutions and deploy the full range of tools to address conflict, including good offices and mediation. It is also important that the UN system retains strong awareness and understanding of political developments in conflict situations, particularly as lessons or experiences in one context may be applicable in other regions.

- **Clarity of mandates and agile Responses:**

Peace operations should have clear, credible, and achievable mandates. Peace operations should be agile and tailored to respond to a range of threats and challenges, drawing on the full range of UN capabilities. This includes flexible mandate design that can evolve with conflict dynamics, and support for responsive operational and administrative responses, including rapid deployment and re-tasking where necessary.

- **Specialised Capabilities:**

Future peace operations require greater specialised capabilities to address contemporary threats. This may include, for example, enhanced intelligence gathering, information analysis, strategic communication, and technological countermeasures against misinformation and disinformation.

Recruitment and training programmes must be adapted to these and other evolving challenges. Personnel provided by TCCs should have the relevant skill sets for mandate implementation; similarly, civilian recruitment in PKOs and Special Political Missions should be framed to ensure the Mission has the necessary skill sets to support mandate delivery.

- **Host Country Ownership:**

The priorities and responsibilities of host countries must be a key consideration. Dedicated attention should be given in planning for adaptations to gathering and taking account of the perspectives of governmental and non-governmental interlocutors. Systematically seeking perspectives of host countries and societies is critical for local ownership and sustaining peace. Genuine host country ownership coupled with sustained political commitment from the international community offers the best prospects for success.

- **Accountability:**

The UN and its Member States must continue to insist on and pursue accountability for attacks on peacekeepers and UN infrastructure. Failure to do so undermines the

implementation of the individual mission mandates and the concept of peacekeeping itself.

- **Transitions; Seamless Integration & Handover:**

There must be seamless integration between peace operations and broader post-conflict recovery, reconstruction and peacebuilding efforts. This includes early and strategic planning for transitions from the outset of a mission's deployment and as part of establishment of its mandate. Planning for effective transitions and resourcing them sufficiently, including handover to national authorities and other UN entities, are critical to avoiding security vacuums and ensuring sustainable peace. This is a topic which Ireland has also raised in PBAR consultations.

Ireland calls for full implementation of Security Council Resolution 2594, which addressed the crucial role peace operations play in the pursuit of sustainable political solutions and building peace and emphasised the need for peace operations to engage in integrated planning and coordination on transitions with the host state and other national stakeholders at all stages of the Mission life cycle.

3. What could United Nations peace operations be expected and mandated to do in the future? Under what conditions are United Nations peace operations least likely to be effective in achieving their objectives? Under what conditions are United Nations peace operations most likely to achieve their objectives?

Ireland has a long-standing commitment to UN peacekeeping. While missions today face compounding challenges, it is important to acknowledge that across the decades, UN peacekeeping has played a key role in protecting civilians, preventing the spread of conflicts and crises and strengthening state sovereignty. In short, UN peacekeeping has laid the foundations for lasting peace in many parts of the world. Equally, UN special political missions have played an indispensable role in conflict prevention, supporting peace processes, and helping nations to rebuild. In Ireland's view, peace operations remain one of the UN's most effective and critical tools.

Peace operations are least likely to be effective under conditions of a lack of unified political support from the Security Council and wider UN membership. Other hindering factors include unclear or unrealistic mandates that are ambiguous, overly ambitious, or lack clear prioritisation, insufficient resources and a lack of predictable, adequate, and sustained financing, the absence of active pursuit of political solutions, and a lack of host country buy-in and genuine partnership.

Conversely, peace operations are most likely to achieve their objectives with a clear political strategy and strong, unified political backing from the Security Council and wider UN membership. As a TCC actively engaged in UN peace operations since 1958, Ireland recognises that conditions for success include sustained political commitment from the

international community, coupled with local ownership as part of a broader, nationally-led peacebuilding framework. Evidence suggests that when women are actively involved in peace processes, outcomes are more sustainable and effective; UN missions can play a critical role in enabling this. Lessons learned from our experience also highlight the importance of early and integrated planning for transitions.

Success is also fostered by tailored and flexible mandates that are responsive to evolving needs, and designed in close consultation with host countries and T/PCCs, with predictable, adequate, and sustained resourcing. The independent study commissioned by UNDPDPO entitled the 'Future of Peacekeeping, New Models, and Related Capabilities' makes an important contribution by setting out the main areas of intervention across UN peace operations. It proposes a modular approach to UN peace operations, which involves designing missions with distinct, interoperable components that can be initiated, reconfigured, or scaled back based on local needs, root causes of conflict and changing conflict dynamics.

System-wide coordination and harmonized approaches across the UN in field contexts that align political, security, development and humanitarian efforts, under a nexus approach, is essential for ensuring coherent strategies, efficient resource use, and consistent engagement with host countries and partners.

As set out in more detail in question 2, to achieve success, future peace operations require greater specialised capabilities to address contemporary threats, including early warning systems, planning, and leveraging new technologies. This may include enhanced situational awareness, information analysis, strategic communication, and technological countermeasures against misinformation and disinformation, as well as more and better community engagement is also needed to counter misinformation, disinformation and hate speech. Training programmes must be adapted to evolving challenges.

There must be better integration between peace operations and broader peacebuilding efforts. This includes early and strategic planning for transitions, including in the mission deployment phase and as part of establishment of its mandate. Planning for effective transitions, including handover to national authorities and other UN entities, is critical to avoiding security vacuums and ensuring sustainable peace.

4. What could be the role of partnerships, with regional organizations, international financial institutions, or other actors, in future United Nations peace operations? What are the opportunities and challenges presented by partnerships, and what principles should underpin them?

Ireland considers that partnerships are vital for future UN peace operations. We consider partnership with stakeholders at all levels – international, regional, national and local - to be key to the success and sustainability of both peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Partnerships offer opportunities for burden sharing, leveraging complementary strengths and enhanced legitimacy through localisation.

Partnerships are also critical for building a sustainable peace, which can bridge the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, critical for sustaining peace beyond mission withdrawal.

Challenges include ensuring effective coordination and coherence, avoiding duplication of efforts, reconciling divergent mandates, and addressing resource disparities.

Partnerships must be underpinned by mutual respect and trust, complementarity and comparative advantage, clear roles and responsibilities, shared objectives, and host country centrality, supporting the sovereignty and leadership of host countries.

UN peace operations have a better chance of success when supported by neighbouring states and the relevant regional organisations. Ireland endorses UN efforts to expand assistance to regional-led peacekeeping missions, including through implementation of Resolution 2719. UN principles and values should underpin UN supported Missions and interventions.

5. Please share any other observations that may benefit the review.

The international community has reaffirmed the value and necessity of UN peace operations. Through the Pact for the Future, all 193 Member States recognised that UN peace operations are a critical tool to maintain international peace and security. This review is a positive opportunity to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.

Success also requires a solid financial foundation and we encourage all Member States to pay their assessments in full and on time. [Reductions in the UN's Peacekeeping budget should be re-deployed to support Peace Operations and Peacebuilding objectives, in line with the Secretary General's call for \$100m of assessed contributions to go to the UN Peacebuilding Fund each year.]

Ireland considers that a number of thematic issues must be taken into account and incorporated in successful planning for and implementation of peace operations. These include:

- **Human Rights & Protection of Civilians:**

The protection of civilians, with a strong focus on human rights, as a non-negotiable core function of UN peace operations and must be a key consideration in all phases of the mission life cycle. Future operations must be adequately resourced and trained to meet this critical responsibility.

- **Diversity, WPS, YPS & Minority Engagement:**

Full and meaningful integration of diverse perspectives across all aspects of peace operations, from mandate design to implementation, is essential for effectiveness and sustainability of peace. This includes delivering on the commitments of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agendas

- **Climate:**
 Climate is an increasingly significant conflict multiplier, adding further complexity to future peace operations and necessitating adaptive responses. This review presents a crucial opportunity to incorporate the impact of climate change on peace operations, as a key consideration across the Mission life cycle. For Ireland, integrating climate security into the framework of peace operations is a key priority, ensuring that future mandates and strategies effectively account for this evolving threat and its profound implications for international peace and security.
- **Training & Capacity Building:**
 Continued investment in high-quality, pre-deployment, and in-mission training for all peacekeepers is vital. This training must be adapted to emerging threats, including on issues like combating misinformation, cybersecurity awareness, and upholding human rights.
- **Leveraging Data & Analytics:**
 The review should address the importance of robust data collection, analysis, and early warning mechanisms, particularly in areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Learning from peacebuilding data can inform more effective and preventative peace operation deployments, ensuring that missions are deployed when and where they can have the greatest impact. This directly links to work for prevention of conflict.
- **International law, including International Humanitarian Law:**
 Adherence to international law, including international humanitarian law, within peace operations and by all parties to conflict is critical. Addressing any violations of IHL must be priority in all phases of the Mission life cycle.
- **Innovation & Technology:**
 The review could usefully explore the opportunities presented by technological solutions, including for engagement and global outreach, from the operational perspective including enhancement of efficiency, safety, and effectiveness; as well as in early warning systems to identify potential triggers for conflict. The challenges posed by new technologies should also be addressed.
- **Safety & Security of Peacekeepers:**
 Ensuring the safety and security of peacekeepers must remain a core priority in the evolving threat landscape. This also necessitates robust follow-up to ensure accountability for attacks against peacekeepers.

IRELAND

Questions for current and former Troop- and Police-Contributing Countries

Q 9 What factors shaped your country's decision to become a T/PCC to UN peace operations? What factors and considerations will determine whether your country will remain an active T/PCC in future UN peace operations?

Ireland's longstanding commitment to UN peacekeeping is rooted in our foreign policy principles, particularly a strong belief in multilateralism, international law, and the primacy of the UN in maintaining global peace and security. Since our first deployment in 1958, Ireland has maintained a consistent and unbroken presence in UN peace operations. This decision reflects historical experience, political values and strategic priorities, with peacekeeping representing a tangible expression of Ireland's foreign policy priorities.

Key factors for participation include:

- **Moral responsibility** – as a small country with a global outlook, Ireland supports strengthening international security and addressing conflict prevention.
- **Credibility and legitimacy of the UN** – peacekeeping is one of the most visible and effective expressions of UN solidarity.
- **Professional development** – participation in peace operations enhances the capabilities, operational experience, and global credibility of the Defence Forces (DF) and the police force (An Garda Síochána).
- **International partnerships** – Ireland often deploys alongside like-minded nations to enhance interoperability (e.g., current UNIFIL battalion with Polish, Maltese, and Hungarian contingents; previous joint deployments with New Zealand, Finland, Estonia, Sweden, Pakistan, and Germany).
- **Alignment with Irish values** – mission mandates must reflect Ireland's commitment to peace and security, human rights, protection of civilians, and adherence to international law.
- **National legislative compliance** – ensuring all deployments continue to meet a UN mandate requirement alongside national government and parliamentary approval.
- **Public and political support** – deployments remain accountable to the Oireachtas (Parliament) and the Irish people.
- **Security environment and threat assessments** – including adequate force protection, CASEVAC planning, and medical/logistical support.
- **UN responsiveness and reform** – willingness of the UN to address structural and operational challenges.
- **DF capacity and resources** – balancing overseas commitments with domestic defence requirements.
- **Opportunities for multinational deployment frameworks** – including EU CSDP missions, EU Battlegroups, and regional partnerships.

2024 Defence Policy Review - this national policy review reaffirms that a commitment to the UN will remain at the heart of Ireland's foreign and defence policy, while recognising evolving operational demands and the increasing role of regional organisations in peace support.

Q 10 How would you assess the degree to which your views as a T/PCC were, or are, taken into consideration with regard to the mandates of UN peace operations and their implementation?

Ireland values its engagement with the UN Secretariat, Security Council, and other stakeholders, particularly through the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34) and the Military Staff Committee and mission T/PCC meetings. In recent years, the level of communication and consideration of T/PCC perspectives has improved, although challenges remain.

Concerns include:

- **Limited influence in mandate formation** – despite consultations, the views of smaller T/PCCs are not always reflected in Security Council resolutions.
- **Operational feasibility gaps** – mandates are sometimes overly ambitious or politically driven without adequate assessment of resources, terrain, or risk.
- **Lack of structured feedback channels** – field experience and lessons learned are not systematically integrated into mandate renewal or review.

Mandates and implementation require:

- More inclusive, transparent, and field-informed mandate processes.
- Greater use of the Military Staff Committee to channel TCC concerns.
- Structured engagement with host states, T/PCCs, and civil society actors during mandate design, implementation and renewal.
- Conditions-based withdrawal planning – Ireland supports mission exit strategies that are tied to achieving political and security benchmarks, rather than rigid timelines, to safeguard progress and prevent security vacuums and relapse into conflict.

Q 11 From your perspective as a T/PCC, what are the most pressing challenges confronting the UN peace operations you are involved in?

Ireland supports the UN Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) and A4P+ initiatives to address these challenges through improved mission performance, political engagement, and partnerships. Drawing from operational experience in complex missions such as UNIFIL (Lebanon) and MINUSMA (Mali), Ireland identifies the following key challenges:

Increasingly complex and dangerous operational environments

- Deteriorating security landscapes and asymmetric threats.
- Blurring of peacekeeping and peace enforcement roles.
- Growing presence of private military contractors, with unclear legal status and host-nation relationships.

Mandate-capability gap

- Mismatch between tasks assigned and available resources.
- Absence of clear transition plans or end states. Lack of emphasis on conditions-based withdrawal, with some missions facing pressure to exit on fixed dates rather than after meeting agreed political and security benchmarks.
- Over extension of mandates without sufficient clarity on stabilisation objectives.

Safety and security of personnel

- Increased levels of attacks on peacekeepers. Accountability of member states, particularly host states, for attacks on peacekeepers.
- Limitations in medical evacuation, in-theatre treatment, and strategic mobility.

Political constraints and mis/disinformation

- Weak host-state cooperation and stalled political processes.
- Disinformation and hate speech undermining mission legitimacy, requiring integrated, proactive, culturally sensitive strategic communications.

Coordination and logistical challenges

- Lack of synergy between military, police, and civilian components.
- Dependence on UN logistics systems with limited strategic lift capability.

Q 12 Based on your experience deploying peacekeepers, what capabilities and support would be needed for deployments in the future?

Ireland's Defence Forces have drawn lessons from decades of deployments across a variety of missions, meanwhile recognising the need to adapt to increasingly complex conflict zones and evolving UN operational requirements. Future capability priorities should include:

Enhanced force protection and situational awareness

- Improved armoured mobility and personal protective equipment.
- Advanced surveillance technology (drones, sensors, counter-IED systems).
- Strengthened tactical and strategic peacekeeping intelligence gathering and analysis capabilities.

Sustainable logistics and supply chain

- Reliable supply lines for fuel, food, ammunition, and spares.
- Access to strategic and tactical airlift, including rotary-wing aircraft.

Robust medical support

- In-theatre Level 2 and Level 3 medical facilities.
- Reliable CASEVAC planning and execution.
- Enhanced combat medical training and trauma-care capacity.

Strategic communications and cybersecurity

- Strengthened and effective strategic communication and public information.
- Secure, modern, and resilient communications infrastructure.

Specialist skills and training

- Language training, gender advisors, cultural awareness, and engagement with local communities.
- Niche capabilities such as engineering, EOD, and CIMIC.
- Integration of Women, Peace and Security (WPS) principles across all roles.

Interoperability and flexible force structures

- Participation in multinational exercises to enhance readiness.
- Rapidly deployable, modular units for diverse mission requirements.