

REVIEW ON THE FUTURE OF ALL FORMS OF UNITED NATIONS PEACE OPERATIONS

OPEN CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

INTRODUCTION

1. The world is witnessing an era of geopolitical upheaval and persistent political tensions, which continue to obstruct sustainable peace and challenge the foundations of international stability. Recent conflicts have endangered the lives of countless civilians, underscoring the urgent need for proactive and robust measures to prevent escalation and ensure the protection of the most vulnerable. Pact for the Future request to undertake a review on the future of all forms of United Nations peace operations, taking into account lessons learned from previous and ongoing reform processes, and provide strategic and action-oriented recommendations for the consideration of Member States on how the United Nations toolbox can be adapted to meet evolving needs, to allow for more agile, tailored responses to existing, emerging, and future challenges.

2. This paper will be answering the questions given for the review of all forms of United Nations Peace Operations call for contribution for review on the future of all forms of United Nations peace operations.

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

3. The challenges facing future peace operations are increasingly diverse and complex in nature. These challenges are likely to have a direct impact on the successful achievement of mission mandates and the overall operational effectiveness of peacekeeping missions. Moreover, they may significantly affect the credibility and legitimacy of United Nations peace operations—and the UN as a whole. The following key challenges can be highlighted:

a. **Complex Asymmetric Threats.** The evolving security environment is increasingly characterized by the presence of non-state actors, transnational terrorist networks, catastrophic destruction, and asymmetric tactics. These developments have rendered traditional peacekeeping approaches less effective. Furthermore, the nature of asymmetric threats makes it difficult to identify clear patterns of operation, as hostile actors often exploit existing security gaps and adopt unpredictable modes of engagement. This significantly challenges the ability of peace operations to anticipate, prevent, and respond effectively to such threats.

b. **Liquidity Crisis and Resource Constraints.** Successful implementation of peacekeeping mandates requires sustained financial support and adequate resources until the mandated objectives are fully achieved. However, persistent

financial limitations, shortfalls in troop and equipment contributions, and logistical challenges significantly undermine the sustainability and effectiveness of missions. These constraints hinder operational planning, delay critical deployments, and ultimately compromise the ability of missions to deliver on their mandates.

c. Technological Advance Threats. The emergence of advanced technologies, such as the use of drones and sophisticated improvised explosive devices (IEDs), has significantly increased the vulnerability of peacekeepers and posed serious challenges to the protection of civilians. Additionally, the growing use of cyber tactics, artificial intelligence-driven disinformation campaigns, and surveillance technologies by conflict actors has further intensified the complexity of threats. Countering these evolving and often invisible forms of warfare has become increasingly difficult, requiring peace operations to adapt rapidly and enhance their technological preparedness.

d. Lack of Clear and Realistic Mandates. Peacekeeping missions are often tasked with broad and ambitious mandates that are not matched with the necessary political backing, financial resources, or operational capacities. This disconnect makes effective implementation extremely challenging and may undermine the credibility of both the mission and the United Nations as a whole. These expansive mandates are frequently referred to as “Christmas Tree Mandates,” as they include multiple, often competing priorities that exceed the capabilities of peacekeeping forces. In light of the increasingly complex threat environment, mandates must be more focused and realistic, accompanied by robust rules of engagement that empower peacekeepers to respond effectively to emerging security challenges.

e. Arms Trafficking and the Challenge of Disarmament. Effective disarmament is a critical prerequisite for the success of any peacekeeping operation. However, the persistent influx of weapons particularly technologically advanced and sophisticated arms poses a major obstacle to achieving mandated objectives. Illicit arms trafficking fuels ongoing violence, empowers spoilers of the peace process, and undermines the authority of both peacekeepers and legitimate state institutions. In many conflict-affected regions, porous borders, weak governance structures, and the presence of transnational criminal networks facilitate the unchecked flow of arms. The availability of advanced weaponry not only escalates the intensity of conflict but also complicates disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) processes. Armed groups, emboldened by their access to modern weaponry, are less inclined to disarm voluntarily, making negotiations more difficult and fragile ceasefires harder to sustain.

QUESTION TWO. How could 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, and capacities)?

4. Given the diverse and complex nature of modern threats to peace, it is evident that traditional methods of conflict resolution are no longer adequate. Hence, future peacekeeping mandates must be reimagined. They must be innovative, nimble, and adaptable, capable of effectively addressing multifaceted challenges. Additionally, the development of forward-looking capabilities to anticipate and identify emerging threats will be critical to the success and long-term effectiveness of peace operations. In view of these following recommendations are forwarded for United Nations Peace Operations to adapt in response to current and future challenges:

a. Robust Mandates for the Protection of Civilians.

Peacekeeping mandates should be more robust and specifically designed to ensure the effective protection of civilians. A strong mandate, supported by robust Rules of Engagement, enhances the mission's credibility and ensures that peacekeepers are empowered to prevent violence, deter aggressors, and respond proactively to threats. This is essential to reinforcing both the legitimacy and operational effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping missions.

b. Enhanced Disarmament Mechanisms. Mandates should include more effective mechanisms for the disarmament of unauthorized armed groups. A well-defined and enforceable disarmament framework backed by sufficient resources and political support will enable peacekeepers to reduce the influence of non-state actors and lay the groundwork for sustainable peace and post-conflict recovery. Addressing arms trafficking requires a comprehensive approach involving robust border monitoring, enhanced intelligence-sharing among states, cooperation with regional and international organizations, and strengthened capacity of national security institutions. Without concrete measures to curtail the flow of arms and enforce effective disarmament, peacekeeping missions' risk being outmatched and unable to fulfill their core mandate of maintaining security and supporting a sustainable peace.

c. Preventing Premature Withdrawal. To avoid disruption and resource loss, mandates must be carefully structured to prevent the premature withdrawal of troops. Premature exits can lead to significant financial losses, abandonment of vital equipment, and a reversal of hard-won peace gains. Planning for responsible and orderly withdrawals must be a central element of all mission design.

d. Defining Clear Conditions for Transition and Drawdown. It is essential to clearly define the conditions under which mission transitions and drawdowns

should occur. These should include specific benchmarks and timelines to ensure that transitions are not only well-timed but also based on objective assessments. This will prevent abrupt exits and support a stable and sustainable handover process.

e. Capacity Building and Local Engagement. Mandates should prioritize capacity building with a strong emphasis on institutional development in host nations. Working closely with local authorities and stakeholders is key to fostering national ownership of the peace process and ensuring long-term stability. Such engagement ensures that peacekeeping leaves behind not only security but also strengthened governance structures.

QUESTION THREE. 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?

5. With the changing dynamics of global conflict, United Nations peacekeeping operations may be expected and mandated to undertake the following roles in the future:

a. Counter Cotemporary Asymmetric Threats. Modern conflicts are increasingly characterized by asymmetric threats, where adversaries often non-state actors or technologically less advanced adversaries employ unconventional tactics to exploit vulnerabilities and cause catastrophic destructions. As a result, United Nations Peace Operations may be expected to confront a range of non-traditional and asymmetric challenges, including terrorism, violent extremism, transnational organized crime, cyber warfare, and the use of drones and other emerging technological threats.

b. Protection of Civilians (PoC). As the nature of conflict becomes more complex, civilians are expected to face heightened levels of vulnerability due to targeted violence, the breakdown of state institutions, and the spread of armed non-state actors. In such contexts, United Nations peacekeeping operations will likely be mandated with broader and more proactive responsibilities for the protection of civilians (PoC). Future missions will not only be expected to physically protect civilians from direct threats such as armed attacks, massacres, or indiscriminate violence but also to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), which is often used as a tactic of war and control. Protection mandates may also extend to preventing forced displacement, abduction of children, human trafficking, and the use of civilians as human shields.

c. Digital Peacekeeping. In the context of modern conflict, digital platforms play a pivotal role—not only in shaping public perception but also in escalating violence. The widespread dissemination of misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech, particularly via social media, has become a significant driver of tension, polarization, and incitement to violence. These digital threats can undermine peace processes, fuel intercommunal conflict, and jeopardize the safety of civilians and peacekeepers alike. As such, future UN peace operations will likely be mandated to monitor and counter harmful online content as part of their broader efforts to maintain peace and security. This includes developing the capacity to identify and respond to coordinated disinformation campaigns, mitigate the spread of online hate speech, and engage in strategic communications to promote factual narratives and peace messaging.

d. Preventive Diplomacy and Conflict Prevention. Future United Nations peacekeeping operations are likely to place greater emphasis on conflict prevention through preventive diplomacy. This includes supporting local peace infrastructures, engaging in proactive mediation efforts, and deploying political missions in advance of escalating tensions to prevent the outbreak of violence. UN operations will be expected to shift from a reactive posture to a more preventive approach, identifying early warning signs and addressing root causes of conflict before they evolve into full-scale crises. This could involve strengthening the role of Special Political Missions (SPMs), enhancing the capacity of regional and local mediators, and promoting inclusive dialogue among stakeholders at the community and national levels. By investing in preventive diplomacy, the UN can reduce the need for large-scale deployments and contribute to more sustainable peace outcomes.

6. Under what conditions are United Nations peace operations least likely to be effective in achieving their objectives?

a. Lack of Political Will and Consent. It has been observed that some host nations resist peacekeeping operations by violating the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), thereby restricting the mission's operational freedom. When the host government is uncooperative, obstructs UN personnel, or seeks to use the mission to legitimize its own actions without a genuine commitment to peace, achieving the mandated objectives becomes significantly more difficult. Furthermore, if major stakeholders to the conflict do not consent to the mission or engage in the process without genuine commitment, peacekeeping efforts risk becoming merely symbolic or being undermined altogether.

b. Inadequate and Ambiguous Mandates. Peacekeeping missions are frequently burdened with overly broad and ambitious mandates, often referred to as “Christmas tree mandates.” These mandates encompass numerous objectives without clear prioritization and frequently exceed the operational capacities of peacekeepers. As a result, missions risk becoming overstretched, with limited resources dispersed across competing tasks. This not only hampers effective implementation but also blurs lines of accountability, making it difficult to assess performance or assign responsibility for unmet objectives

c. Insufficient Resources and Capabilities. Peacekeeping operations must be adequately supported with financial resources, logistics, and technical capabilities, tailored to the specific threats and operational environment they face in order to effectively achieve their mandated objectives. Missions that lack sufficient funding, logistical infrastructure, or technical support are often unable to carry out even their basic functions, thereby compromising their overall effectiveness.

d. Weak or Fragmented Peace Processes. Peacekeeping operations often operate in politically complex environments shaped by geopolitical dynamics and conflicting interests among influential stakeholders, both within the United Nations system and among the parties to the conflict. These competing agendas can significantly hinder the ability of peacekeepers to carry out their mandated tasks effectively. When key international actors are divided or prioritize strategic interests over collective action, it weakens the unity of purpose and reduces the political leverage of the mission. Furthermore, in contexts where active hostilities continue and peace agreements are either non-existent, ignored, fragile, or unimplemented, peacekeeping missions are deployed without a viable political framework to support their efforts. The absence of a credible and inclusive peace process undermines the legitimacy and sustainability of the mission, leaving peacekeepers to operate in a vacuum of political will. In such scenarios, peacekeeping often becomes reactive rather than preventive or stabilizing, limiting its ability to contribute meaningfully to long-term peace and security. Without consensus among key stakeholders and a durable political foundation, peacekeeping missions are left to navigate a volatile and uncertain landscape, where their presence may be symbolic rather than substantive. To enhance effectiveness, greater coherence among international actors and stronger linkages between political processes and operational mandates are essential.

QUESTION FOUR. 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?

7. Partnerships with regional organizations, international financial institutions (IFIs), and other actors can play a pivotal role in enhancing the effectiveness, sustainability, and legitimacy of future United Nations peace operations. Following, are how such partnerships could contribute to enhance the effectiveness of the peacekeeping missions. In future UN peace operations, effective partnerships will not be optional they will be essential. The complexity of modern conflicts requires integrated, multi-actor approaches that leverage the comparative strengths of different organizations and stakeholders. The UN must adopt a networked model of peace operations, underpinned by cooperation, coordination, and mutual accountability to achieve sustainable peace and security.

a. Leadership for Political Legitimacy and Local Ownership. Awareness of regional dynamics is a pivotal factor for the success of any peace process. Regional organizations such as the African Union (AU) and European Union (EU) often possess a deeper understanding of local and regional contexts. Partnerships with these organizations help ensure that peace operations are context-sensitive and enjoy broader legitimacy, thereby enhancing political traction and reducing perceptions of external imposition. Such collaboration also fosters local ownership of the peace process, making it more acceptable to all stakeholders involved in the conflict. Therefore, regional organizations should play a leading role in the formulation of mission mandates, ensuring they reflect ground realities and regional priorities. Moreover, their financial contributions to peacekeeping missions would not only enhance ownership but also promote greater accountability and shared responsibility for sustaining peace.

b. Bridging Financial Gaps. Peace operations often face challenges due to limited funding and short operational timelines. In contrast, International Financial Institutions (IFIs) such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) operate with development oriented and long-term planning frameworks, which can complement the UN's immediate peace and security efforts. These institutions can offer critical support for post-conflict recovery by providing low-interest loans or grants, as well as technical expertise. Their involvement can bolster infrastructure development, governance reforms, economic recovery, and poverty eradication key pillars for achieving sustainable peace. Therefore, strategic partnerships between the UN, regional organizations, and IFIs are essential to ensure a coherent transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding.

Enabling Flexible and Rapid Response. Preventing the escalation of violence requires rapid and decisive responses, particularly to mitigate catastrophic consequences and safeguard civilians. Regional organizations should take the lead in establishing and maintaining standby forces composed of willing and capable member states. These regional forces can rapidly deploy in response to emerging crises, either in support of or as a temporary substitute for United Nations peacekeeping missions, which often face bureaucratic or logistical delays. Such mechanisms would significantly enhance the responsiveness, efficiency, and overall impact of peace operations. Hence, Regional Organizations should proactively establish partnerships with other regional entities, member states, and financial contributors to strengthen their capacity in peace and security operations. Such partnerships can facilitate resource sharing, technical cooperation, and coordinated strategies in addressing complex crises. By engaging with financial institutions, donor countries, and other regional blocs, regional organizations can improve the sustainability, responsiveness, and legitimacy of their peace efforts.

8. What are the opportunities and challenges presented by partnerships, and what principles should underpin them?

9. Effective partnerships between the United Nations (UN), regional organizations, member states, international financial institutions, and civil society have become indispensable in modern peace operations. These partnerships offer the potential to enhance operational effectiveness, legitimacy, and sustainability. However, they also present a unique set of challenges that, if unaddressed, can undermine peace efforts. Following are the key opportunities and challenges associated with partnerships in peace operations and proposes a set of guiding principles to ensure such collaborations are equitable, effective, and sustainable.

a. OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED BY PARTNERSHIPS

(1) Complementary Strengths. Different stakeholders bring distinct capabilities and unique competencies that are essential for the success of peace operations. Harnessing and integrating these diverse strengths whether strategic, operational, financial, or technical can significantly enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of peacekeeping efforts. Partnerships ensures that peace operations are more comprehensive, context-sensitive, and better equipped to address complex and evolving challenges on the ground.

(2) Resource Concentration. Partnerships have the potential to attract and pool resources financial, technical, and human from a broader range of actors, including donor countries, international financial institutions, and the private sector. Such collaboration can significantly strengthen both peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations by ensuring sustained support, diverse expertise, and enhanced operational capacity.

(3) Comprehensive Approaches. Effective partnerships can bridge the traditional divides between peace, security, development and humanitarian efforts, fostering comprehensive and coordinated approaches that address the root causes of conflict. This requires the seamless integration of peacekeeping and peacebuilding initiatives, ensuring that short-term stabilization efforts are aligned with long-term development and governance objectives.

(4) Unified Responses to Complex Peace Challenges. Peacekeeping operations and peacebuilding efforts are inherently costly and come with significant political, operational, and logistical burdens challenges that no single organization or country can shoulder alone. Strategic partnerships provide a framework for sharing responsibilities, risks, and resources, thereby enhancing the sustainability and resilience of peace efforts. When effectively designed and implemented, partnerships can amplify collective impact, fill critical capacity gaps, and contribute meaningfully to the achievement of lasting peace.

b. CHALLENGES IN PARTNERSHIP IMPLEMENTATION

(1) Diverging Political Interests. Partners may hold competing priorities or politically sensitive and conflicting interests that create friction, undermine trust, and result in misalignment in both policy formulation and operational implementation. These differences can impede unified action, stall decision-making, and ultimately weaken the overall effectiveness and credibility of peace operations.

(2) The Risks of Unequal Partnerships. Unequal partnerships, where certain actors dominate decision-making processes, can undermine genuine cooperation and erode trust particularly among regional or local partners. Such imbalances may lead to perceptions of marginalization, reduce local ownership, and ultimately weaken the legitimacy and effectiveness of peace operations.

(3) Institutional and Legal Incompatibilities. Differences in institutional mandates, legal frameworks, and operational cultures can hinder collaboration and delay joint action. These disparities often complicate coordination, reduce efficiency, and slow down decision-making processes, ultimately impacting the timely and cohesive delivery of peace operations.

c. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

(1) Impartiality and Equity. Partnerships must be founded on mutual respect, recognizing the contributions, perspectives, and sovereignty of all parties involved especially local and regional actors. All stakeholders should enjoy equal rights and be treated with fairness. Decisions should be made through consensus, ensuring that every stakeholder's voice is heard and duly acknowledged.

(2) Sustainable Solutions. Partnerships should be oriented towards delivering sustainable and context-specific solutions in conflict affected areas throughout the peace process. The collective resources, expertise, and experience of all stakeholders including local, regional, and international actors must be effectively coordinated to support the achievement of durable peace in line with United Nations principles.

(3) Transparency and Trust. Open dialogue, information sharing, and joint planning are essential to building trust and ensuring coherence in partnerships. Transparent communication, effective coordination, and mutual respect among Member States and relevant stakeholders are critical to fostering successful and sustainable collaboration

(4) Protection and Security. Partnerships should primarily focus on ensuring the protection of civilians as well as the safety and security of peacekeepers. All peacekeeping actions must be designed to safeguard civilians while simultaneously upholding the security and well-being of peacekeeping personnel

(5) Local Ownership and Inclusivity. The terms and conditions of any partnership should be jointly determined by all active stakeholders. Meaningful involvement of national and local actors throughout the process helps ensure that peace efforts are context-specific, culturally sensitive, and more likely to lead to sustainable outcomes.

(6) Shared Objectives and Collective Commitment. All stakeholders must share clear and common objectives, particularly with regard to the protection of civilians, and demonstrate a strong commitment to the implementation of agreed mandates. Clearly defined, jointly agreed goals and performance benchmarks are essential to guide collective efforts. Partners must also be held accountable for their respective contributions and actions to ensure transparency, effectiveness, and mutual trust.

QUESTIONS FOR CURRENT AND FORMER TROOP- AND POLICE- CONTRIBUTING COUNTRIES

1. What factors shaped your country's decision to become a T/PCC to United Nations peace operations? What factors and considerations will determine whether your country will remain an active T/PCCs in future United Nations peace operations?

a. Sri Lanka as Peace Driven Nation. Sri Lanka has consistently demonstrated a firm commitment to global peace and security. Sri Lanka have a history of participating in UN peacekeeping operations since the 1950s As a responsible member of the international community, the country actively engages in multilateral initiatives focused on conflict prevention, peacekeeping, and the protection of civilians. Peace remains a cornerstone of Sri Lanka's national ethos and foreign policy. In the aftermath of its own post-conflict recovery, Sri Lanka has placed increased emphasis on contributing to global stability and reconciliation efforts. The country strongly advocates for peaceful coexistence, inclusive dialogue, and international cooperation in addressing global security challenges. High priority is given to the protection of civilians, particularly vulnerable populations affected by armed conflict. Sri Lanka's peacekeeping contingents are equipped with training in international humanitarian law, human rights, and gender-sensitive practices, ensuring alignment with United Nations standards and operational mandates.

b. Military Restructuring for Sustainable Peace. Following the end of the conflict in 2009, Sri Lanka emerged with a large, battle-hardened, and professionally trained military force. With reduced domestic deployment requirements, the country sought constructive avenues to utilize its military capabilities. Participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations offers a meaningful platform for Sri Lanka to engage its armed forces in international service. Through these deployments, Sri Lanka not only contributes to global peace and stability but also shares its military expertise and operational experience in support of international peace and security efforts.

c. Global Image Reform and Strategic Outreach. Sri Lanka's military has maintained a strong track record of discipline and professional conduct in accordance with internationally recognized United Nations standards. Engagement in peace operations under the UN allows Sri Lanka to demonstrate its commitment to upholding global norms, reinforcing accountability, and contributing positively to international peace and security. Deployments under the

UN flag allowed Sri Lankan military forces to demonstrate their commitment to global norms and humanitarian responsibilities.

d. Diplomatic and Foreign Policy Objectives. Contributing to United Nations peacekeeping missions enhances Sri Lanka's visibility and credibility within the international community, particularly at the United Nations. Such engagement supports the country's broader diplomatic objectives, including the strengthening of bilateral relations with key UN member states and regional organizations. Sri Lanka views peacekeeping participation as an integral component of its foreign policy strategy, aimed at fostering multilateral engagement and expanding its influence in global decision-making forums.

e. Professional Development and Exposure. Deployment in multinational peacekeeping environments will provide Sri Lankan military and police personnel with valuable operational experience, advanced training, and exposure to a wide range of complex challenges. Participation in such missions will enhance the professionalism and adaptability of Sri Lanka's armed forces and police, while also strengthening their interoperability with other international contingents. This exposure will contribute to capacity building and aligns national practices with international standards.

2b. What factors and considerations will determine whether your country will remain an active T/PCCs in future United Nations peace operations?

a. Undermining Performances. Sri Lanka firmly believes that the performance and professionalism of peacekeepers should be the primary criteria for recognition and future deployment opportunities. It is a matter of concern that, at times, deserving contributions are overlooked due to geopolitical considerations. Such practices can be discouraging to troop and police contributing countries that demonstrate consistent commitment, discipline, and operational excellence in the field. Sri Lanka emphasizes the importance of an impartial and merit-based approach in evaluating peacekeeping contributions, in order to uphold the credibility and effectiveness of United Nations peace operations.

b. UN Demand and Deployment Opportunities. Sri Lanka has proactively invested in enhancing the readiness and capabilities of its peacekeeping contingents, in accordance with the evolving operational requirements and standards set by the United Nations. These efforts reflect the country's commitment to contributing meaningfully to global peace and security. However, there have been instances where anticipated deployments were not realized, despite meeting the required criteria. This has resulted in concerns, particularly

given the significant resources allocated to maintain high levels of preparedness. Additionally, the current distribution of troop contributions among member states appears uneven, and the limited consideration extended to new contributors in future deployments may risk discouraging sustained engagement. Sri Lanka respectfully underscores the importance of transparency, fairness, and merit-based selection in the allocation of peacekeeping opportunities, which would strengthen trust and collaboration among all contributing countries.

- a. c. Human Rights Compliance and Vetting Standards. Sri Lanka remains fully committed to upholding United Nations human rights compliance and vetting standards in its peacekeeping contributions. The country continues to align with international norms by promoting transparency, accountability, and a policy of zero tolerance for misconduct and human rights violations. Sri Lanka has established rigorous internal processes to ensure that all deployed personnel meet the required ethical and professional standards. However, it has been observed that, in certain instances, Sri Lankan peacekeepers have not been cleared for deployment despite having no allegations or adverse records against them. This situation has become a matter of concern and a discouraging factor for Sri Lanka, particularly given its ongoing efforts to ensure strict adherence to UN vetting procedures. Sri Lanka respectfully emphasizes the need for consistency, fairness, and evidence-based assessments in the vetting process, in order to maintain the confidence and active participation of contributing countries.

2. 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 United Nations peace operations and their implementation?

- a. Sri Lanka actively contributes to the ongoing development of United Nations peacekeeping by sharing its operational experiences both in peacekeeping and broader security matters through forums such as the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34) and other relevant UN platforms. These contributions are made with the objective of enhancing the effectiveness, resilience, and relevance of peace operations in complex and evolving environments. However, it has been observed that, on certain occasions, practical and context-specific recommendations based on field realities have not received due consideration. While recognizing the diverse perspectives within the international system, Sri Lanka underscores the importance of inclusive dialogue and merit-based evaluation of contributions to ensure that peacekeeping policies remain grounded, effective, and responsive to operational challenges.

3. From your perspective as a T/PCC, what are the most pressing challenges confronting the United Nations peace operations that you are involved in?

a. Asymmetric Threats and Security Risks for Peacekeepers. The threat to peace has become increasingly diverse and asymmetric in nature. The operational environment has grown more complex, with advanced technologies now commonly employed in conflict zones often directly targeting peacekeepers. UN personnel are frequently deployed in settings where traditional ceasefire monitoring is no longer adequate. Instead, missions are confronted with evolving threats posed by non-state actors, terrorist groups, and transnational criminal networks. However, T/PCC personnel are often not equipped with the necessary capabilities, intelligence support, or robust mandate protections to respond effectively to these rapidly changing security dynamics.

b. Inadequate Resources for Mandated Objectives. The ongoing liquidity crisis within the United Nations has emerged as a major challenge, severely impacting the ability of missions to achieve their mandated objectives. While UN mandates are often ambitious and multidimensional, the resources allocated whether in terms of personnel, logistics, equipment, or funding are frequently inadequate. This persistent gap between mandates and means undermines operational credibility, increases the risk of mission failure, and places a disproportionate burden on Troop- and Police-Contributing Countries (T/PCCs), who are expected to sustain operations under constrained conditions.

c. Sustainability and Exit Strategies. Peacekeeping missions must be guided by clear exit strategies and well-defined conditions for withdrawal. However, many missions currently lack such frameworks, along with sustainable peacebuilding mechanisms to ensure lasting stability. In the absence of clearly defined exit criteria, missions often conclude without consolidating institutional resilience in host nation's leading to the reemergence of fragility and the reversal of hard-won gains. As a result, Troop- and Police-Contributing Countries (T/PCCs) are frequently left to manage residual risks without adequate support or a long-term stabilization plan.

d. Political Divisions and Host-State Constraints. Peace operations are often undermined by political divisions within the UN Security Council, particularly on issues related to host-state cooperation, accountability, and human rights. Additionally, violations of Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs) have been observed, further complicating the achievement of mandated objectives. These political rifts and operational constraints filter down to the mission level, affecting

the chain of command and impeding timely and effective decision-making on critical matters. As a result, not only is the overall effectiveness of the mission compromised, but the safety and security of peacekeepers are also placed at greater risk.

e. Challenges in Pre-Deployment Vetting and Clearance Processes. While the United Nations has established mechanisms to ensure accountability and compliance with conduct standards, the current pre-deployment vetting and clearance processes have, at times, led to delays in force generation and timely rotations. These procedural delays can affect overall mission readiness and contribute to operational fatigue among deployed contingents. Additionally, concerns have been raised regarding the transparency and consistency of the clearance process, particularly in cases where candidates are not approved without clearly communicated, evidence-based justifications. This has, in some instances, affected the morale of peacekeepers and underscored the need for enhanced dialogue between the UN and Troop- and Police-Contributing Countries (T/PCCs) to ensure mutual confidence in the system.

f. Impact of Misinformation and Hostile Narratives. Misinformation, disinformation, and hostile narratives particularly through social media platforms have increasingly undermined the credibility and effectiveness of peace operations. These digital threats not only endanger the safety of peacekeepers but also pose significant challenges to the protection of civilians. In many contexts, such narratives have fueled mistrust, distorted public perception, and weakened local support for UN missions. Despite these growing risks, missions often lack the dedicated capacity and resources to effectively counter disinformation or to communicate the positive contributions of peacekeepers, both within host communities and at the international level. Strengthening strategic communications and digital engagement is therefore essential to safeguarding mission legitimacy and operational impact.

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

a. Specialized Training to Address Emerging and Technological Threats. Peacekeepers must be equipped with specialized training to address emerging challenges in today's complex operational environments. This includes competencies in countering misinformation, digital threats, and ensuring the effective protection of civilians. Additionally, peacekeepers must be prepared to operate in asymmetric threat environments where non-traditional tactics are

frequently employed. Training should also encompass countermeasures against technologically advanced threats, such as unmanned aerial systems (drones), improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and other evolving tools of conflict that pose direct risks to personnel and mission assets. Further, Dedicated communication teams with digital engagement strategies are essential to counter false narratives and showcase mission contributions.

b. Timely Intelligence Sharing for Enhanced Threat Response. Timely and effective intelligence sharing is essential to counter evolving asymmetric threats, ensure the protection of civilians, and safeguard the safety and security of peacekeepers. Enhanced coordination of intelligence between the United Nations, Troop- and Police-Contributing Countries (T/PCCs), and host nations is critical for accurate threat assessment and strategic planning. Therefore, it is imperative that deployed troops possess the capability to collect, process, and share actionable intelligence in a timely manner, supported by secure and reliable communication systems.

c. Enhancing Mobility for Rapid Deployment. Rapid deployment of troops is critically important, particularly to ensure the timely presence of peacekeepers at crisis scenes and to protect civilians in volatile environments. To meet this operational need, the United Nations should prioritize the provision of mobility assets capable of operating in diverse and challenging terrain. Specifically, the deployment of motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) should be considered to enhance cross-country mobility, enabling faster response times and greater tactical flexibility in remote or inaccessible areas. Strengthening such capabilities will significantly improve mission responsiveness and the effectiveness of civilian protection efforts.

d. Women in Robust Peacekeeping. Gender-responsive peacekeeping is no longer optional it is a strategic necessity in today's multidimensional and often volatile operational environments. The inclusion of women in peacekeeping not only enhances the credibility and legitimacy of missions but also improves access to local communities, facilitates the protection of civilians, and strengthens early warning and conflict resolution mechanisms. However, the participation of women must not be limited to traditional support or administrative roles. There is a growing need to actively involve women in robust peacekeeping functions, including patrols, quick reaction forces, intelligence, and frontline operational tasks. Empowering women to serve in these roles ensures a more representative and effective force that is better equipped to address the full spectrum of challenges faced in contemporary peace operations.

e. Countering Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). The use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) has become increasingly prevalent in modern conflict zones, posing a significant and persistent threat to the safety and security of peacekeepers. These devices are often deployed by asymmetric actors and non-state armed groups to disrupt peace operations, hinder freedom of movement, and inflict casualties. The threat is further exacerbated by the integration of modern technologies such as remote detonation systems, concealed triggering mechanisms, and advanced explosives into IED construction, making detection and neutralization increasingly challenging. In this context, enhancing the capability to counter IED threats is a critical operational priority. Peacekeeping missions must be equipped with specialized training, technical expertise, detection and disposal equipment, and intelligence capabilities tailored to this evolving threat.

f. Special Forces Capability. The peacekeeping landscape is rapidly evolving, marked by increasing complexity, fluid threats, and highly sensitive operational environments. Contemporary missions are frequently deployed in volatile settings where the lines between combatants and civilians are blurred, and the presence of asymmetric threats such as armed groups, organized crime, and terrorist elements has become more pronounced. As a result, the task of protecting civilians one of the core mandates of peacekeeping has grown significantly more challenging. Traditional peacekeeping frameworks may no longer be sufficient to respond effectively to such dynamic threats. In this context, there is a pressing need to enhance operational capabilities through the deployment of specialized units. Specifically, the inclusion of at least one Special Forces company with rapid deployment capability within peacekeeping missions could offer a critical edge. These units bring advanced tactical training, high mobility, and the ability to respond swiftly to emerging threats enabling missions to proactively deter violence, respond to crises, and reinforce protection efforts more effectively. This approach would mark a shift toward more agile, responsive, and adaptable peacekeeping models suited for today's complex theatres of operation.