

Swiss Submission to the Call for Contributions, dated 24 June 2025 by DPO & DPPA, to the Review on the Future of all Forms of United Nations Peace Operations

Questions for all Member States

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

Peace operations today face a complex environment marked by:

- Complex conflict environments: The proliferation of non-state armed groups, terrorism, transnational organized crime, and climate-driven instability have increased the complexity of conflict settings. These and other factors challenge the ability of UN peace operations to effectively implement mandates.
 - Geopolitical fragmentation and weakening consensus: Increasing division, especially in the UN Security Council, undermines consensus on peace and security issues. This has contributed to weakened political processes and stalled peace efforts, with missions mandated in contexts where comprehensive agreements are absent.
 - Complex and broadened mandates: Peacekeepers are expected to manage a vast range of tasks and are often under-resourced and facing operational restrictions. This is a mandate-capacity mismatch – broad mandates often exceed available force, civilian, intelligence, and logistical capabilities.
 - Lack of respect for international law, in particular international humanitarian law and human rights law, including direct targeting of peacekeepers and humanitarian personnel: The growing number of attacks, acts of violence, and threats against peacekeepers, humanitarian personnel, other United Nations and associated personnel, including national and locally recruited personnel, along with their premises and assets, make missions riskier and force constant adaptation.
 - Resource constraints and financial volatility: Declining budgets and delayed pledges impede the ability of peacekeeping operations to implement mandates. Imbalanced burden-sharing compromises the credibility of UN peace operations as well as their stability by rendering them more dependent on a smaller number of contributors.
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)?
- Mandate realism: Crafting mandates that are realistic, achievable, and frequently reviewed in light of changing conditions on the ground. This requires the capacity to sequence or combine special political missions and tailored peace operations with regional partners.
 - Mandate flexibility: Crafting mandates that give flexibility to Secretariat and Mission Leadership through the delegation of authority to adapt resources, spatial and organizational layout, and tasking of mission components to environments that may evolve faster than the UNSC mandate review cycles.
 - Stronger political strategies: Deepening political engagement and diplomacy to supplement operational measures and to ensure missions have the necessary local and regional consent.

Therefore, prioritize the “primacy of politics”, tying missions clearly to inclusive political processes and sustained mediation, involving civil society and women and youth. Leverage political influence and operational flexibility of SG and member states to achieve broadly negotiated, forward-leaning political solutions.

- Customized approaches: Deploying tailored responses – political missions, uniformed components, logistics support, and other tools – matching the specific context and available leverage.
 - Better resourcing, burden-sharing, and investment in personnel: Ensure timely, predictable, and sustained financing and encourage developed countries to increase troop/police contributions as well as women peacekeepers. States should allow for the necessary staffing flexibility, which is often lacking today. Training peacekeepers and investing in the development of their capacities is crucial.
 - Empowering local actors and institutions: Capacity-building efforts that enable host states and local partners to assume greater responsibility, ensuring lasting impact. Include these peacebuilding elements throughout the whole mission cycle and collaborate extensively with the UN Peacebuilding Fund, including by planning financing from the outset of the peace operation mandate.
 - Promoting respect for international law: Make sure to promote international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law, amongst all parties to the conflict and other relevant actors.
 - Upholding accountability: Enforcing robust accountability frameworks for all leadership levels for performance and misconduct.
 - Transition and post-mission period: Thinking about the transition and the post-mission period should ideally take place as soon as peace operations begin. This process should involve all relevant UN actors. Security sector reform has an important place in transition situations and should be considered from the outset and integrated within a broader political strategy, which notably takes protection of civilians related concerns into account. Once a mission reaches the withdrawal phase, the corresponding context often disappears from the agenda, while protection needs may remain or accentuate. The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) could play a more significant and institutionalised role in such scenarios. For example, relevant representatives of the missions, including the RCs, could regularly brief the PBC as a transition approaches.
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?

Future Mandates – UN peace operations may be expected to:

- Engage more deeply in peacebuilding through conflict prevention, mediation, and institution building to address the root causes of conflict, strengthen national capacities, and lay the foundation for sustainable peace.
- Address cross-cutting issues such as women, peace, and security; climate-security links; and addressing organized crime.

- Make effective use of new technologies in a responsible manner and in accordance with the SG's Strategy on New Technologies.
- Provide technical, logistic, and security support to regionally led peace initiatives.
- Set up regional hybrid formats of peace operations to leverage respective strengths, improve operational effectiveness, and ensure greater responsiveness to local dynamics.

Effectiveness:

- **Most effective:** when a peace agreement is in place, mandates are realistic, there is strong domestic consent and cooperation, adequate resources are provided, and external, non-mandated support for belligerents is absent.
 - **Least effective:** in situations without local consent, ongoing hostilities, or active external interference, and where missions face critical resource gaps or operate with unclear mandates.
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?
- **Role and Opportunities:** Partnerships with regional and subregional organizations (African Union, OSCE, ECOWAS, etc.), international financial institutions, and NGOs are vital for sharing burdens, integrating local expertise, and ensuring sustainable outcomes. Combined teams and operational partnerships can provide new capabilities and broader legitimacy. Regional partnerships could also help to overcome the multilateral impasse at the UNSC to create sustainable and adequate mandates.
 - **Challenges:** Coordination and coherence issues, resource disparities, accountability gaps, and differing political agendas can hamper effectiveness.
 - **Principles:** Partnerships should be underpinned by shared values, clear roles, mutual respect, human-rights compliance, transparency, and sustained political engagement. Pre-deployment preparation and continuous information sharing are essential to bridging operational and cross-cultural differences.
5. Please share any other observations that may benefit the review.
- Public and media engagement matters: Peace operations must demonstrate their impact in concrete terms. Broader societal dialogue is essential to build legitimacy and accountability. Effective leveraging of available communication tools is necessary to fight dis- and misinformation, which can erode trust and incite violence against peace operations. Outreach must engage all layers of society.
 - Civil society and expert networks provide critical input to UN deliberations and play a vital role in implementation.
 - Climate fragility as a peace and security imperative must be integrated into standard planning.
 - Gender mainstreaming needs bold reinforcement to move beyond rhetoric to measurable impact.
 - Improved integrated planning at mission level will benefit the effectiveness of peace operations through unity of action and coordinated use of sparse resources.

Questions for Current and Former Troop- and Police-Contributing Countries

9. 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?

Switzerland's participation in UN peace operations reflects its commitment to the principles and purposes of the UN Charter. By providing personnel, expertise, and resources, Switzerland seeks to promote respect for international humanitarian and human rights law, protect civilians, and advance conflict prevention and resolution, thereby contributing to international peace and security. This commitment to multilateralism and international law is a central element of Swiss foreign policy.

Switzerland will continue its support as T/PCC as long as the needs in conflict areas are best served by UN Peace operations and our contributions add value in accordance with our neutrality. The main consideration to continue the contribution is the effect in the area in relation to the costs of the operation.

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 United Nations peace operations and their implementation?

- The level of dialogue between Security Council and T/PCCs before mandate renewal through formal and informal T/PCC meetings is inadequate. From a T/PCC view it is crucial that senior Mission Leadership (HoM, Force Commanders, Police commissioners) are available at T/PCC meetings to inform timely and transparently. This would provide information on operational challenges, events, and critical decisions.
- Switzerland aims to contribute in specific areas where it has extended knowledge or can add value through its historic position and neutrality. Switzerland's viewpoints and necessities were taken into consideration by the United Nations in implementing peace operations. This process has been satisfactory.

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

Switzerland is mainly involved as contributor of military observers and specific humanitarian demining knowledge. Additionally, it contributes staff officers and subject matter experts to specific areas in UN peace operations.

The most pressing challenges in these operations are infractions by conflict parties that remain without consequence. Other more general challenges are described above under question 1.

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

As a minimum, the current level of support should be maintained, i.e. regarding strategic transportation, UN-provided camp infrastructure etc.

Training of individuals and contingents needs to remain central to pre-deployment and should be verified by the UN.