

# History of UN Peacekeeping

## Factsheet

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### Peacekeeping before the United Nations

According to the UN Charter, signed on 26 June 1945, UN member states shall settle disputes peacefully and refrain from using force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state ([Article 2](#)). It follows the [League of Nations Covenant](#) which obliged member states "not to resort to war" and the [Kellogg-Briand Pact](#) that condemned "recourse to war for the solution of international controversies, and renounce it as an instrument of national policy in their relations with one another". The United Nations was primarily thought of as a forum for diplomatic exchanges and cooperation between nations to facilitate the peaceful settlement of disputes and diffuse tensions between states.

### Peacekeeping in the Post WWII International Order

The United Nations was founded to prevent war, in particular based on the devastating experiences of the First and Second World War. However, 'peacekeeping' is not mentioned in the Charter, the founding document of the UN. In it, chapter VI describes how the UN can settle military disputes through non-military means. Chapter VII, in turn, describes both the military and non-military action, which the UN can take against threats to international peace. The provisions in these two Chapters allow the United Nations to deploy personnel in specific circumstances. Under Chapter VI and with the consent of the parties, the UN can decide to take action. This has been used to place troops as impartial observers to keep the peace and prevent the outbreak of violence until a solution is found. However, because this engagement with personnel on the ground blurs the border to using armed forces, allowed under article 42 of Chapter VII, peacekeeping operations are sometimes referred to as operations under 'Chapter VI ½' of the UN Charter.

The first peacekeeping operation was the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), mandated to monitor an Armistice between Israel and its Arab neighbours in May 1948. Similarly, the UN deployed observers to India and Pakistan in January 1949 as the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan. These two operations are still running today to

prevent incidents from escalating and provide objective information.

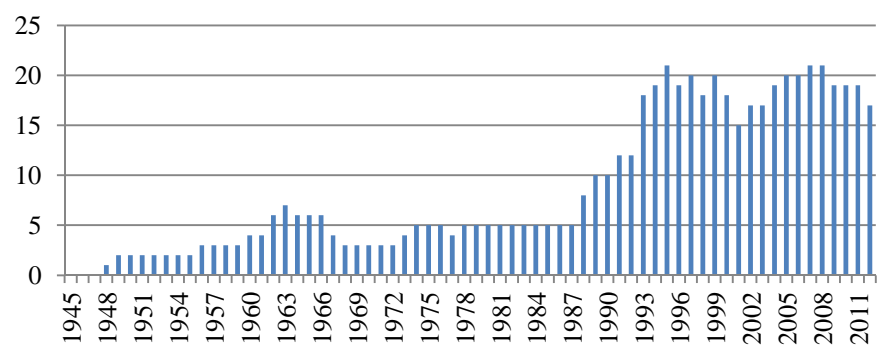
### Peacekeeping during the Cold War

During the Cold War, the confrontation between members of the Security Council resulted in few resolutions to mandate peacekeeping operations. In this period, the veto of the Permanent Five was used frequently, while it has been a measure of last resort since the end of the Cold War ([Global Policy Forum](#)). Furthermore, the volatile relationships between states and the constant risk of escalating hostilities between the two superpowers limited the possible scope of UN peacekeeping activities. Any operations that were mandated needed to fulfil three principles to reduce the risk of provoking further violence: impartiality, consent and limited force. Although these principles were formed gradually, through practice, in the particular constraining circumstances of the Cold War, they have been adopted as the benchmarks of legitimacy for all peacekeeping operations. Whilst they have been treated more flexibly since the end of the Cold War, these three principles are still given serious consideration by the UN Security Council when debating the establishment of a new operation.

### Peacekeeping in the 1990s

The end of the Cold War marked the beginning of a new era in UN peacekeeping. A surge in the number, size and scope of operations and subsequently a reform of methods and approaches continued throughout the 1990s. The collapse of the stalemate between the two Superpowers ended the Council's paralysis. Furthermore, the increase of civil wars and acts of state violence towards civilians provoked a compulsion towards international involvement. Together, these fac-

## UN Peacekeeping Operations by year, 1945-2012



tors led to a rapid increase in the number of peacekeeping operations deployed by the UN. Of the 67 UN peacekeeping operations deployed since its establishment, 49 have taken place since 1990 ([UN 2012 list of operations](#)).

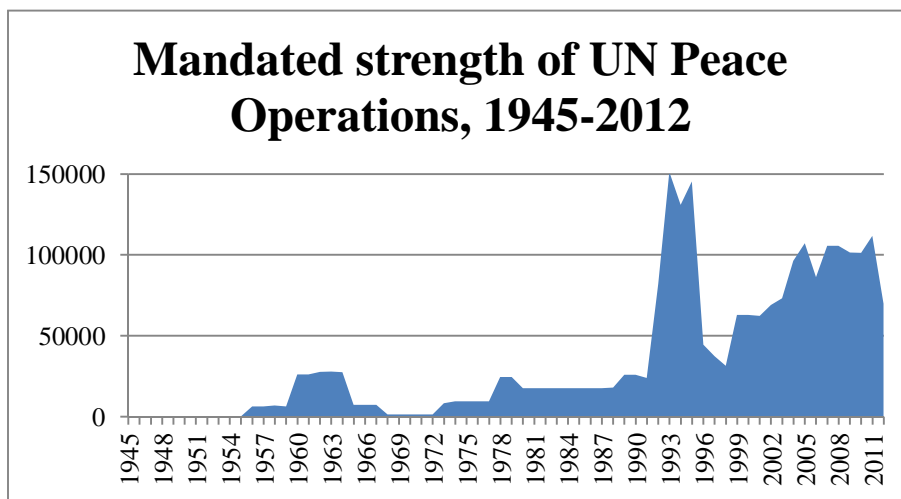
The new dynamic of the Security Council also enabled the UN to engage in more ambitious operations. The UN began to deploy troops to conflict areas before a ceasefire had been established in order to either protect civilians in an act of humanitarian intervention or bring an end to the hostilities by way of ‘peace enforcement’. Enthusiasm for these practices dropped after UNITAF, a US-led intervention in Somalia, resulted in the death of 18 US soldiers in the Battle of Mogadishu in 1993.

Nevertheless, the scope of peacekeeping operations continued to expand, particularly following the 1992 *Agenda for Peace*, written by the then Secretary General Boutros-Ghali. In this report, the importance of sustainable peace is stressed and it is argued that this could only be achieved through the building of sustainable institutions, an approach which became known as ‘peacebuilding’. Subsequently, the UN’s involvement within states became more expansive. Practices such as the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of warring parties (DDR) and the development of a state’s administrative capacity began to be included in peacekeeping operation mandates. These operations are labelled as ‘robust’, ‘complex’ or ‘multi-dimensional’ peacekeeping operations, to express the changed scope and size.

In 1992, the UN established the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), in order to design and manage the increasing number and growing size of operations. Before a resolution for a new peacekeeping operation has been passed, DPKO offers support with fact-finding operations. Upon adoption of a mandate, it deals with the logistical challenges of recruiting personnel, military forces and deploying the necessary equipment to the theatre. Upon the start of the operation, it acts as the interface between the Security Council and the mission on the ground. In the past few years, the DPKO has been restructured and the Department for Field Support (DFS) has been established to oversee logistics in the field. The current head of DPKO is Hervé Ladsous.

### Peacekeeping in the 2000s

Realising the failures of UN peacekeeping in Rwanda, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Somalia, efforts to reform the United Nations peacekeeping bureaucracy have been ongoing since the mid-1990s. In 2000 the Secretary General Kofi Annan commissioned the Re-



port of the Panel on United Nations Peacekeeping, or the ‘Brahimi Report’. This report recommended several ways to refine and improve UN peacekeeping, identifying limited resources, ambiguous or over ambitious mandates and a lack of coordination between international bodies as stumbling blocks to successful operations. Given the political sensitivity, most, but not all recommendations made by the report were implemented.

Given the continued need for peacekeeping but insufficient means available to the UN, the need for reform persisted. The World Summit in 2005 decided on a number of proposals. The resulting General Assembly resolution (A/Res/60/1) established the Peacebuilding Commission to support and integrate peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts.

The Capstone Doctrine (2008) marked a further stage in reform of peacekeeping practices by formalising and codifying a body of previously unwritten peacekeeping principles into a cohesive document. The aim for this doctrine is that it will further regulate and harmonise peacekeeping efforts.

The World Summit Outcome also formally endorsed the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ (R2P) as a normative concept. It balances states’ sovereignty with their responsibility to protect their citizens. In cases, the responsibility to protect citizens can lead the international community to address genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The first reference to the responsibility to protect was made in UN resolution S/RES/1973, granting the right to protect the civilian population in Libya in 2011.

Since the mid-2000s, the numbers of deployed personnel have been stagnant and are decreasing in the last years due to the Western engagement in Afghanistan. While peacekeeping will remain a key area for the United Nations to engage in, it is likely to be less personnel intensive in the coming years.