1.1. Peacekeeping and the UN

With over 120,000 personnel worldwide, UN peacekeeping is helping countries torn by conflict to create lasting peace. From strengthening government ministries in South Sudan to supporting elections in Haiti, from protecting civilians in Eastern Congo to maintaining ceasefire lines along the Golan Heights, military, police and civilian staff are working in 16 missions around the world to assist the governments and people of our host countries to prevent a recurrence of conflict.

The United Nations (UN) itself was founded in 1945 in the aftermath of a devastating world war. Since its inception, the UN has been called upon to maintain international
peace and security, and to support the establishment of environments in which peace processes can be consolidated. 1948 saw the deployment of the first UN field mission to support peace. With over 60 years of experience, today’s multidimensional peacekeeping operations work closely with UN agencies, funds and programmes to deliver a joint UN response to conflict worldwide.

According to the UN Charter, the Security Council holds primary responsibility for maintaining peace and security. Even though it is not specifically enshrined in the Charter, the legal basis for peacekeeping can be found between the traditional methods for the “pacific settlement of disputes” under Chapter VI and the more forceful action mandated under Chapter VII.

Formally established as a department of the UN Secretariat in 1992, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has nearly 122,000 personnel, with 118 countries contributing military and police to 16 different DPKO-led missions around the world. Even with all of these operations deployed globally, the authorized budget for peacekeeping was USD 7.06 billion for 2012, which is less than 0.5 per cent of the world’s military spending.

The Member States of the UN authorize specific peacekeeping operations through Security Council resolutions. Mandates are usually negotiated by the Council in response to analysis and recommendations provided in reports of the Secretary-General about the situation in the country. As detailed in the next chapter, civil affairs components may be responsible for the implementation of specific mandated tasks, or, more generally, for providing support to the implementation of the mandate as a whole. Security Council mandates are renewed at regular intervals, and revised as necessary, until such time as a decision is taken to withdraw the mission.

Member States also play a critical role in the support and maintenance of peacekeeping missions through the General Assembly. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, which reports to the General Assembly through the Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization), meets annually in New York to negotiate a report that provides a context for the work of UN peacekeeping and sets broad policy parameters for it. This committee – mainly consisting of past

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1 This includes 15 peacekeeping operations and 1 special political mission supported by DPKO. Figures from March 2012. Regularly updated statistics can be found at http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping.
or current troop or police contributors to peacekeeping operations – is colloquially known as “the C34” as it was initially made up of 34 Member States, although the current membership is 144.

Significantly for civil affairs, in 2011, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations agreed on language formally referencing the civil affairs function for the first time in a legislative report (A/65/19), recognizing:

[...] the important role of Civil Affairs Officers in United Nations peacekeeping operations, including through cross mission representation, monitoring and facilitation at the local level, support to confidence building, conflict management and reconciliation and support to restoration and extension of state authority. The Special Committee notes that successful implementation of many peacekeeping mandates requires consistent engagement with the local government and population and stresses that the inclusion of local staff in civil affairs components has been important.
Budgets for UN peacekeeping – both at headquarters and for individual missions – are also approved annually by the General Assembly, through the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary).

The Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Peacekeeping Operations at UN headquarters provides overall direction for peacekeeping, advises the Secretary-General on peacekeeping matters and acts as a focal point on peacekeeping in the Secretariat for Member States. Regional teams in DPKO’s Office of Operations support mission components, including civil affairs, with day-to-day operations. A small civil affairs team, housed within the Division of Policy, Evaluation and Training (DPET), supports civil affairs components in the field through policy, guidance, advocacy and training.


The Department of Political Affairs (DPA) is another key department within the UN Secretariat. It collaborates with DPKO as a partner for peacekeeping operations in mediation and elections. The Department of Political Affairs manages political missions and peacebuilding support offices engaged in conflict prevention, peacemaking and post-conflict peacebuilding. Several DPA-supported special political missions (SPMs) have civil affairs components, for example in Sierra Leone, Somalia and the former mission in Nepal.

1.2. Core principles of peacekeeping

The UN Charter lays the foundation, under international law, for the responsibility of the UN system to maintain international peace and security. Peacekeeping is one of many instruments available to the UN in carrying out this work. While missions with different characteristics have emerged, peacekeeping has most commonly been used in recent years to preserve and build the conditions necessary for sustainable peace where a ceasefire or peace agreement is already in place and where the parties to a conflict have consented to the deployment of a peacekeeping mission. However, peace – like war – is a protracted process and a peace agreement may exist, only later to unravel. Therefore, while peacekeeping may entail monitoring peace processes that emerge and assisting the signatories to implement the agreements, it may also involve efforts to instil confidence and reaffirm commitments to stalled or thwarted peace processes.
Peacekeeping is defined as an instrument for peace and security by three mutually reinforcing core principles, listed below, which provide a compass to guide peacekeepers in the implementation of their mandates. The United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines (“Capstone Doctrine”), 2008, lays out these principles in greater detail, and chapter 5 of this Handbook looks in more detail at how they relate specifically to civil affairs work on the ground.

- **Consent**
  Peacekeeping can only take place with the consent of the parties to the conflict. This consent ensures that the mission has the political and physical freedom and the protection needed to carry out its mandate effectively. Without consent, the security of peacekeepers may be jeopardized as a peacekeeping mission risks becoming a party to the conflict, rather than the arbiter of the peace agreement.

- **Impartiality**
  Peacekeepers will implement their mandate without favour or prejudice to any of the parties to the conflict. Impartiality is not the same as neutrality, however, and does not mean that peacekeepers need to be apolitical in condoning violations of the peace agreement or of international norms. Rather, it requires that they hold all parties to a conflict to the same standards. Abiding by the principle of impartiality will ensure that a peacekeeping mission is perceived as fair and transparent.

- **Non-use of force**
  Peacekeepers will refrain from the use of force, except in self-defence and defence of the mandate. With the authorization of the Security Council, the use of force may occur as a tactical measure of last resort in self-defence of UN personnel and property and to defend the mandate. In contexts where the civilian population is at risk, the Security Council may give the mission a mandate to use force to protect the civilian population from imminent threat of physical violence.

**Other conditions**
The three principles above are necessary conditions for peacekeeping to be effective in the implementation of a mandate and to be credible in the eyes of the host population, but they are not sufficient. Three other critically important conditions, namely credibility, legitimacy, and national and local ownership, further underpin successful peacekeeping. Credibility rests, to a large degree, on the mission’s ability to meet local expectations. To achieve and maintain this, the mission must have a clear and deliverable mandate, with resources and capabilities
to match. Perceptions of the legitimacy of a peacekeeping mission will fluctuate throughout its life cycle, but ultimately legitimacy depends on various factors. These include the perceived impartiality with which the mission exercises its mandate; how it uses – or does not use – force; the conduct of its personnel and the respect they demonstrate for the culture, customs and people of their host country; and the visibility of actual peace dividends. National and local ownership is not only considered essential to building sustainable peace but also critical for preserving consent, and reinforcing the legitimacy of a mission.

1.3. History and evolution

Over the years, UN peacekeeping has evolved to meet the demands of different conflicts and a changing political landscape. The first peace operation, the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), was established in 1948 when the Security Council authorized the deployment of lightly armed UN military observers to the Middle East to monitor the Armistice Agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbours. Since that time, 69 UN peacekeeping operations have been deployed worldwide.
Chapter 1 | Brief introduction to UN peacekeeping

United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Department of Field Support

UNTSO is typical of what is now known as “traditional” peacekeeping. Traditional peacekeeping falls under Chapter VI (Pacific Settlement of Disputes) of the UN Charter, which stipulates that there can be no use of force except in self-defence, and which requires the consent of the host government and a ceasefire for deployment. Such traditional peacekeeping is typically focused on the containment of conflicts between countries through border demarcation and the separation of forces after inter-state wars. These traditional observer missions remained the norm up until the 1990s. However, the end of the cold war signalled an increase in peace operations required to respond to intra-state conflict or the containment of conflict within states, rather than simply to inter-state conflict. Deployed under Chapter VII of the UN Charter (Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace and Acts of Aggression), these operations are permitted to use force to defend themselves, the mission mandate and civilians in imminent danger. The advent of the Agenda for Peace, a landmark report by Boutros Boutros-Ghali on preventative diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping, marked the first time that Chapter VII was invoked for this purpose.²

Peacekeeping today ranges from small unarmed ceasefire observer missions to large-scale multidimensional missions. Mandates cover a variety of missions, for example supporting the implementation of a comprehensive peace agreement, such as in Liberia; responding to destabilization, such as in Haiti, where peacekeepers were sent following the deterioration of the political, security and humanitarian situation; and engaging in contexts such as Darfur, where no peace agreement exists and peacekeepers are there to support the preconditions necessary to forge one.

A detailed timeline of UN peacekeeping can be found at: http://www.un.org/depts/dpko/timeline.pdf and an up-to-date list of all past and present peacekeeping operations can be found at: http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/operationslist.pdf.

1.4. Trends and key reforms

In the more than 60 years since its inception, UN peacekeeping has celebrated many successes. UN peacekeepers have supported political processes and helped national actors to take important steps towards durable peace in numerous countries in the post-cold war era. These include Namibia, El Salvador,

² An Agenda for Peace: Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping, A/74/277—S/24111 (June 1992).
Cambodia, Mozambique and eastern Slavonia (Croatia) in the mid-1990s, and Sierra Leone and Burundi more recently. While facing difficult problems on many fronts, these countries have not relapsed into violent conflict for several years since the UN peacekeepers departed. In fact, they have all successfully managed two or more elections, including several cases that required transitions of power among former enemies. Similarly, a number of more traditional missions have helped to prevent relapse into violence in the absence of a political settlement.

In the past 15 years, more civil wars have ended through negotiation than in the previous 200 years and the UN has been instrumental in this achievement. It is, however, very difficult to meaningfully monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions, especially while they are deployed. Success depends on many factors, including those beyond the scope of the missions, and certain impacts can only be assessed over the long term. Determining the role that a particular peacekeeping operation or peacebuilding mission played in the establishment of a strong and durable peace is even more difficult.

The Secretariat and Member States are in continuous dialogue about how to address the recurrent challenges that UN peacekeeping faces, such as those related to the protection of civilians. The UN is always striving to learn from its past experiences and is continuously engaged in reforms to meet the perpetually changing and increasingly complex needs of the global security environment. As such, peacekeeping operations look very different today from 1948 or even 1999. Peacekeeping reform is an ongoing process, especially in the wake of the highly visible and tragic failures of the UN missions in Somalia, Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia in the mid-1990s. The following lists some of the major initiatives for reform since that time:

- The 2000 Brahimi Report represented an important turning point in setting out a renewed vision for peacekeeping in the 21st century. It initiated major reforms that have, to a large extent, enabled the tremendous surge in size and complexity that UN peacekeeping has since undergone. Subsequent reform initiatives of the UN Secretariat and Member States have built on this foundation for improvement by seeking to adapt UN peacekeeping to changes in the strategic and operational environments.

- “Integration” is a concept that has been introduced over the past decade to describe a system-wide UN response to UN engagement in countries emerging from conflict, specifically where a multidimensional peacekeeping mission, or
special political mission (SPM), is deployed alongside a United Nations Country Team (UNCT). The main purpose of integration is to maximize the collective and individual impact of all the various UN efforts in support of peace consolidation. This often involves a strategic partnership between a multidimensional UN peacekeeping operation and the UNCT, under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC). A series of tools has been introduced to bring this concept to life, including the Integrated Mission Planning Process, which is discussed in more detail in chapter 8.

- In 2007, the UN sought to better meet the support needs of its increasingly high-paced, global operations by restructuring DPKO and consolidating administrative and logistics field support under the newly created Department of Field Support (DFS). This department oversees the daily field support operations in personnel, finance, logistics, and information and communication technology necessary to deploy, direct and sustain UN field-based peace operations worldwide.

- The publication of the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines or “Capstone Doctrine” in 2008 sought to introduce a guiding doctrine for peacekeeping across operations. This initiative forms part of a broader effort to develop a doctrinal basis for UN peacekeeping work, with the development of policies, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and guidelines to govern and support the work of staff. The Civil Affairs Policy, and accompanying guidance such as this Handbook, is part of the greater body of formal guidance developed for peacekeepers over the last few years.

- In 2009, a set of proposals to reform and strengthen peacekeeping were launched as part of the “New Horizon” initiative, with a view to defining a policy agenda for peacekeeping that reflects the perspectives of the global peacekeeping partnership and that seeks to make peacekeeping operations faster, more capable and more effective. This initiative, which provides the basis for ongoing reform activities within the UN Secretariat and missions, represents an effort to respond to the operational and policy challenges that have emerged through the gradual evolution of UN peacekeeping during the past decade. It aims to reinvigorate the partnership among all peacekeeping stakeholders and to build a common framework for strengthening peacekeeping to meet the requirements of the future. An important reform that emerged from the “New Horizon” initiative was the Global Field Support Strategy (GFSS), approved by
the General Assembly in 2010. The GFSS is an integrated services delivery model aimed at enabling faster response times for mission start-up and improving support to mission operations.

- A further initiative of key significance for UN peacekeeping was the publication in 2011 of a report on *Civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict*, by an independent group of senior advisers appointed by the Secretary-General. This report proposes practical measures to improve civilian support to conflict-affected countries, focusing on how to recruit and deploy the range of expertise required, as well as on how to transfer skills and knowledge to national actors.

1.5. The core functions of multidimensional UN peacekeeping operations

Although specific mandates vary from context to context, the core functions of multidimensional UN peacekeeping operations, as identified in the *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines* or “Capstone Doctrine” in 2008, are to:

(a) Create a secure and stable environment while strengthening the State’s ability to provide security, with full respect for the rule of law and human rights;

(b) Facilitate the political process by promoting dialogue and reconciliation and supporting the establishment of legitimate and effective institutions of governance;

(c) Provide a framework for ensuring that all United Nations and other international actors pursue their activities at the country-level in a coherent and coordinated manner.

Civil affairs supports each of these functions through its work on the ground across UN peacekeeping missions, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.
## Recommended resources

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines (&quot;Capstone Doctrine&quot;)</td>
<td>A readable introduction to all aspects of UN peacekeeping, as well as the highest level DPKO doctrine document, covering many key policy questions.</td>
<td><a href="http://pbpu.unlb.org/pbps/Library/Capstone_Doctrine_ENG.pdf">http://pbpu.unlb.org/pbps/Library/Capstone_Doctrine_ENG.pdf</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POINT: Peace Operations Intranet</td>
<td>Provides online access for UN peacekeeping personnel to peacekeeping news and resources, including the policy and practice database, careers portal and other relevant topics. This link is only accessible to UN peacekeeping personnel.</td>
<td><a href="https://point.un.org/UNHQ/SitePages/POHome.aspx">https://point.un.org/UNHQ/SitePages/POHome.aspx</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy and Practices Database</td>
<td>Provides a visual framework for all the functions performed in UN peacekeeping, and contains any available policy and good practice for these functions. This link is only accessible to UN peacekeeping personnel.</td>
<td><a href="http://ppdb.un.org">http://ppdb.un.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual Review of Global Peace Operations, Center on International Cooperation</td>
<td>Provides detailed statistics on peace operations annually, as well as a thematic article about an area of current concern.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cic.nyu.edu/peacekeeping/annual_review_11.html">http://www.cic.nyu.edu/peacekeeping/annual_review_11.html</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Report of the Panel on Peace Operations (&quot;Brahimi Report&quot;)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Landmark reform agenda from 2000.</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace_operations/">http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace_operations/</a></td>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>A New Partnership Agenda: Charting a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping</th>
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<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>The most recent reform initiative in UN peacekeeping. Two progress reports are also available.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>A report on how civilian support is provided by the UN in post-conflict countries. Contains several proposals relevant for civil affairs work, including on supporting national capacities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td><a href="http://www.civcapreview.org">http://www.civcapreview.org</a></td>
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