



## *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council*

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Department of Political Affairs - Security Council Affairs Division  
Security Council Practices and Charter Research Branch

## **26. United Nations peacekeeping operations**

### **Overview**

During the period under review, the Security Council held five meetings in connection with the item entitled “United Nations peacekeeping operations”, adopting one resolution.<sup>1</sup> At the meetings, the Council discussed the issue of inter-mission cooperation and considered a multidimensional approach to peacekeeping with a view to better coordinating it with peacebuilding processes. The Council also heard briefings by several Force Commanders of peacekeeping operations regarding the challenges they faced in the field.

The table at the end of the section lists the meetings at which this item was considered, and gives information on, inter alia, invitees, speakers and the decision adopted.

### **Briefings on moving successfully from peacekeeping to peacebuilding**

On 26 March 2012, in his briefing to the Council, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations pointed out that when the Security Council mandated missions, it was not only to stabilize the country and keep the peace, but also to contribute to the building of a sustainable peace. He stated that while peacekeepers should not address the full spectrum of peacebuilding activities, they were best suited to prioritizing those initiatives that advanced the peace process or political objectives of a mission. That did not mean, however, an expansion of the mandates of peacekeeping operations, but to make the best out of tasks that peacekeepers were already being asked to perform. The Under-Secretary-General stressed

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution [2086 \(2013\)](#)

that peacekeeping missions had a restricted time horizon and needed to synchronize their plans with those actors better suited to undertaking long-term engagements. He concluded by affirming that transitions should not be about simply reducing numbers in a peacekeeping operation, but that it was through building confidence and maintaining clear communication between the host Government, key national stakeholders and the international community that a successful drawdown plan and an enduring peace would be secured.<sup>2</sup>

The Under-Secretary-General for Field Support referred to the fundamental role of effective transitions in ensuring a sustainable peace, stating that delivering an effective response to the peacebuilding needs of post-conflict countries required the same agility and flexibility from field support systems that was required from other peacekeeping tasks. This was especially significant when considering the impact that large and multidimensional field missions had on the social and economic life of the host countries. Examples showed how joint planning with national counterparts had a positive impact throughout the drawdown phase. She also identified national capacity development as a priority for planning and executing peacebuilding tasks and effective transitions. In concluding, she noted that the Security Council played an enormous role in the process of transitioning to a sustainable peace, setting the direction not only through mandates but also building and maintaining the political support required for delivery.<sup>3</sup>

### **Briefings by Force Commanders of United Nations peacekeeping operations**

On 20 June 2012, under the initiative of the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, the Security Council was briefed at an open meeting by various force commanders of United Nations peacekeeping operations. In his briefing, the Force Commander of the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) highlighted the need for a system to support common military standards and for training in peacekeeping operations, especially when it came to the protection of civilians under imminent threat, which he called a fine balance between prompt and robust action required from a soldier in uniform and a person who cared and nurtured the

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<sup>2</sup> [S/PV.6740](#), pp. 2-5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5-7.

vulnerable civilian community in his area of operational responsibility.<sup>4</sup> Addressing the Council on leading a composite force towards common operational goals, the Force Commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) outlined the key challenges inherent in a composite and multinational force such as UNIFIL, namely language, interoperability of material and equipment, integration of civilian and military components, multinationality within a single battalion, and interoperability of maritime units.<sup>5</sup> The Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) spoke on the challenges in dealing with a complex political environment in peacekeeping operations, with a particular reference to the inter-communal crisis that had taken place in Jonglei state, South Sudan, in December 2011 and January 2012.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the Force Commander of the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) focused his presentation on the contribution of the military component of the mission to the stabilization of Haiti as well as the support it provided to the country's institutions.<sup>7</sup>

In the debate that followed, Council members welcomed the presence of the Force Commanders and expressed appreciation for their assessments while noting that this initiative was a useful practice to inform the Council of the challenges the Blue Helmets faced in the field. While sharing the view that peacekeeping operations were an important tool for the maintenance of international peace and security, speakers generally also agreed on the need for missions to be assigned clear and realistic mandates by the Security Council and for the necessary resources to be provided in an effective fashion so that peacekeepers could carry out their tasks accordingly.

On 26 June 2013, Council members heard briefings by the Force Commanders of MONUSCO, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). The Force Commander of MONUSCO described how the use of both advanced and more basic military technology could offer benefits for peacekeeping. In the context of the more robust mandate set out by resolution [2098 \(2013\)](#), he said that MONUSCO prepared for the arrival of unarmed and unmanned aerial vehicles

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<sup>4</sup> [S/PV.6789](#), pp. 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8.

(UAVs) to be used for surveillance purposes, identifying movements of armed groups and helping to deter their hostile action.<sup>8</sup> In his briefing, the Force Commander of UNMIL highlighted the need for in-mission assessment of pre-deployment training, and recommended the establishment of an evaluating mechanism within force headquarters that would assist the force leadership in sustaining mission-capable troops.<sup>9</sup> Focusing on how planned inter-mission cooperation could impact mission crisis management capability, the Force Commander of UNOCI described how the existing framework of cooperation between UNMIL and UNOCI had optimized the use of available assets in the two geographically contiguous missions, and identified areas where cooperation could be enhanced, as well as major challenges.<sup>10</sup>

Following the briefings, Council members in general endorsed the idea that the increasing complexity of mandated peacekeeping tasks in the context of limited resources called for new approaches such as the use of new technology and inter-mission cooperation, as long as they were used within the limits agreed and on a case-by-case basis. Speakers were overall also supportive of in-mission assessment of pre-deployment training as it was critical to efficiency and sustaining operational readiness.

### **Peacekeeping and inter-mission cooperation**

In his briefing to the Council on 12 December 2012, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations emphasized that there was no official agreed definition for inter-mission cooperation and that the practical modalities had been defined on a case-by-case basis. He further noted that such cooperation had become increasingly attractive over the past few years, mainly due to four factors, namely, the recurring lack of certain critical items of equipment, which prevented missions from implementing their mandates especially in times of elections or security crises; the repeated appeal by the General Assembly and the Security Council for the enhancement of synergies among missions deployed in geographical proximity to each other; the need for a more rational use of resources pushed by the current global economic crisis, and finally, the fact that inter-mission cooperation was, by definition,

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<sup>8</sup> [S/PV.6987](#), pp. 2-3.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-6.

a flexible tool. In closing, he said that rather than a tool of choice, inter-mission cooperation was a tool of necessity, to be used temporarily and on a limited scale, and that consent of troop-contributing countries, host Governments as well as of the Security Council would remain key enabling principles.<sup>11</sup>

In the same meeting, the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support stated that, from the perspective of mission support, inter-mission cooperation meant that troops, civilian personnel and assets could be redeployed to another mission at short notice, sustained while in a temporary site due to a mission start-up or crisis, and ultimately returned to their original location and intended use. With regard to the start-up of a mission, she noted that delays in establishing a field presence could have a negative effect on the mission's chances to successfully implement its mandate. In that context, the support from the United Nations missions in the Middle East had been critical for the rapid build-up of the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) in early 2012.<sup>12</sup>

During the debate, Council members generally praised the different examples of successful inter-mission cooperation arrangements, agreeing that increased temporary cooperation between missions operating in geographic proximity could make them more efficient and effective. Concerns were, nonetheless, also raised by some delegations: the United States representative stressed the need to ensure that helping one mission did not mean hurting another and noted that troop-contributing countries could not be mandated with a task they had not committed to. In addition, it was important not to allow stop-gap measures to become substitutes for long-term planning and preparedness.<sup>13</sup> In a similar vein, the representative of the Russian Federation expressed his concerns that strengthening one mission and weakening another meant altering its mandate, which required the consent of the Security Council.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> [S/PV.6886](#), pp. 2-4.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

## **Debate on a multidimensional approach**

On 21 January 2013, the Security Council held an open debate on a multidimensional approach to United Nations peacekeeping operations. During the debate, the Council adopted resolution [2086 \(2013\)](#), by which it, inter alia, emphasized that peacekeeping activities should be conducted in a manner so as to facilitate post-conflict peacebuilding; it also recognized the important role of multidimensional peacekeeping.

The Secretary-General stated that while peacekeeping operations were more varied and more complex than ever, peacekeeping remained a highly cost-effective investment in progress towards lasting stability, and that no international tool was as effective in combining political, security, rule of law and human rights efforts. He went further to say that the draft resolution rightly emphasized that national Governments had the primary responsibility for identifying peacebuilding priorities and that peacekeeping missions played a vital role on the fronts of inclusivity and institution-building, which were critical to preventing a relapse into conflict.<sup>15</sup>

During the debate, the nearly sixty speakers who took the floor generally welcomed the increased focus on the nexus between peacekeeping and peacebuilding as a result of the growing complexity of contemporary conflicts, with multidimensional peacekeeping operations as a result of such an integrated approach. Several speakers emphasized the principle of national ownership as paramount from the very early stages of peacebuilding activities so as to allow a successful drawdown process of the peacekeeping mission and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace.<sup>16</sup> A number of speakers also highlighted the importance of the support from the Security Council, in coordination with the Secretariat and the troop-contributing countries in order to ensure a successful transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding.<sup>17</sup> The representative of the Russian Federation noted, however, that peacekeeping operations could not fully take upon themselves the responsibility for long-

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<sup>15</sup> [S/PV.6903](#), pp. 2-3.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6 (Australia); p. 7 (Republic of Korea); p. 20 (Morocco); p. 22 (Luxembourg); p. 24 (Egypt, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement); p. 25 (New Zealand); pp. 27-28 (South Africa); p. 29 (Indonesia); p. 30 (European Union); p. 36 (Chile); p. 41 (Cuba); p. 47 (Sweden); p. 61 (Namibia); p. 65 (Montenegro); and p. 67 (Benin).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11 (Guatemala); p. 15 (France); p. 20 (Morocco); p. 21 (Azerbaijan); p. 24 (Egypt, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement); p. 28 (South Africa); p. 36 (Chile); p. 42 (Cuba); p. 45 (Thailand); p. 53 (Uganda); p. 61 (Namibia); and pp. 63 (Zimbabwe).

term peacebuilding and must coordinate their work with other actors. He further cautioned against the broadening interpretations of Council mandates by individual States and the Secretariat, especially when related to the norms of international humanitarian law for the protection of civilians in armed conflict.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

### Meetings: United Nations peacekeeping operations

<i>Meeting and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
<a href="#">S/PV.6740</a> 26 March 2012				Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Under-Secretary-General for Field Support	All invitees	
<a href="#">S/PV.6789</a> 20 June 2012				Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Force Commander of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), Force Commander and Head of Mission of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), Force Commander of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH)	All Council members and all invitees	
<a href="#">S/PV.6886</a> 12 December 2012				Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Under-Secretary-General for Field Support	All Council members and all invitees <sup>a</sup>	
<a href="#">S/PV.6903</a> 21 January 2013	United Nations peacekeeping: a multidimensional approach  Letter dated 1 January 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-	Draft resolution submitted by all Council members <sup>b</sup> ( <a href="#">S/2013/27</a> )	40 Member States <sup>c</sup>	Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations	Secretary-General, all Council members <sup>d</sup> , 39 rule 37 invitees <sup>e</sup> and rule 39 invitee	Resolution <a href="#">2086 (2013)</a> 15-0-0

<i>Meeting and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
	General ( <a href="#">S/2013/4</a> )					
<a href="#">S/PV.6987</a> 26 June 2013				Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Force Commander of MONUSCO, Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), Force Commander of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), United Nations Military Adviser	All Council members and all invitees	

<sup>a</sup> Portugal was represented by its Minister of State and Foreign Affairs and India was represented by its Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs.

<sup>b</sup> Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, China, France, Guatemala, Luxembourg, Morocco, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Togo, United Kingdom, United States.

<sup>c</sup> Armenia, Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Chad, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Egypt (on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement), El Salvador, Fiji, Germany, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Japan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Montenegro, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nigeria, the Philippines, Senegal, Slovakia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Zimbabwe.

<sup>d</sup> Pakistan was represented by its Secretary of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>e</sup> Although invited under rule 37, the representative of the Philippines did not make a statement.