



Security Council

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Overall performance of United Nations peacekeeping operations

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. By the statement by the President of the Security Council of 31 August 2022,¹ the Council requested a report on the overall performance of United Nations peacekeeping operations and recommendations on improving their performance, adjusting or providing exit strategies for if needed, their respective mandates, and measures to enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers.

2. The fundamental challenges facing peacekeeping today are acknowledged in the present report, which also highlights efforts to strengthen the performance of United Nations peacekeeping, with a particular focus on the period since the launch of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative in March 2018 and the Action for Peacekeeping Plus implementation plan for the period from 2021 to 2023. The report serves to examine the parameters used to assess peacekeeping performance and highlights challenges that hinder peacekeeping operations from reaching their full potential. The report also provides details on the progress made to date in the priority areas of the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative and contains recommendations for the further improvement of United Nations peacekeeping.

II. Assessing United Nations peacekeeping performance and impact

3. Since 1948, over 70 United Nations peacekeeping operations have contributed to, or continue to work towards, the durable cessations of hostilities or the prevention of the resurgence of violent conflict. More than 88,000 uniformed and civilian personnel were deployed to peacekeeping operations as of June 2023, with mandates to protect civilians from violence and abuse, preserve ceasefires, rebuild trust, help to find political solutions to conflicts and create conditions for sustainable conflict resolution and the restoration of constitutional authority. United Nations peacekeeping is a collective effort that involves Member States, the Security Council, host countries, troop- and police-contributing countries, regional partners and financial contributors, and missions. All have a stake in the performance of peacekeeping operations.

¹ [S/PRST/2022/6](#).



4. Notwithstanding its successes, and as noted in the policy brief on A New Agenda for Peace,² in a number of current conflict environments, the gap between United Nations peacekeeping mandates and what such missions can actually deliver in practice has become apparent. The challenges posed by long-standing and unresolved conflicts, without a peace to keep, driven by complex domestic, geopolitical and transnational factors serve as a stark illustration of the limitations of ambitious mandates without adequate political support. The request by the transitional Government of Mali for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to withdraw without delay and the recent demonstrations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo against the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) are key examples of the fundamental challenges facing some peacekeeping operations today.

5. Together with Security Council mandates and intergovernmental guidance, an existing body of peacekeeping policies and guidance defines parameters and standards against which the performance of peacekeeping operations can be assessed in different areas of mandate implementation. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations has recognized that peacekeeping performance is contingent upon several critical factors, including, but not limited to, well-defined, realistic and achievable mandates, political will, leadership, performance and accountability at all levels, adequate resources, policy, planning and operational guidelines, caveats that have a detrimental impact on mandate implementation and performance, and training.³ Important frameworks, tools and methods have been introduced or strengthened to assess the performance of missions across their different mandated tasks, drawing on qualitative and quantitative data.

6. Notwithstanding these systems, a broader comparative evaluation of the performance and impact of different missions, and of peacekeeping as a whole, poses certain methodological challenges due to the range of variables and the uniqueness of political and operational contexts in which missions are deployed. The contributions of independent expert panels and of academic research have been indispensable in documenting challenges and systemic deficits, formulating recommendations for their remediation, and establishing an evidence base on the overall impact of peacekeeping. In 2000, the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, chaired by Lakhdar Brahimi, presented important recommendations to strengthen peacekeeping.⁴ Fifteen years later, the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, chaired by José Ramos-Horta, concluded that “United Nations peace operations have proven highly adaptable and contributed significantly to the successful resolution of conflicts and to a declining number of conflicts over two decades” while warning that changes in global conflict dynamics might now “be outpacing the ability of United Nations peace operations to respond”.⁵ In acknowledgement of that diagnosis, the Action for Peacekeeping initiative was aimed at addressing the serious challenges that a number of missions faced, including the lack of effective peace processes, lack of consent from the parties, fragmented political support and, in some cases, direct attacks on a mission leading to unacceptably high casualty rates.

7. In recent years, the Security Council has repeatedly underscored the importance of peacekeeping as one of the most effective tools available to the United Nations in the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security.⁶

² [A/77/CRP.1/Add.8](#).

³ [A/75/19](#), para. 92, and [A/77/19](#), para. 106.

⁴ [A/55/305-S/2000/809](#).

⁵ [A/70/95-S/2015/446](#).

⁶ See [S/PRST/2022/5](#), [S/PRST/2021/17](#), [S/PRST/2021/11](#).

8. Examples from current missions, as set out below, illustrate the positive impact of peacekeeping operations in terms of protecting civilians and contributing to longer-term political and peace efforts while highlighting the plausible risks that host countries and their populations might face if peacekeepers were not present:

(a) In 2021, conflict in Tambura, South Sudan, displaced over 80,000 civilians. In response, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) set up a temporary operating base that helped stop the fighting, prevented further attacks against civilians, and provided space for dialogue and access to essential resources. Routes were secured, enabling humanitarian actors to return. UNMISS civilian components engaged with local communities while UNMISS police supported the National Police Service with capacity-building. As a result of these and other partners' concomitant efforts, nearly all displaced persons returned to their homes;

(b) MONUSCO pursued a comprehensive approach to create a political and security environment conducive to the first peaceful transfer of power after the 2018 elections. Despite the challenges of continuing conflict driven by illicit competition for resources, ethnic and regional tensions and an increasingly hostile context, the Mission helped to mitigate the risks of violence and abuse faced by civilians. For example, in Djugu territory, Ituri province, MONUSCO currently provides physical protection for more than 100,000 internally displaced persons in areas with little State presence;

(c) The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) supported a return to democratic order and created conditions for the peace process, including through operations directed at bringing armed groups to the negotiating table to sign the 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation. In 2022, the protective presence of MINUSCA enabled the delivery of humanitarian aid to almost 2 million people and helped to prevent a relapse into widespread violence;

(d) Between Israel and Lebanon, the cessation of hostilities has held since 2006, and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has been credited by the Security Council⁷ with having successfully implemented its mandate allowing for the maintenance of peace and security. The mission's deployment as well as liaison and coordination mechanisms provide critical deterrence and effective means for de-escalation. However, pending the conclusion of a permanent ceasefire agreement, the risk of escalation remains considerable.

9. Peacekeeping operations have also supported the promotion and protection of human rights including through monitoring, investigation and reporting, efforts by national authorities to strengthen accountability while protecting victims and witnesses, and the strengthening of the capacity of institutions, including national human rights institutions. The good offices, strategic advice, technical assistance and logistical support of peacekeeping operations have proved central to building trust and to advancing key governance, and security and justice sector reforms. By resolution [2282 \(2016\)](#), the Council welcomed the contribution of peacekeeping operations to a comprehensive strategy for sustaining peace.

III. Strategic and contextual challenges for effective peacekeeping

10. At a time of global fragmentation, peacekeeping remains a unifying force that brings Member States together around a shared vision of collective security. It represents effective multilateralism in action and enjoys unparalleled international

⁷ Resolution [2650 \(2022\)](#).

legitimacy derived from its Security Council mandate and broad international backing.⁸ The collective political support of Member States, particularly the Security Council, for its mandate is among the strongest assets that a peacekeeping operation has, underpinned by a firm resolve and posture and the capacities of a mission to defend itself and proactively pursue its mandate. However, recent years have seen increasing divisions over some peacekeeping mandates, including over some of their core mandated tasks. A lack of unity within the Council can have a negative impact on the political leverage and effectiveness of peacekeeping operations to support peace processes.

11. Ultimately, political solutions to conflict rest with the leaders of the country and its people. A peacekeeping operation cannot succeed in its primary objectives when there is insufficient political will for peace among the main stakeholders, or when the support of host Governments and conflict parties for the presence of peacekeepers is questioned. Inconsistent or eroding host Government support for the presence of peacekeepers has posed challenges, with obstructions ranging from administrative hurdles to severe movement restrictions that violate status-of-forces agreements and have an impact on the ability of a mission to implement its mandate.

12. In addition, peacekeeping operations have been confronted with the significantly changing nature of armed conflict and a surge in new conflicts over the past decade. Intra-State conflicts, including in several peacekeeping settings, have become more intractable and increasingly enmeshed in global and regional dynamics, and non-State armed groups, including terrorist groups, have proliferated. Many of these groups engage in illicit economic activities. Long-standing conflicts are fanned by patterns of exclusion, discrimination and human rights violations and abuses, amid high levels of corruption and a general regression of the rule of law and accountability. State institutions often lack the capacity, and sometimes the political will, to counteract these trends and to advance reforms.⁹ Climate disruption exacerbates the risks of instability and armed violence, especially in conflict-affected areas.¹⁰ Information integrity is compromised in several peacekeeping settings, as the advent of digital media combined with weak media sectors has enabled misinformation, disinformation and hate speech to flourish in many parts of the world, which poses a serious risk of armed violence and threatens the safety and security of peacekeepers.

13. These political and operational dynamics have made peacekeeping increasingly challenging. United Nations peacekeepers have made significant efforts to adapt to this ever-growing complexity and to address the structural drivers that perpetuate violence and insecurity while adapting to increasingly perilous threat environments.

IV. Efforts to enhance peacekeeping performance

14. Since its launch in March 2018, the Action for Peacekeeping initiative has sought to enhance the effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping and address its key challenges. Partners of the initiative have made significant efforts to ensure tangible improvements in mandate delivery. These were strengthened with the launch in 2021 of the Action for Peacekeeping Plus implementation strategy, which is focused on seven systemic priorities and two cross-cutting themes that can have a

⁸ See [A/77/CRP.1/Add.8](#).

⁹ United Nations, "Synthesis of results of the support to the rule of law by five peacekeeping operations", Synthesis Report, 19 July 2023, p.7. Available from <https://oios.un.org/inspection-evaluation-reports>.

¹⁰ See [A/77/CRP.1/Add.8](#).

multiplier effect on overall performance. Section IV provides an outline of efforts and progress to date with regard to Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative.

A. Action for Peacekeeping Plus priority 1: collective coherence behind a political strategy

15. Advancing and supporting political solutions to conflict, together with external partners, is a core element of United Nations peacekeeping. For example, in the Central African Republic, agreement on a multiyear political strategy is allowing MINUSCA to advance its mandated support to the peace process through a decentralized approach. An enhanced, robust and proactive security approach enhances stabilization. For instance, MINUSCA uniformed and civilian components stabilized Sam Ouandja and supported the redeployment of national defence and security forces, allowing humanitarian and development partners to launch stabilization and recovery projects. The number of civil servants deployed throughout the country to provide regular State services has more than tripled with the support of MINUSCA.

16. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO has played an important role in advancing regional peace processes, providing political, technical and logistical support to the political track of the Nairobi peace process and facilitating the participation of over 200 participants from armed groups, civil society, youth and women in consultations between the Government, Congolese armed groups and local communities. MONUSCO also facilitated the work of the ad hoc verification mechanism established under the Luanda road map.

17. To effectively facilitate and enable durable political solutions, Member States, particularly the Security Council, have a critical role to play in supporting the political efforts of the United Nations in an active and unified manner. It is equally important to note that the lack of such support has a detrimental impact on the ability of peacekeeping to contribute to the peaceful resolution of conflict.

B. Action for Peacekeeping Plus priority 2: strategic and operational integration

18. Efforts are under way to increase political coherence with United Nations partners, and to ensure greater strategic and operational coherence within missions, with United Nations lead entities, agencies, funds and programmes, and with other partners, including international financial institutions.

19. The roll-out of the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System in all peacekeeping operations over the past five years has ensured that all missions have an integrated plan for mandate delivery, supporting evidence-based decision-making by senior mission leadership and enhanced reporting to the Security Council. Twenty reports of the Secretary-General and 18 fact sheets have been informed by System data, analysis and infographics. MONUSCO and the transitions team are using the System to monitor MONUSCO transition plan indicators.

20. Joint planning among uniformed, civilian and support components has enabled more effective mission responses. MINUSMA and MINUSCA have created joint planning units that bring together civilian and uniformed expertise. In the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), joint operational planning was key to successful ground convoy movements to deliver fuel and critical equipment to team sites located in the eastern part of Western Sahara.

Integrated assessment and planning, and conditions for successful transitions

21. Challenging conflict settings also increasingly require integrated assessment and planning that spans peace and security, development and humanitarian dimensions, notably as over half of the annual expenditure of the United Nations system is in integrated settings and crisis-affected countries. Progress on integration is evident, yet further improvements can be made. A revised policy on integrated assessment and planning, released in 2023, is a step towards more systematic joint analysis, and integrated assessment and planning by integrated United Nations presences. For example, in South Sudan, UNMISS participated in the integrated process to develop the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2023–2025) and is cooperating with United Nations partners in the integrated transition planning process.

22. Proactive and integrated assessment and planning are critical success factors for transitions involving the drawdown of United Nations missions. All United Nations actors in a country and at the regional and Headquarters levels must be part of joint planning, coordination and management from the outset, to the greatest extent possible. The Secretary-General has introduced transition road maps in 2019 to encourage the proactive, integrated and forward-looking planning of United Nations transitions – such road maps have been articulated in eight mission settings.

23. Managing a mission drawdown and eventual exit is a delicate political task, requiring the collaboration of national actors and international partners, including the Security Council. It also requires the United Nations to retain adequate capacity for political analysis, dialogue and convening at the field level, for example through an enhanced Resident Coordinator's Office following the closure of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). It also requires the cooperation of host authorities to ensure a mission's continued freedom of movement, security of personnel, and unhindered imports of essential items and goods such as fuel, spare parts or rations.

24. Preserving space for inclusive peacebuilding requires political strategies that can engage a wide group of stakeholders around a shared vision of key priorities and the desired end state, including the Security Council, relevant Member States, regional and subregional organizations, international financial institutions and civil society. United Nations agencies, funds and programmes have a crucial role to play in engaging as early as possible in transition planning efforts, supported by dedicated transition planning capacities. This approach is reflected in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. MONUSCO works with the broader United Nations system and relevant partners towards a transition agreed with national authorities in line with the joint transition plan, as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General.¹¹ Similarly, in the Sudan, the State Liaison Functions were created in the context of the withdrawal of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) to enhance United Nations integration and the capacities of the country team around key thematic areas that required international support beyond the mission's departure.

C. Action for Peacekeeping Plus priority 3: capabilities and mindsets

Strategic force generation

25. Effective peacekeeping requires the right capabilities in the right place, at the right time, and with the right mindsets. United Nations peacekeeping has improved uniformed capabilities and reduced critical capability gaps, in collaboration with troop- and police-contributing countries.

¹¹ S/2023/451.

26. The Department of Peace Operations forecasts requirements to address potential challenges and disseminates them to Member States through documentation and dedicated briefings, and organizes emerging capability requirement workshops. The 2023 Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference to be held in Accra will provide an opportunity for Member States to reinforce their commitment to peacekeeping through new pledges, in line with the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative. Preparatory meetings and a pledging guide help to shape pledges based on needs and gaps. Owing to pledges from Member States, assessment and advisory visits and the elevation of capabilities to higher levels of readiness in the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System, deployment times have been accelerated and investments have been increased to prepare, train and support contingents and units to deploy with the required capabilities.

27. Continued collaboration between the Secretariat and Member States has made it possible to maintain military and police units at necessary levels of readiness and preparedness for deployment to field missions, helping, but not sufficing to fill extant capacity gaps. At the beginning of the 2022/23 fiscal year, 272 pledges were registered in the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System, with 13 military and police units verified as ready for rapid deployment. Four of the units at the rapid deployment level were deployed to missions. From January 2022 to April 2023, 21 units were generated from the System.

28. The Departments of Peace Operations and Operational Support are collaborating to mobilize uniformed capabilities and ensure they have the required training and equipment, including through the triangular partnership programme, providing multi-actor training for uniformed personnel. The light coordination mechanism is collaborating with United Nations counterparts and Member States to address troop- and police-contributing countries' capacity needs that affect mandate implementation, and the safety and security of uniformed personnel. The mechanism has launched, for instance, Member State-provided military mobile training teams, allowing for exceptional deployments of technical assistance teams to peacekeeping operations.

Increasing the meaningful participation of women peacekeepers

29. A diverse workforce enhances the ability of United Nations peacekeeping to engage with the local population and improve situational awareness and mandate implementation. Gender parity is critical to success and is a key commitment of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative. Thanks to joint efforts with troop- and police-contributing countries, targets in the uniformed gender parity strategy have been met for all categories of uniformed personnel except military contingents. As of May 2023, women constitute 25.6 per cent of individual uniformed personnel. The United Nations continues to implement initiatives to increase the deployment of women and is enhancing working and living conditions and strengthening support mechanisms for deployed women and gender-responsive leadership capacity. Such initiatives include guidelines on integrating a gender perspective into the work of military components. Within United Nations police, the Secretariat has refined predeployment operational readiness assessments, in-mission inspections, guidance and training materials to sustain its gender-balanced workforce and nurture leadership talent. In the areas of justice and corrections, the percentage of women deployed as government-provided personnel has increased from 25 to 40 per cent during the past five years (see figure I).

Figure I
Percentage of uniformed women deployed, 2018–2023



Source: Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy, Action for Peacekeeping Plus, third progress report. Available at https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/a4p_progressreport3_final_aug_1_2023_0.pdf.

Note: Data refer to all uniformed personnel deployed by the United Nations (special political missions and peacekeeping operations).

30. As of July 2023, 43 per cent of heads and 33 per cent of deputy heads of civilian-led peacekeeping operations were women, while all military-led missions are led by men. Women encumber 29 per cent of all senior leadership positions in the 12 peacekeeping operations, and 6 out of 14 personnel appointed as heads or deputy heads of police components were women.

31. A key innovation towards a diversified peacekeeping community are engagement teams and platoons. Comprised of at least 50 per cent women, this military capability helps to form connections with communities and gain access to a broader range of the population, thereby improving mission coverage, service provision and security. Women and men peacekeepers may pick up on different signals and threats during patrols, thereby strengthening situational awareness. In the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), the 2022 Military Gender Advocate of the Year, Captain Cecilia Erzuah, was recognized for engaging with community leaders, women's groups and young people during patrols, which enabled her battalion to better understand community security needs and prevent hostilities.

32. As part of its commitment to attaining gender parity, the United Nations is implementing gender responsive designs through the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations to create safer, more secure and more appropriate accommodation

solutions for women peacekeepers, thereby enabling their increased participation in peacekeeping. Monitoring the implementation of these gender responsive designs indicates that 13 peacekeeping operations and special political missions are improving the working and living conditions for women in the field. Supported by the Elsie Initiative Fund for Uniformed Women in Peace Operations, UNIFIL is one of the first missions to provide gender-sensitive housing, including four women-specific accommodation buildings, restrooms and a welfare area. MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, and UNISFA completed pilot projects with funding from the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations project.

Maintaining a performance and learning culture

33. Peacekeeping performance is enhanced through strategic partnerships with troop- and police-contributing countries and a robust organizational learning and guidance system. In missions, four policy and best practices officers and about 20 uniformed and civilian focal points capture and share best practices and lessons, which inform guidance, training and decision-making.

34. The Department of Peace Operations provides capacity-building support such as training for Member State military and police trainers, advisory and assessment visits and the training material needed to prepare units and personnel for deployment. During the 2022/23 fiscal year, the Department conducted 14 such trainings of trainers in areas such as protection of civilians, community-oriented policing and peacekeeping-intelligence.

35. In-mission evaluations and the deployment review mobile application help Member States to identify key lessons learned for future deployments. Performance is supported by mandatory in-mission exercises and rehearsals to help units and individuals adapt to mission conditions.

D. Action for Peacekeeping Plus priority 4: accountability to peacekeepers

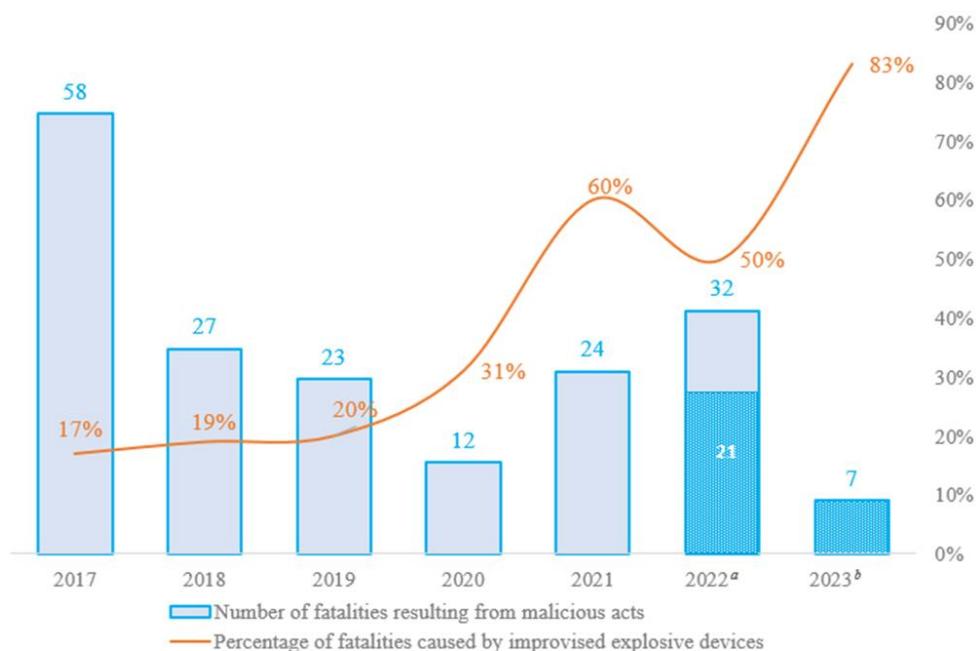
36. The safety and security of peacekeepers remain of utmost concern and central to the Action for Peacekeeping and Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiatives. Recent years have seen significant efforts to improve the safety and security of peacekeepers, with the prioritization of preventative measures wherever possible. In Mali, ahead of the withdrawal of MINUSMA by 31 December 2023 in line with Security Council resolution [2690 \(2023\)](#), the Mission has been working with the transitional Government to ensure a safe and orderly withdrawal despite the challenging timeline and as attacks against peacekeepers by non-State armed groups persist. However, adapting to a fast-changing mission environment and procuring new capabilities are time-consuming and challenging efforts that become even more so in the context of budget cuts and the frequent rotation of uniformed personnel.

37. The action plan to improve the security of United Nations peacekeepers is a valuable instrument that serves to identify security gaps and challenges, develop practical solutions and share best practices. Between 2018, when the action plan was launched, and 2020, uniformed peacekeeping fatalities resulting from malicious acts decreased annually. Implementation has led to critical enhancements in areas such as adaptability, mindset, integrated planning, peacekeeping-intelligence, operational approach, and policies and guidelines. It has also resulted in improvements in training, equipment, medical trauma care, protection of key infrastructure, and measures to improve accountability for crimes against peacekeepers. However, the number of uniformed fatalities resulting from malicious acts increased in 2021 and 2022, with attacks against peacekeepers becoming more sophisticated, including

through the use of improvised explosive devices, indirect fire attacks and unmanned aerial systems (see figure II).

Figure II

Total number of uniformed peacekeeper fatalities resulting from malicious acts and percentage of those fatalities caused by explosive ordnance and/or improvised explosive devices, 2017–2023



Sources: Notification of casualty (NOTICAS) peacekeeper fatalities database and Action for Peacekeeping Plus, third progress report (available at https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/a4p_progressreport3_final_aug_1_2023_0.pdf).

^a Highlighted area shows 21 fatalities in the period from January to August 2022.

^b Highlighted area shows seven fatalities in the period from January to 29 August 2023.

38. For the past three years, an increasing proportion of peacekeeping casualties resulting from malicious acts has been caused by explosive ordnance and improvised explosive devices. In 2023 alone, five of the seven peacekeeper deaths were due to such incidents. The continuing and growing explosive ordnance threat produces not only gruesome fatalities but also significant harm to the survivors. The threat of attacks using improvised explosive devices reduces the operational effectiveness of missions and humanitarian elements by restricting freedom of movement, which becomes dependent on capabilities to counter such attacks and on the availability of explosive ordnance specialists.

39. Significant progress has been made in implementing the recommendations of the independent strategic review on the United Nations response to explosive ordnance threats.¹² This progress includes enhancing the mandates of the most affected missions, improving the training and equipping of uniformed contingents, strengthening peacekeeping-intelligence capabilities and supporting national capacities in detecting and countering improvised explosive devices attacks and deploying the requisite disposal of such devices and explosive ordnance disposal units. To facilitate progress, 10 statement of unit requirements for units deploying to MINUSMA, MONUSCO and MINUSCA were revised to ensure that contingents had

¹² S/2021/1042.

the skills and equipment necessary to effectively operate within their threat environments. Predeployment and in-mission training and mentoring are being provided to units, while the Secretariat continues to engage with national and regional training centres to align their efforts with mission requirements.

40. A new policy on integrated defence of peacekeeping bases is aimed at mitigating risk, decreasing the injuries and fatalities of United Nations peacekeepers and reducing damage to United Nations infrastructure from malicious acts. To support its implementation, lessons learned from MINUSMA fed into recommendations to strengthen current practice. Efforts are also under way to improve crisis management capabilities in field missions.

41. Timely casualty evacuations can greatly increase the survivability rates of peacekeepers from critical injury or illness. Strengthened trainings, stress testing and other activities have led to improved casualty evacuation systems, data generation and the development of innovative technologies. Stress tests were conducted in MINUSCA and MINUSMA in early 2022 and 2023 and are scheduled for UNMISS in September 2023.

42. In line with the health-care management framework, medical facilities in the field provide a systematic, integrated approach to health care using a range of strategies, including structured assessment, biannual monitoring of hospitals, United Nations health-care quality and patient safety accreditation of medical facilities, and the use of data to improve outcomes through surveys that serve to evaluate and monitor patient experience. The Secretariat prioritizes the well-being of its personnel by expanding its occupational safety and health platform with measures adapted to their unique circumstances and needs. This platform allows for the collection of verifiable data on the causes and impacts of injuries and illnesses, and the subsequent introduction of preventive measures to enhance personnel safety and well-being.

43. Disease-specific risk mitigation plans and technical support have been developed to mitigate the risks of potential disease outbreaks and other public health emergencies. While coronavirus disease (COVID-19) cases are on the decline globally, transitional preventive measures for uniformed personnel remain in place to minimize the risk of transmission. Beginning in July 2024, mental health experts will be available at level II hospitals, with up to two experts per mission, and mental health-care workers will be on hand to help commanders ensure optimum mental health and operational readiness. Furthermore, a mental health strategy focused on prevention, protection, promotion and support is under development. With the support of Member States, the resources and training material outlined in the strategy are expected to be accessible to uniformed personnel through a digital platform. Their active engagement will make it integral to their health programmes.

Accountability for criminal acts against United Nations peacekeepers

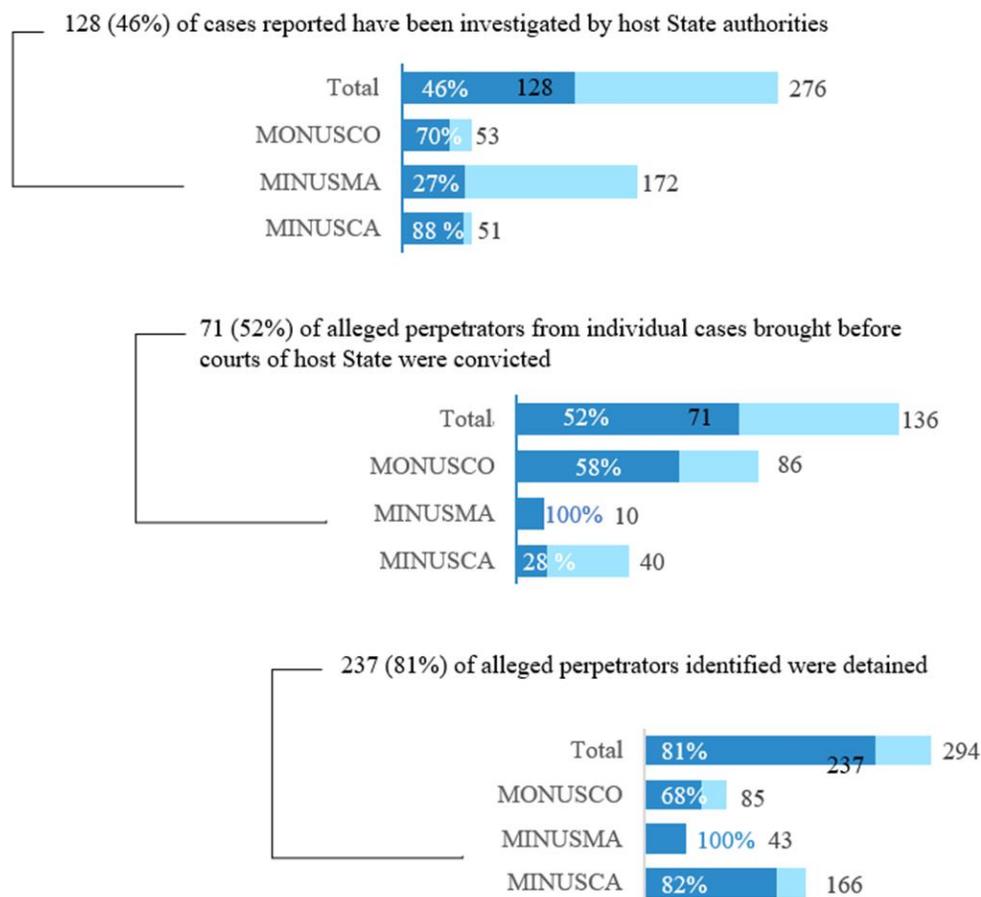
44. Since 1948, 1,067 uniformed peacekeepers have been killed as a result of malicious acts, including 331 since 2013. Few of those responsible for such crimes have been brought to justice. In line with Security Council resolution [2589 \(2021\)](#), the Secretariat is pursuing actions, resulting in an increase in the number of alleged perpetrators identified and detained and an increase in the percentage of cases with confirmed national investigations. Seventy-one individuals have been convicted since 2019 in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo¹³ and

¹³ In the case of MONUSCO, the data provided on investigations, detentions and convictions include those related to the high-profile assassination of two United Nations experts in 2017, noting that they were not peacekeepers.

Mali for the killing of peacekeepers, and national investigations have increased¹⁴ (see figure III).

Figure III

Investigation and prosecution of crimes against peacekeepers, 2013–2023



Source: Action for Peacekeeping Plus, third progress report. Available at

https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/a4p_progressreport3_final_aug_1_2023_0.pdf.

Note: All data is since 2013 for MONUSCO, MINUSCA and MINUSMA, the three mission settings with the highest number of fatalities caused by malicious acts. Data are reported cumulatively. In the case of MONUSCO, statistics include investigations, detentions and convictions relating to the high-profile assassination of two United Nations experts in 2017, noting that they were not peacekeepers.

E. Action for Peacekeeping Plus priority 5: accountability of peacekeepers

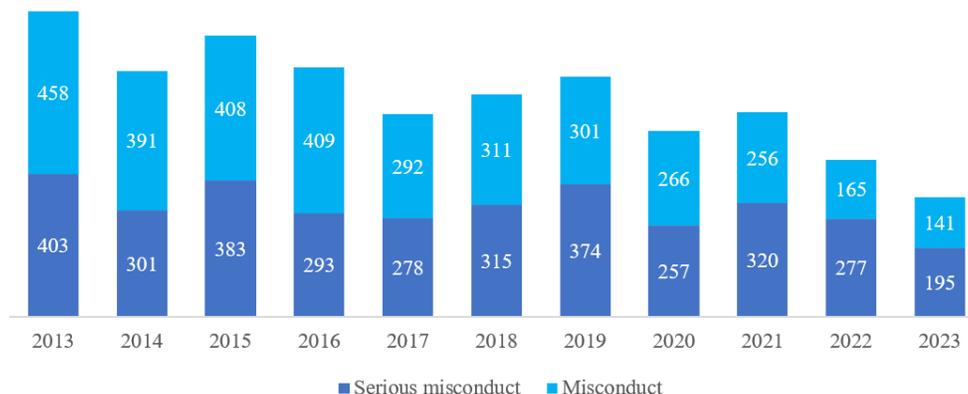
45. The past decade has seen a consistent annual decline in the allegations of misconduct that were unrelated to sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations – allegations relating to the latter have yet to show a similar trend. However, as a result of improved risk management, including prevention efforts, and continuous engagement with Member States to ensure accountability for misconduct and reduce the response time on allegations, over the past five years a growing

¹⁴ For comparison, there were no convictions for such crimes between 2013 and 2019 in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali.

number of the allegations reported annually was related to events from past years, or several years prior, rather than from new events (see figure IV).

Figure IV

Number of allegations reported by year in peacekeeping operations



Source: Action for Peacekeeping Plus, third progress report. Available at https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/a4p_progressreport3_final_aug_1_2023_0.pdf.

46. Preventing misconduct in the first place is essential. Holding individual perpetrators accountable should act as a deterrent, but when widespread and systemic acts of sexual exploitation and abuse are reported, or when Member States do not conclude investigations, adopt sanctions or update the Secretary-General on any progress, the Secretariat follows Security Council instructions to repatriate entire units.¹⁵

47. Cooperation with Member States remains critical when it comes to the conduct and discipline of uniformed personnel, be it for preventing misconduct, ensuring accountability or providing remedies for victims, including children born as a result of sexual exploitation and abuse, as illustrated in figure V. Twenty Member States have informed the Secretariat that DNA is recognized to establish paternity under national law and/or have conducted DNA paternity testing on matters referred to by the Secretariat, enabling these children to enjoy related rights.

¹⁵ See resolution 2272 (2016).

Figure V
**Engagement with Member States to strengthen the conduct of
 peacekeeping personnel**



Source: Action for Peacekeeping Plus, third progress report. Available at https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/a4p_progressreport3_final_aug_1_2023_0.pdf.

48. While progress has been made towards addressing paternity and child support claims arising from acts of sexual misconduct and abuse, these claims remain largely unresolved. Renewed facilitation efforts by Member States and the Secretariat are required. Moreover, the Secretary-General continues to implement a zero-tolerance policy in regard to sexual harassment, while making efforts in partnership with Member States to raise awareness and enforce accountability.

49. Following the request of the Secretary-General to place the rights and dignity of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse at the centre of all efforts, MINUSCA, MONUSCO and UNMISS have established Senior Victims' Rights Officers as the main point-of-contact for all victims of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel. Victims receive medical, psychosocial and legal assistance and support for the resolution of paternity and child maintenance cases. Missions are providing assistance and support to victims through the trust fund in support of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse and other sources. During the budget year 2022/23, the trust fund supported six projects in five countries, with a budget of \$1,736,145,¹⁶ providing direct support to 1,224 individuals.

50. Implementation of the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces is ongoing, which identifies risks associated with supporting non-United Nations security forces and strengthening mutual accountability of the United Nations and recipient entities.

Environmental footprint

51. Through the environment strategy for peace operations (2017–2023), peacekeeping operations have reduced their environmental footprint. Performance indicators show improvement from the baseline established in 2019–2020. For

¹⁶ Not all projects are in peacekeeping locations or are led by peacekeeping operations.

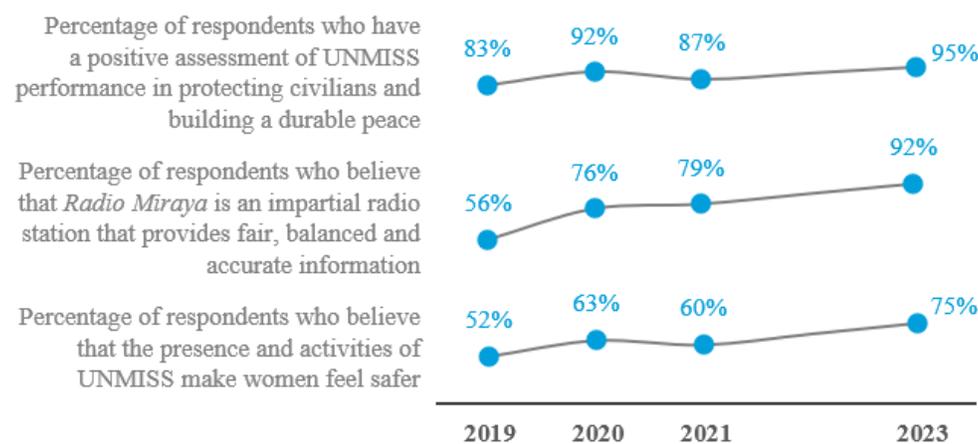
instance, the proportion of field sites meeting minimum wastewater risk level criteria has increased from 66 to 72 per cent, the proportion of solid waste managed with preferred disposal methods has increased from 39 to 51 per cent and greenhouse gas emissions have gone down from 7.5 to 7.3 ton per person per year. In line with mandates of the General Assembly,¹⁷ next steps are being considered in consultation with Member States to ensure the continuity of efforts beyond June 2023.

F. Action for Peacekeeping Plus priority 6: strategic communications, including effectiveness in addressing misinformation and disinformation

52. Effective strategic communications are crucial to securing support, managing expectations, responsibilities and capacities, and highlighting the contributions of peacekeeping to peace and stability. They are also critical to understanding local sentiments towards missions, as shown in figure VI. To demonstrate the value and impact of peacekeeping on host communities, the Secretariat launched a global campaign in 2023, “Peace Begins with Me”, which has significantly increased engagement on social media compared with 2022.¹⁸

Figure VI

Results from annual perception and public opinion surveys commissioned by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan on local perspectives of the Mission



Source: Action for Peacekeeping Plus, third progress report. Available at https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/a4p_progressreport3_final_aug_1_2023_0.pdf.

Note: Surveys were conducted by an independent firm on the basis of a sample distributed proportionally to the population size within the 10 states in South Sudan.

53. Misinformation, disinformation and hate speech are increasingly weaponized. For example, a disinformation campaign preceded a violent attack in Aqibiyah, Lebanon, in December 2022 that left one peacekeeper dead and three others injured. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, protests and violence targeting peacekeepers have been correlated with increased online negative sentiment against them. A dedicated team in the Department of Peace Operations provides practical, direct support to missions to develop policy, guidance and training and to roll out

¹⁷ See A/77/19 and General Assembly resolution 76/274.

¹⁸ During May 2023, the campaign hashtags were mentioned 28,500 times by 15,900 unique users, an increase from 3,300 hashtag mentions for a similar campaign in May 2022. In the same month, United Nations peacekeeping social media received 158,500 engagements (when a user likes, shares, views video or comments on a post) compared with 30,200 in May 2022.

digital tools for monitoring and analysis. Peacekeeping operations have also adopted a proactive role to countering misinformation and disinformation. MONUSCO is training parliamentarians, media representatives and youth to promote sharing of accurate content on social media. In UNIFIL, press releases are issued proactively ahead of high-risk moments, the Head of Mission engages with key political and security actors and media outlets, and a visual storytelling campaign has been launched explaining the role of the mission.

54. The implementation of the recommendations of the 2023 strategic review of strategic communications across United Nations peacekeeping operations¹⁹ will require sustained Member State support, including for addressing the challenge posed by misinformation and disinformation.

G. Action for Peacekeeping Plus priority 7: cooperation with host countries

55. The Secretariat continues its efforts to strengthen cooperation with both host countries and local communities and often to support national institutions. Such engagement occurs in the context of the good offices of missions and at the working level, through clear and open dialogue with national authorities.

56. In Lebanon, the economic crisis has affected the Lebanese Armed Forces. Continued joint activities such as community engagement patrols, security escorts, foot and vehicle patrols, market walks and training activities by UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces in the mission area of operations were facilitated through non-lethal material support provided by UNIFIL under Security Council resolutions [2591 \(2021\)](#) and [2650 \(2022\)](#). Joint patrols increased from 13 per cent in mid-2021 to 20 per cent in 2023.

57. National stakeholders must fully respect and adhere to Security Council mandates and status-of-forces agreements. In the Central African Republic, MINUSCA continued to engage with national authorities to proactively address compliance with the status-of-forces agreement, in particular impediments to freedom of movement, utilization of aviation assets and the detention of United Nations personnel. Sustained engagement by Mission leadership with national authorities resulted in the lifting of the restrictions on night flights that had been in place for 10 months, as well as the restrictions on the utilization of unmanned aerial vehicles, although new notification requirements were put in place. The full use of these assets remains a key component for situational awareness and the security of peacekeepers during operations.

58. In Mali, MINUSMA has faced a high number of restrictions and access constraints by the host authorities. This has significantly hampered effective mandate implementation,

H. Innovative, data-driven and technology-enabled peacekeeping

59. The Strategy for the Digital Transformation of United Nations Peacekeeping is aimed at leveraging digital technologies to strengthen the safety and security of personnel and shape agile and responsive mandate implementation. It serves to complement and build on a range of efforts across peacekeeping to better utilize digital technology. The Secretariat has made progress in peacekeeping-intelligence, including the establishment of an operational and policy framework as well as a Peacekeeping-Intelligence Academy, providing decision makers in the field with

¹⁹ [S/2023/282](#).

information to anticipate and mitigate threats. For example, the MINUSCA action plan for the enhancement of peacekeeping-intelligence and early warning capacity establishes priorities and time frames to strengthen capacity across relevant Mission components.

60. Meanwhile, a technology-enabled capability based on the Unite Aware platform is helping to integrate situational awareness information, thus promoting a common operational picture and mission-wide shared understanding of developments on the ground. Piloted in the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), it has been used, for example, to visualize information such as on land permits, security incidents and unauthorized activities in the buffer zone. The tool is being deployed to MINUSCA, while in MINURSO, Unite Aware Sage serves as a tool to enhance integrated reporting and analysis in the mission. Specialized efforts also continue. For example, to tackle misinformation, disinformation and hate speech in the context of peacekeeping, the Department of Peace Operations is building personnel capacity for monitoring and analysis of the digital information environment.

I. Impact of the women and peace and security agenda on operational effectiveness

61. The integration of the women and peace and security agenda across Action for Peacekeeping Plus priorities has had a catalytic impact on the operational effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, from strengthened people-centred approaches in early warning, conflict resolution and prevention, to augmenting women's civic and political participation. For example, collaboration between gender teams, military, police and women networks in early warning has facilitated dialogues and hotspot mapping to identify threats for enhanced protection of women and girls through gender responsive patrols. The participation of women in the Nairobi peace process rose to 40 per cent representation in the 110 civil society organizations with MONUSCO support. Systematically integrating gender data and women and peace and security indicators in planning, reporting and analytical frameworks such as the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System, Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative and the Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action has resulted in a more comprehensive and balanced analysis across thematic areas.

62. Engagement and capacity-building with Member States and partners on women and peace and security have led to results. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the joint transition plan integrated gender and women and peace and security perspectives in all priority benchmarks. In the Central African Republic, the engagement of MINUSCA with the national Government and women leaders supported an increase in women's participation in local peace and reconciliation committees by ensuring that their representation reached the 35 per cent gender quota.

J. Tools and frameworks to consolidate performance and accountability efforts

63. Since June 2022, the Department of Peace Operations has begun to systematically monitor progress on the implementation of Action for Peacekeeping Plus priorities, leveraging internal and external data from missions and Headquarters. So far, three biannual reports, documenting progress on high priority and catalytic actions, have been presented to Member States. The monitoring framework and reporting system is being reviewed to include indicators on the impact of Action for Peacekeeping Plus implementation, with the aim of helping to track progress across the broader Action for Peacekeeping agenda.

64. The integrated peacekeeping performance and accountability framework, developed in 2020, serves to consolidate all Secretariat efforts to assess and strengthen peacekeeping performance and the accountability of civilian, uniformed and support components. The framework also provides an outline of efforts to improve the various performance assessment tools that it covers. For example, based on the process outlined in the framework, the Department of Peace Operations is finalizing guidance on the recognition of outstanding military and police performance through commendation letters to troop- and police-contributing countries, as well as special mentions in the reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council.

65. As a key mission-wide performance tool, the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System has helped to centralize and secure mission data and increase analytical and reporting capabilities. Prior to its roll-out, United Nations peacekeeping lacked a system for gathering data, assessing impacts and informing evidence-based strategic decision-making and integrated planning. The System helps peacekeeping operations to assess impact in complex conflict environments as the first truly comprehensive tool to link the context of a country with peacekeeping planning, data, results and reporting. With over 35,000 data points, the System has enabled missions to better assess their performance, visualize trend analysis and develop recommendations for leadership. It has facilitated the conduct of over 50 impact assessments that have produced recommendations to mission leadership on improving decision-making to enhance mandate implementation and strengthen reporting.

66. Regular reviews conducted by the Office for the Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership contribute significantly to performance and accountability efforts by identifying gaps that have an impact on mandate delivery and by providing recommendations on systemic issues related to performance, safety, security, welfare and the provision of adequate support services to personnel. Following the reviews, several missions and troop- and police-contributing countries have improved living conditions and welfare for uniformed components deployed in remote areas. Recommendations stemming from observations of the living conditions of troops in temporary operating bases have led to missions adjusting operational concepts, including by closing several such bases, which has improved the protection of civilians as well as command and control. Findings and recommendations from the reviews can lead to other positive changes within missions. The Secretariat works in partnership with troop- and police-contributing countries and Member States to address the challenges identified. For example, the Office supported one troop- and police-contributing country in developing a national action plan to resolve current cases of misconduct or sexual exploitation and abuse, and to prevent new cases.

Performance assessment tools for uniformed and civilian personnel

67. Assessing and improving the performance of civilian, police and military personnel remains a priority for the United Nations. As outlined in the integrated peacekeeping performance and accountability framework, the Secretariat has undertaken efforts to strengthen senior mission leadership performance management and accountability through a closer review and a streamlined format for senior managers' compacts between the Secretary-General and heads of peacekeeping operations. For civilian staff, the Secretariat has adjusted its staff performance management system, with a focus on ongoing and meaningful performance conversations between managers and staff instead of formal midpoint reviews, in order to foster a more constructive feedback cycle.

68. Steps have been taken to improve in-mission military unit evaluations based on a methodology with clear and transparent military performance standards and indicators, which account for operational realities, and ensure that units are

contributing effectively to the peacekeeping mandate. Identified shortfalls are recorded in performance improvement plans and, based on the seriousness of the issue, remedial measures are taken and tracked at the mission or Headquarters level. The Office of Military Affairs conducts pre-rotation visits with military skills validations based on the above-mentioned standards and indicators to ensure that performance shortfalls are addressed and that the next rotation complies with United Nations military standards.

69. Regarding police components, formed police unit performance evaluations are conducted quarterly and include an expanded rating scale, along with a performance improvement plan for each assessed unit that provides remedial measures to be taken, covering training, health and welfare, the protection of civilians and operations, among others, to further enhance performance. Gender considerations have also been strengthened in the assessment.

70. Performance data is integrated into the knowledge management system of the Department of Peace Operations for troop- and police-contributing countries, allowing for the recognition of shortfalls by Member States. In addition, quarterly briefings are provided to mission leadership on performance trends and issues. Integrated performance feedback meetings are also held about seven times per year for troop- and police-contributing countries, including on identified shortfalls and good practices. Furthermore, the Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support transmits quarterly letters to troop- and police-contributing countries identifying gaps in formed capabilities deployed to field missions under memorandums of understanding.

V. Observations and recommendations

71. Peacekeeping performance ultimately hinges on the partnership and commitment of all stakeholders across the spectrum of strategic, political and operational dimensions. Important efforts have been undertaken in recent years to professionalize peacekeeping and continuously improve its performance. I commend the critical role that Member States play in support of effective peacekeeping, including in providing political support, in preparing and contributing high-performing units, personnel and capacities, and in ensuring accountability, including in cases of misconduct.

72. As I note in my policy brief on A New Agenda for Peace, there is an urgent need for the Security Council and the General Assembly to undertake a reflection on the limits and future of peacekeeping in the light of the evolving nature of conflict, with a view to enabling more nimble, adaptable and effective mission models while devising transition and exit strategies, where appropriate. This reflection should clearly take into account the comparative strengths and successes of peacekeeping as well as its doctrinal and operational limitations as a tool that relies on strategic consent and the support of critical parties.

Political frameworks and mandates

73. For peacekeeping to succeed, warring parties must exhibit a genuine commitment to a political process. By definition, peacekeeping operations deploy to address conflicts that have proved difficult to solve, and while not every operation will succeed, the majority of missions with multidimensional mandates have left behind countries demonstrably more stable and without major conflict. At its core, peacekeeping is and should always remain an instrument of the Security Council employed to foster conditions amenable to a sustainable political solution to the conflict at hand. This basic principle applies to all peacekeeping operations, ranging

from those with more limited but crucial monitoring and ceasefire observation mandates to multidimensional missions. To create conditions for sustainable political solutions, Member States, and in particular the Council, must act in a unified manner to support them.

74. To ensure missions can effectively perform their mandated functions, the Security Council should continue to ensure full and consistent support throughout a mission's life, including by continuously engaging with relevant conflict parties and in particular the host Government to ensure that the mission is not politically stymied or obstructed in the implementation of its mandate. When faced with systematic restrictions and violations of status of forces agreements, United Nations peacekeeping operations need the strong and unified support of Member States in advocating with the host Government to lift them. The Department of Peace Operations is strengthening its efforts to systematically collect and track violations of status-of-forces agreements in line with requests from the Council and the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

75. The optimal performance of peacekeeping operations also hinges on mission mandates that provide clear strategic direction, and that are prioritized, achievable, adaptable to changing circumstances, and sufficiently resourced. I thank the Security Council for progress achieved in this regard in recent years. I stand by my commitment to provide the Council with regular, frank assessments and realistic recommendations of the highest standards to support the Council's decision-making. More investments in strategic communications are required to better set and manage expectations, both in host countries and internationally, about the mandate, capacities and limitations of peacekeeping operations, and to counter any disinformation efforts that seek to discredit them. Moving forward, Council members may wish to consider how to further improve mandating, including with a view to enabling peacekeeping to become more people-centred, inclusive and participatory. With their unique capabilities and operational reach, including in engaging with local communities, peacekeeping operations are often uniquely placed to help address patterns of exclusion that reignite and drive many intra-State conflicts today. Finally, in line with Council resolution [2594 \(2021\)](#), it remains crucial that exit strategies and transitions be planned from the onset of a mission, and in an integrated and iterative manner, to ensure that mission drawdowns result in gains that are consolidated while minimizing the risk of relapse into conflict or escalation.

Peacekeeping reform and capacities

76. Long-standing reform efforts, including through the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and the reform of the peace and security pillar, have produced important achievements relating to professionalism, performance and strengthened partnerships, among others. Member States should recommit to further reform of United Nations peacekeeping that builds on the progress achieved in recent years, with a view to making peacekeeping operations nimbler and more adaptable to existing and emerging challenges. This should include the ability to maintain a robust posture when needed to reinforce credibility vis-à-vis host country authorities and communities.

77. United Nations peacekeeping should continue to make a decisive shift towards fully leveraging data and digital technologies to effectively track conflict trends, understand local sentiments, enable inclusive dialogue, monitor impact and help to guide evidence-based decisions. The strategy for the digital transformation of peacekeeping and the quintet of change towards a United Nations 2.0 provide such a framework. Yet the complexity of leveraging data-driven analysis and planning in dynamic and challenging environments requires specialized and dedicated capacities. Planning, data management and analytical capacities have often been under-resourced

in peacekeeping operations. Member States should support the inclusion of full-time specialized capacities to ensure that missions have the necessary capacity to utilize and analyse data so that it can be appropriately leveraged for planning and performance assessment. Ultimately, these efforts rely on the capabilities of a diverse, mobile and committed United Nations workforce. To remain fit for purpose, investments in training, including for early warning, collection, assessment and timely dissemination of peacekeeping-intelligence, data analytics and strategic communications are necessary.

Partnerships and networked multilateralism to address complex conflicts

78. The complex and interlocking challenges in today's conflict environments have outpaced the abilities of United Nations peace operations to respond, as the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations observed eight years ago. Furthermore, it has become apparent that they surpass the capacities of any multilateral institution or Member State when acting alone. As I note in my policy brief on A New Agenda for Peace, a more deliberate, coherent and integrated action is required to mobilize the full range of tools available as part of a system of networked multilateralism. The range of threats and challenges confronting peacekeepers, which are the drivers of many protracted conflicts, call for a much more integrated operational model between peacekeeping operations, the wider United Nations system and regional and international partners. Member States should support efforts towards a greater integration of United Nations efforts internally, including in legislative bodies, and comprehensive approaches involving the entire United Nations system and strong partnerships with a range of actors, including regional organizations and international financial institutions.

79. Better coordination is also required with national or regional military operations, given that over the past decade, peacekeeping operations have often operated alongside regional, subregional or ad hoc security deployments with enforcement mandates. In these contexts, the delineation between United Nations peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations should remain clear. While peacekeeping operations have demonstrated that they can act robustly to bring armed groups to the negotiating table or protect civilians, they are neither designed nor equipped for enforcement or counter-terrorism tasks that go beyond established doctrine. In recent mission contexts, there have been perceptions of underperformance of peacekeeping operations on the part of host Governments and the public, stemming partly from a lack of clarity over a mission's mandate, capabilities and rules of engagement, in particular when other regional or bilateral forces may be operating in the same area. As I note in my policy brief on A New Agenda for Peace, where peace enforcement is required, the Security Council should authorize a multinational force, or enforcement action by regional and subregional organizations. Furthermore, I reiterate my call for a new generation of peace enforcement missions and counter-terrorism operations, led by African partners with a Security Council mandate under Chapters VII and VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, with guaranteed funding through assessed contributions.

80. In conclusion, I wish to salute the commitment and bravery of United Nations peacekeepers around the world. I pay my most heartfelt tribute to all peacekeeping personnel who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of peace over the past 75 years.