

FUTURE OF PEACE OPERATIONS

On 6-7 October 2022, the Challenges Annual Forum (CAF22) gathered over 145 partners and key stakeholders from 26 countries to collectively generate thoughts and reflections on the future of peace operations with the aim to further the UN Secretary General's 'New Agenda for Peace' Initiative. The Forum was co-hosted by the United Service Institution (USI) of India in New Delhi.

10 Key Takeaways from CAF22:

- **Recommitment to UN principles, norms, and values:** In a world of growing polarization with critical converging threats to international stability, the 'New Agenda for Peace' is vital to re-energize multilateral peace and security and to obligate Member States to uphold the UN Charter.
- **Primacy of politics:** Sustainable political solutions addressing underlying causes of conflict should continue to be at the core of peace operations. In supporting host states, field missions should be careful not to unintentionally impede incentives for national peace processes.
- **Out-of-the-box thinking:** The 'New Agenda for Peace' constitutes a momentum to advance a more comprehensive and integrated approach to international peace and security. Creative thinking is needed to update existing tools and frameworks and make better use of the full spectrum of peace operations across the range of instruments, including preventive deployments and special political missions.
- **Flexible and well-resourced peace operations:** More creative and adaptable mandates will allow fit-for-purpose field missions with the operational freedom and flexibility to effectively adjust to fast evolving threats, needs and contexts. Mandates need to be matched with adequate resources - a severe lack of funds and equipment are directly affecting the performance and credibility of peace operations.

- **Digital transformation:** Strategic foresight through timely, integrated data and digital technologies will significantly improve the performance as well as the safety and security of peace operations.
- **Placing people at the center:** Effective protection of civilians is important for the credibility of peace operations. Mission planning and operational responses need to be strengthened through community engagement and a better understanding of local needs. Perception studies should be conducted and used more systematically, also for measuring mission effectiveness in the eyes of local populations. The role of youth and women in peace operations is essential and needs to be further enhanced.
- **Limits of peace operations:** It is important to acknowledge the limits of peace operations, particularly in UN mission settings with lighter footprints without deterrent capacity to protect civilians.
- **Partnerships:** Regional organizations and security arrangements play important roles in the maintenance of peace and security. It is crucial for the UN to continue developing effective ways to engage with regional organizations, including on questions of capabilities, financing, but also norms and principles. Given the cross-border nature of many conflicts, regional mandates for peace operations should be considered when needed. UN engagement with *ad hoc* regional security arrangements needs to be based on clear common political objectives.
- **Containment of mis- and disinformation:** Better and more skills, tools, and resources are needed to understand digital social media landscapes to avoid growing threats to peace operations. Field missions need to become better in containing mis- and disinformation, and leverage opportunities for strategic communications through storytelling based on everyday efforts of peace operations.
- **Safety and security:** Increased attacks on peacekeepers in field missions are alarming and directly affect their ability to engage with and protect local communities. Further support to mission leaders and a greater understanding of attack patterns can help tailor more effective responses and improve mission performance.

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