



THE CHALLENGES FORUM'S REFLECTIONS ON THE PACT FOR THE FUTURE AND PEACE OPERATIONS

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The International Forum for the Challenges of Peace Operations (henceforth the Challenges Forum)¹ is, since 1996, committed to the continuous development of effective and innovative peace operations. With the **highest number of wars and armed conflicts in the world since 1946**, it is our sincere hope that the United Nations (UN) Member States will **make full use of the opportunity provided by the Pact for the Future and step up their efforts to further develop and improve their collective peace operations toolbox**. The UN deserves and needs fit-for-purpose operational instruments that can better address existing and evolving challenges to international peace and security. In line with the partnership's inputs to the UN Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace, and based on our collective knowledge and experience, we wish to share the following reflections and suggestions on the Pact for the Future and international peace operations.

Global infrastructure and framework for peace operations



It has taken the UN family more than **75 years to gradually develop a global infrastructure and framework for international peace and security**, including recruitment and deployment mechanisms, a global body of experienced and trained military, police and civilian peacekeepers and crisis managers, specialised agencies, training centres, targeted research, analysis and knowledge management, as well as cooperative partnerships and associations.

Together they form the **cornerstone** of peace operations that have gradually paved the way for more professional and performance-driven peace operations. It is important however to remember that this is a vulnerable collective infrastructure, that needs to be maintained, and where needed adapted, in a professional and sustainable way. It also needs to be reinforced with effective preventive measures and technological applications. This is a **shared responsibility of all UN troop, police and resource contributing Member States, as well as for regional organisations**, such as the African Union and the European Union. In today's globalised and interdependent world, national and international peace and security efforts and commitments are often mutually reinforcing and represent a collective effort that serves both national and international interests. To remain purposeful and effective, this collaboration requires **solidarity and sustainable policies**.

Political and operational prerequisites for success



Peace operations are a significant investment on behalf of the international community which must be provided with the **necessary political and operational prerequisites** to achieve their objectives. It is important to highlight that peace operations alone cannot achieve the desired strategic objectives. **Accountability should to a higher degree be shared between the Security Council, host countries and peace operations**. Inclusive and respectful mechanisms and

¹ The Challenges Forum is a global partnership consisting of 52 organisations from 24 countries, a platform for dialogue through events, workshops and publications. www.challengesforum.org



formats for gathering host country experiences should be worked out and systematically implemented, in order to generate guidance and best practices for all concerned stakeholders. This would enable co-responsible actors, including host countries, to better uphold the principles of peace operations and more effectively support the implementation of agreed peace operations' mandates. In the interest of the populations in conflict affected countries, the UN and its Member States should, based on the principles of peace operations, explore innovative ways to work with host countries also during periods of varying levels of cooperation and support.

Supportive strategic direction of peace operations



Strategic direction from the UN Security Council is a critical peace operations' success factor. It is important that this **direction is primarily guided by the goals, needs and requirements of field missions**, and that it promotes a dynamic and agile operational conduct through empowering mission leaders, encouraging sharp and truthful reporting and minimising risk-aversion. In addition, the Security Council and UN Headquarters need to ensure the adoption of clear and realistic strategic outcomes as well as sustained political support for operations, through e.g. the active involvement of concerned troop, police, and resource contributing Member States.

Safety and support of peace operations personnel



The men and women serving in international peace operations are the most important asset of a mission and they need to be supported and taken care of in a professional, responsible and sustainable manner. We reemphasise the priority to **ensure the safety and security of all peace operations personnel**, in line with modern duty of care standards, including mental health and self-sustaining logistical support. All peace operations personnel need to be adequately prepared and trained for their assignments in order to **ensure the required individual and operational performance**. It is equally important to make sure that peace operations personnel are provided with **good terms and conditions during their assignments and after their return home**, and that they are met with well-deserved recognition for their service.

Evolving regional peace operations



International peace efforts are most effective when the **strengths and complementarities of both the international and regional levels are fully combined and leveraged**. The regionalisation of peace operations has evolved over more than two decades, and we must continue to strengthen and fine-tune the close relationships between the UN and its key regional partners. Civil societies and non-governmental actors also have important roles to play. The overall strategic peace operations objectives can only be achieved together. In addition to the realisation of adequate and sustainable financing for AU-led peace support operations, **a long-term goal should be to ensure that similar regional mechanisms can be made available also for other continents and regions, as a universal peace and security tool in the spirit of the UN Charter**.

Towards the Summit of the Future and beyond

The proposal to request the UN Secretary-General to undertake a **review on the future of all forms of UN peace operations** is strongly supported by the Challenges Forum partnership. The review should aim to be inclusive, innovative and anchored in both positive and challenging experiences, factoring in the evolving global context with a rapid technological development and climate-



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related security risks. The ultimate objective should be an agile, strengthened and upgraded peace operations toolbox. At a crucial but promising time for peace operations, following the Summit of the Future and ahead of the 2025 Peacekeeping Ministerial, the **Challenges Annual Forum** will take place in **Berlin on 3-4 December 2024**, with the threefold purpose of 1) contributing to the discussions and reviews on the future of peace operations, 2) deepening the exchange of ideas and experiences and aligning partners and key stakeholders, and 3) supporting the implementation of the Pact for the Future.

The 76 year-long history of international peace operations reminds us that international conflict and crisis management is difficult, risky, costly and unpredictable, without shortcuts to restoring peace, nor guarantees for success. However, international conflict management should not be deterred by setbacks and failures, but instead bounce back, learn, adapt, aim to do better, and remain determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. We sincerely wish the UN family of Member States, and in particular the penholders Germany and Namibia, the best of luck in providing the international community with a Pact for the Future with the potential to pave the way for a more peaceful, prosperous and partnership-oriented future, in which UN peace operations will continue to be a versatile, proven and irreplaceable instrument.

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