



# RECKONING THE PERFORMANCE OF UNITED NATIONS PEACE OPERATIONS: AN EXPLORATION

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**Abstract:** The concept of United Nations (UN) peace operations evolved as an important instrument to respond to conflicts and civil wars in troubled parts of the world. Many of the peace operations launched over seven decades of its existence has been successful in limiting violence and saving millions of lives. But few of them brought catastrophic consequences and some are dragging on for decades with no end in sight. The principal aim of this study is to analyse performance of UN peace operations with special focus on likely causes of the lapses, and in the light of such lapses, to explore ways to enhance its effectiveness. The major research methods included secondary literature review, documentary research, key informant interviews, and personal observation. Some of the lapses identified in the study are divided consent from lack of comprehensive peace agreement and military centric focus to address root cause of the conflicts. The research argues that there is a need to revisit essential aspects of the peace operations and restrict itself within traditional principles and roles. The research offers some important shifts and practical measures to enhance effectiveness. Main suggestions are fundamental fixes including enhancing training and capacity boosts of UN peacekeepers so that past lapses are not repeated.

**Keywords:** *United Nations Peace Operations; Achievements; Lapses*

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## INTRODUCTION

UN peace operations emerged as the doctrine of necessity, designed to restore order amid wave of intrastate and interstate conflicts in the backdrop of World War II. As the European and other colonial powers hurriedly left their colonies in Africa and Asia following the war, many newly independent countries emerged (Jett, 2019). These newly emerged nations soon involved in wars between rival factions leading to enormous loss of human lives and sufferings. These countries

and communities needed international engagement short of military interventions to stop fighting and for humanitarian relief. The UN, right after its inception with high hopes, had to act to resolve these conflicts. Peace operations offered an innovative and legitimate option to try a new way of intervention. During the Cold war era, peace operations remained mostly within the domain of traditional monitoring and observation roles and later shifted to multi-dimensional missions. Peace operations consequently evolved as a pragmatic multilateral instrument to respond to conflicts and civil wars in many parts of the world. For the same cause, peace operations became more essential, more desired over other forms of international intervention.

In order to succeed, UN peace operations have to be deployed in support of functional political processes. The same is evident from the impasse in all UN missions that are around for long. Peace operations are best understood through the application of many theories as well as the mandates, roles, and purpose for which the peace operations missions are authorised (*Badmus & Jenkins, 2019*). Scholars favour the 'liberal peace theory' in understanding peace operations due to its allegiance with the post-Westphalian model. Linking liberal peace theory to peace operations, scholars assume that the mounting of peace missions is to serve the interests of liberal democracies by promoting the principles of liberal peace. Experts also observe that the 'Liberal Peace theory' captures the liberal theoretical tradition that motivated the member States to contribute to UN peace operations (*Badmus & Jenkins, 2019*). However, the emerging nature of conflict demanded peace operations to shoulder more and more complex tasks, beyond the security role it habitually performed. The UN and more specifically the peacekeepers' ability to perform those responsibilities at times failed to keep pace, for reasons beyond their power.

Over the last decade, as with the fast-changing nature of conflicts, peace operations had to undertake a 'robust' shift to adapt and to meet the expectations and realities (*Hunt, 2017*). There has been a stark contrast between many of the peace operations interventions as some operations made the UN and international communities gratified. Whereas some operations as in Somalia, relapsed into unimaginable turmoil, and there were genocides on multiple occasions, where the UN have been blamed to have been a bystander (*Bryant, 2015*). The strength and capacity of the peacekeepers vis-à-vis the task and the precarious operational environment has been a mismatch due to financial and operational constraints. More often the UN had to deploy a scanty force amidst challenging environments. A study of accomplishment and disappointments are as such essential to prevent recurring the lapses in any such future endeavour. This study makes a retrospection of UN peace operations and analyses its success and disappointments in dealing with diverse conflicts around the globe.

The paper starts with a brief history of evolution of UN peace operations and then in the second section highlights notable achievements by UN peace operations. Thereafter, in the following sections a quick analysis of lapses by some

of the peace operations, impacts of lack of comprehensive agreements, case of misconduct and related issues are highlighted. Finally, the paper makes an attempt to suggest path to success in UN peace operations.

## **THE RATIONALE, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

The study is significant for several reasons: (i) there has been shifts in fundamental principles and role of peacekeepers as well as declining focus on lasting political solutions, (ii) the role and contribution of UN peacekeepers are now clearly recognised, as such any effort to enhance further effectiveness of peace operations is worthwhile, (iii) the study would suggest a set of specific steps to fulfil the commitment in preparing the peacekeepers and to make positive contributions to peace and stability amongst troubled communities. The primary aim of this research is two folds. Firstly, to identify the limits and inadequacies of UN peace operations in managing present-day conflicts and in light of such inadequacies, secondly, to suggest ways that can enable UN peace operations to achieve the assigned mandate. The study also explored measures to enhance effectiveness of UN peace operations.

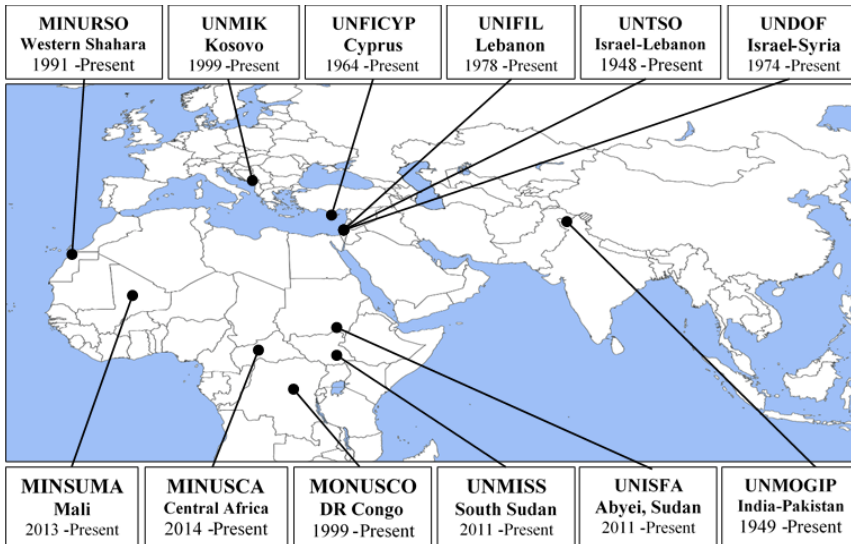
The subject has been explored by applying a mixed method, combining both qualitative analysis and quantitative responses from a field survey amongst practitioners. The study attempted to identify the inadequacies of present-day UN peace operations. In the process of reckoning the lapses, related predicament, and the implications of such limitations have also been analysed. The major research tools included secondary literature review, documentary research, key informant interviews, and personal observation. A comprehensive analysis of literatures including a study of related official documents namely Security Council resolutions and reports, DPO policies and guidelines, training materials including national polices and directives in the conduct of training and preparedness of peacekeepers were carried out. A Good number of key informant interviews were conducted targeting a range of policy makers and experienced peacekeepers that included UN Force, Sector and Contingent commanders, Subject Mater Experts at national peacekeeping training institutes as well as headquarters staffs managing peace operations. The first named author's close personal experience gained during his involvement in couple of UN peace operations, as UN Military Observer, staff officer at the headquarters and long instructional experience at national peace training institute, also informed the observations and analyses presented in this article. The research findings indicate the need for structural fixes and capacity enhancements corresponding to realities in the field. The research recommends fundamental fixes and addressing capacity voids by equipping UN peacekeepers with matching outfit to deal with growing challenges.

## **EVOLUTION OF UN PEACE OPERATIONS**

UN peace operations have evolved as one of the most effective multilateral tools available to international community to help prevent the conflict and pave the way to sustainable peace. The UN General Assembly Resolution 50 (1948) authorised the first ever peacekeeping operations - the UN Truce Supervision Organization, in short, the UNTSO on May 29, 1948 (*UNTSO, 2020*). The resolution called for the end of hostilities between Israel and its Arab neighbours. May 29<sup>th</sup> is thus celebrated as the 'International Day of UN Peacekeepers'. This traditional observer mission has been through upheaval in the Middle East following the Arab-Israel wars of 1956, 1967 and 1973. As a first-ever peacekeeping operation, UNTSO was set up with high expectations to make peace between Israelis and the Arabs. Many in the UN visualized and shared such high hopes since 1948. UNTSO remained busy since inception and has been operating endlessly in the absence of a productive solution to the conflicts between state of Israel and its Arab neighbourhood (*Jett, 2019*). The mission continues to function till date. After UNTSO, the second peace operations, 'UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP)' was authorised on January 24, 1949 by the UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 39 (1948) and 47 (1948) (*United Nations, 2020*). The mandate of this traditional operation is to supervise India-Pakistan peace agreement in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Since the beginning, both Indian and Pakistani military authorities have continued to lodge complaints with the mission for routine ceasefire violations that continue even today. Indian military authorities have restricted the activities of the observers on their side of the Line of Control since long. Yet, the operation continued for over 70 years amid the hotspots of two South Asian nuclear powers. Experts feel that maintaining the status-quo till date can be taken as success of this operation. Critics on the other hand point out that the prevalent status-quo refrained international bodies to seriously engage in the issue and to explore prospects for lasting solution to the Indo-Pak crisis.

UN Emergency Force (UNEF) is the first-ever peacekeeping force deployed amid Suez Canal crisis between Egypt and Israel in 1956. The 1956 crisis started when Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal and the European powers namely Britain and France attempted to intervene. To address the matter, the idea of a peacekeeping force wearing Blue Helmets for identification was proposed during a meeting at the UN on November 4, 1956, by Lester B. Pearson, a Canadian diplomat and later Prime Minister of Canada (*The Canadian Encyclopaedia, 2017*). Pearson had initially proposed Canadian soldiers only, but the Egyptians were suspicious of the concept. Eventually, Mr Pearson came up with the view that the UN peacekeeping force would be constituted from a diverse origin of national forces. This was the first UN led military contingents apart from Military Observers deployed in UNTSO and the concept of peacekeeping force was born. Pearson was later awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for this work. He is also considered as father of the UN peacekeeping operations. UNEF has been a vivid

example of the importance of UN peace operations forces and their limitations. The UNEF accomplished great success and was able to maintain peace in one of the most complex areas of the Middle East (Jett, 2019).



**Legend:**

1. MINURSO - UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
2. MINUSCA - UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR
3. MINUSMA - UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
4. MONUSCO - UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC
5. UNDOF - UN Disengagement Observer Force
6. UNFICYP - UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
7. UNIFIL - UN Interim Force in Lebanon
8. UNMIK - UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
9. UNMISS - United Nations Mission in South Sudan
10. UNISFA- United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (Sudan)
11. UNTSO - UN Truce Supervision Organization is an organization
12. UNMOGIP - United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan

*Figure 1. Ongoing UN Peace Operations (Based on UN Peacekeeping, 2021)*

The Charter of the UN makes no mentions of the peacekeeping or peace operations as the founding members did not foresee any need for such ventures in the post-World War scenario. As such, modern-day peace operations approach is different from the UN roles as envisioned in the UN Charter of 1945 (Badmus & Jenkins, 2019). However, the concept emerged with the setting up of the UNTSO in 1948 making the model as old as the UN itself (United Nations, 2000). Till date, a total of 71 peace operations have been deployed by the UNSC. Peace operations witnessed a dormant episode and a period of surge with the geo-

political setting and superpower rivalry for last seven decades. Since inception, it transformed from the observations and monitoring of cessation of hostilities and the disengagement of forces in an interstate conflict to full-scale military model. Thereafter, to incorporate multi-dimensional operations involving troop, police and civilian, working together to stabilise and build a war-torn country. There have been enormous shifts since the first peace operation which was set up in 1948 to a full-scale 'peace enforcement' as peacekeepers are now facing international armed groups using terrorists' tactics as the case in Mali and the Central African Republic (CAR).

Present-day conflicts are mostly intrastate and typically occurring within a state that is collapsing or one that has totally failed (*Baker & Weller, 1998*). Amid such setting of poverty and lawlessness, the criminality and gang cultures are widespread. Home-grown and international non-State actors will surely step in the scenario with new methods of terrorism that further complicate the situation. Experts observe that uneven economic development has been the root cause of violence in the contemporary world. Other causes of intrastate conflicts have been the demographic pressures resulting from migration, as it increases population density, and cause environmental degradation, disease and food shortages (*Baker & Weller, 1998*). Failure to resolve this crisis contributes to fears of ethnic reprisals, renewed bloodshed and continuing turmoil throughout the region and even spilling over the continent and beyond. Bringing socio-political stability in such setting has always been the most challenging task the peacekeepers are assigned to address.

Intrastate conflicts are usually extremely difficult to resolve and easy to reappear, due to deep divisions in political, ethnic, religious, and economic groupings. Moreover, continuously evolving threats with new tactics and techniques transformed in scale and scope of today's peace operations. Internationalization of local war as transnational illicit group joining the factions has been another impediment. Moreover, warlords and factions are interconnected with organised crimes and international terrorism network. The economic downturn from COVID-19 pandemic may further complicate the situation and act as a catalyst for more decline. Victims of these new warfare has been predominantly the civilians, not the combatants. This necessitates a response across the full spectrum of political, economic, social, development, military, humanitarian, etc. (*Baker & Weller, 1998*).

## **NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS**

Since the modest start in 1948, the UN has been successful in resolving conflicts conducting effective peace operations in dozens of countries. Undeniably, UN peace operations have been successful in prevention of large-scale violence, ending some of the most horrific conflicts, enhanced civilian protection and security of female children in many troubled counties and communities (*Coning, 2019*). Three



significant UN undertakings studied by ‘Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network (EPON)’, an independent expert body that studies peace operations, rated the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the MONUSCO, and MINUSMA. EPON observes that these missions have made significant contributions to preventing major civil wars and large-scale conflict (Coning, 2019). Analysis of MONUSCO, MINUSMA, UNMISS, and AMISOM suggests that peacekeepers might not have been able to bring about an end to violent conflict, but its work in areas such as child protection, human rights, and sexual violence are commendable. Other peace operations, such as in Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Timor Leste, etc. have been able to wrap up after successfully implementing mandates assigned by the UN Security Council. In sub-Saharan Africa, a range of conflict resolution, good offices, and local peace initiatives have made a notable contribution to preventing violent conflict and reducing risks to civilian lives and livelihood (Coning, 2019). Experts also rate peacekeepers’ effort to promote the Women, Peace, and Security agenda to have made some degree of progress.

Peace operations in Cambodia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mozambique, Namibia, Tajikistan, and Liberia are considered to have been successful in saving lives, bringing security and political stability (UN Peacekeeping, 2020). Researchers consider the complex multi-dimensional operations in the 21st century in countries like Sierra Leone, Burundi, Ivory Coast, Timor-Leste, Liberia, Haiti, and Kosovo as peace operations triumph. The UN, in these recent peace operations, have been able to stabilize precarious security situation, supported humanitarian relief and helped conduct successful elections, enabling peaceful transitions. Moreover, one of the UN’s most complex and successful interventions in peacekeeping and peace-making efforts in Central America in 1989, the UN Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) has been a huge success (Department of Public Information, 2003). The UN assistance to the collective agreement steered a new nonviolent era in Central American countries of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua have been widely admired as a success.

The UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) has been acknowledged as an enormous accomplishment of UN peace operations. UNTAC was successful in organizing nationwide free elections that established a new government following the vacuum left by the Khmer Rouge regime. The UN role and accomplishments in Haiti has been a notable success, where the UN had to setup numerous overlapping and concurrent peace operations since 1993 (Jacobson, 2012). Experts also grade the UN Emergency Force II (UNEF II) as a success as it could maintain peace along the most volatile border between Egypt and Israel. The mission in Liberia was an accomplishment for the UN that started in September 2003 and ended with much sought about stability in the country in 2018. The UNOCI in Ivory Coast has also been viewed as an achievement given the fact that multiple peaceful transition of power occurred between elected administrations through UN electoral assistance.

## RELATIVE LAPSES

The report by the panel led by Mr Lakhdar Brahimi (Brahimi Report) observed that the UN failures to distinguish victim from aggressor damaged the stature and credibility of UN peace endeavour in the 1990s (*United Nations, 2000*). Following the catastrophe and deaths of thousands in Somalia, the 'UN Commission of Inquiry' investigating peacekeeping debacle determined that the UN should avoid deploying peacekeepers for the peace enforcement actions to deal with internal conflicts (*Williams, 2015*). The high-level panel headed by Mr Hose Ramos Horta urged to focus more on political solution rather than military outcome of the conflicts (*High Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, 2015*). Experts observe military centric focus in dealing with situations in most peace operations and views that emphasise on defeating armed elements militarily may not help bring lasting peace. The root cause of the conflict is political and finding a lasting solution acceptable to all the stakeholders will continue to remain a challenge in the days ahead. Some of the peace operations' lapses and concerns are discussed subsequently.

**Rwandan Genocide:** The unforgiveable mass murder of Hutus in Rwanda cast a dark shadow on the peace operations achievements. The escalating tensions between parties in the conflict, in Rwanda was ignored by the UN Canadian Force Commander and other UN representatives (*Winfield, 1999*). Various reports confirm that peacekeepers failed to assimilate the severity of the viciousness and thereby failed to stop the violence that resulted killing of about 800,000 Hutus including Tutsi and sympathetic Hutus in just 100 days in 1994 (*BBC, 2014*). The UN leadership in Rwanda and in New York had ignored signs that the genocide was in the making. A Belgian contingent of UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) is blamed to abandon thousands of people at a school, who sought refuge at the vicinity of peacekeepers camp. Instead of saving lives, the peacekeepers were asked to vacate the position to escort visitors to the airport (*McGreal, 2015*). About 2,000 Rwandan citizens at the school were murdered within hours the soldiers left, using guns, grenades, and blades. Researchers view the episode with UN peacekeeping Rwanda as not an isolated one. In the following year, UN peacekeepers from the Netherlands failed to stop the carnage of eight thousand Muslims in Srebrenica, Bosnia at a UN Safe Area. It was the most infamous mass slaughter by the Serbs in Bosnia. (*McGreal, 2015*) These episodes bear the evidence of terrible catastrophes at a time when UN had vast growth in peace operation during the post-Cold War surge.

**Srebrenica Massacre:** In Bosnia Herzegovina, the UN peacekeepers were deployed at posts to protect civilians in several 'Safe Areas' around Srebrenica in 1995. The forces were mandated by the Security Council to deter attacks and use forces in the defence of the mandate. Most Bosnian citizens deposited their guns as pledged in the agreement and were unarmed in July 1995. Serb forces took advantage of the situation and brutally killed about eight thousand Muslims men and teens within two weeks (*BBC, 2020*). Studies identify it as the worst mass



slaughter on mainland Europe after World War II. Moreover, in early July 1995, the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) peacekeepers from the Netherlands declined to return their guns back to the Bosnian Muslim communities even after they were facing attacks by the Bosnia Serb Army (*New York Times, 1995*). Commander of the Dutch contingent cited to have thought that the Bosnian citizens were unable to defend Srebrenica. The peacekeepers also assumed that they would not be effective to protect the civilians either. As such, UNPROFOR forces refrained to take steps to counter the Serb militia by not firing a single shot and vacated their posts. Eventually, the horrific slaughter of Muslim men and boys, and women and children took place in Bosnia unabated. The massacre of innocent civilians occurred within the so called 'safe areas' declared by UN peacekeepers. Mr Kofi Annan later commented that, "The tragedy of Srebrenica will forever haunt the history of the UN" (*BBC, 2020*).

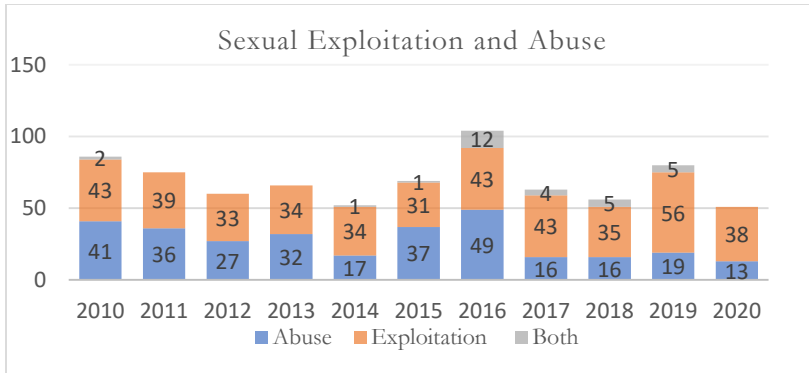
**Failure in Somalia:** In Somalia, the UN peace operations failed miserably, resulting first in the tragic deaths of 25 Pakistani soldiers. The incident followed the death of eighteen U.S. soldiers. In that, horrific images of mutilated soldiers dragged on the Mogadishu streets shocked the world (*Gittleman, 2007*). Mandates in UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) mission were unrealistic, especially given the operating environment resulting from lack of consent for the peace operations. Though the mission had huge authorisation of personnel strength, but it lacked military enablers and specialized capabilities (*Williams, 2015*). Another gross miscalculation has been the employment of the lightly armed peacekeepers to conduct large-scale enforcement actions. Ambitious venture to disarm the unwilling factions, and later to capture General Mohammad Aidid, have been the most unrealistic expectation on the part of UNOSOM II. Consequently, the UN acknowledged that the organization was not yet capable of launching a large-scale enforcement action. The crisis in Somalia has been political and addressing the root cause required different approach. Whereas the operation focused on humanitarian aid during the conflict without resolving the dispute. Failure of the two operations in Somalia resulted hasty withdrawal of the peacekeepers in 1995 and the crisis remained unresolved till date. The crisis in Somalia further escalated thereafter that continue to trouble the people in Somalia and the region.

**Lack of Comprehensive Peace Agreement:** Experts feel that since 1990, most peace operations have been deployed where the conflict is unfinished and without any comprehensive agreement between the parties. Particularly, UNTSO, the first UN peacekeeping mission that began in May 1948 and continue even today and none is aware of its culmination. Six of the ongoing thirteen peace operations in 2021, are traditional peace operations and three of them are in and around Israel. All UN traditional peace operations lacked any exit strategy. The same was observed by the Brahimi Report. The report also notes that the classical monitoring and observation missions were mostly ineffective as it deals the symptoms rather than the origin of the hostilities. Besides, the UNTSO in Jerusalem, the UNDOF in Syria, UNMOGIP in Indo-Pak border and the

UNIFIL in Lebanon continue to linger on today (Jett, 2019). Main reasons these peace operations dragging on endlessly is the lack of common ground between the belligerents' claims. In most cases, the stand-off is more preferred over righteous solutions. The status quo in UNMOGIP, the second oldest operations also facing endless deadlock as both countries have shown no desire to settle their conflicting claims as such continuation of mission suits both the parties.

**Political Standoff:** As discussed previously, half of the ongoing peace operations have been toiling around as there are no sincere steps to address the issue and find a lasting political solution (Jett, 2019). The same has been the case for UNIFIL in Lebanon, UNFICYP in Cyprus and UNMOGIP in India-Pakistan. All the traditional peace operations currently underway including the MINURSO in Western Sahara are seemingly endless as UN could not find a meaningful political outcome. The case in Western Sahara is all about arranging a credible referendum of the Sahrawi inhabitants in addition to other mandated task to oversee the security situation, that does not suit Morocco as it declines to hold the referendum without being sure of the favourable outcome (Theofilopoulou, 2015). Morocco's approach has been the same since the initiation of MINURSO mission. The same has been the case for UNIFIL in Lebanon, UNFICYP in Cyprus and UNMOGIP in India-Pakistan. As observed in the recent peace operations in Sub-Saharan Africa, political process without encompassing all parties involved can also lead to more disorder rather than resolution of the root cause of the conflict.

**Allegations of Misconduct:** Sexual exploitation and abuse prevail in all operations despite vigilance and enactment of abundant stricter policy measures on all related issues by the UN. Unfortunately, whom civilians' believed to have been sent to protect them, are also accused of exploiting their women and girls causing serious embarrassment (Jacobson, 2012). As a matter of principle, the UN maintains a 'Zero Tolerance' policy at its headquarters and in all field missions. However, implementation is at times stalled due to the absence of accurate and timely reporting of data and by enforcement responsibility dedicated to the troop and police contributing states (Jessica Anania, 2020). Studies indicate that in February 2020 there has been 43% rise in allegations compared to 2018-19 (Figure 2). The report by the high-level panel headed by Mr Hose Ramos Horta, said that the UN troop scandals were the worst thing that can happen to the UN, which will take enormous efforts to overcome this dark chapter (The United Nations, 2015). Shockingly, a third of sexual abuse allegations against UN personnel involved children and teenagers under eighteen (United Nations News Centre, 2015). In a report to General Assembly the UN Secretary General mentioned that most (74%) of the abuse occurred with missions in DRC and CAR in 2018. Whereas, rest 36% was reported from missions in Haiti and South Sudan (UN Secretary General, 2020). Secretary General Guterres has assured that he has launched numerous steps and reforms to expediate legal process by appointing a victims' advocate to help the sufferers (Lederer, 2020).



**Figure 2.** *Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Peace Operations: 2010 – 2020 (Based on Conduct in the UN Missions, 2021)*

**Haitian Cholera Deaths:** An outbreak of cholera in Haiti in 2011 killed over 10,000 people that created a serious embarrassment for UN Peacekeepers. Genomic investigations of the Haitian cholera bacteria showed that a Nepali peacekeepers camp were responsible for introducing the bacteria through a flawed sanitation system that emptied sewage into the river. High-level denial of any involvement or responsibility of the Nepali contingent in the incident has been another UN setback in the recent past (*Katz, 2016*). The UN refused to acknowledge responsibility fearing the huge backlash on legal and moral impact on peace operations. Therefore, it relentlessly pursued to be indicated in the case at the U.S. Lawsuit to avoid being implicated for payment (*Jett, 2019*).

**Other Issues:** African conflicts in general are fuelled by the access of precious metal that can draw external actors to interfere and protract the fighting (*Ian Bannon, 2003*). The issue at times is not addressed in the mandates of most ongoing peace operations, which has been a cause for concern. Armed group’s ability to make fortunes are likely to be threatened by an end to exploitation of vital natural and mineral resources. Moreover, there have been international involvement in the intrastate conflicts with diverse interests coming into play. Lack of physical presence of peacekeepers from the Western nations has been obvious that hampers political commitments and needs to end sooner.

## PATH TO SUCCESS

There are numerous studies and varied opinions suggesting how present-day peace operations may succeed in resolving conflicts and saving lives and livelihood of millions of innocent civilians caught up in the conflict. Though hard to achieve, but experts widely suggest that a comprehensive peace agreement is an essential precondition for success of any peace operation. As outlined in the first of the three fundamental principles, the ‘Consent’ of all the parties is vital

starting point for any peace operation. Besides Consent, peace operations must stick to the tested principles and remain within the essence of the other principles of 'Impartiality' and 'Non-use of force except in self-defence or defence of the mandate'. However, the challenge is to engage with armed groups with record of brutalities and grave human rights violations. The high-level panel headed by Mr Hose Ramos Horta also recommended to focus more on political solution rather than military outcome of the conflicts. Experts observe military centric focus in dealing with situations in most peace operations and views that emphasise on defeating armed elements militarily may not help bring lasting peace. The root cause of the conflict is political and need a lasting political solution to resolve the conflict. Renewed focus is also required on peace-building effort involving populations so that local ownership is felt by the communities.

Being organised and armed not to conduct distinctive military operations, the peacekeepers are no way capable to decisively engage in combat and win in the long term. For the same reason peacekeeping forces are not competent to undertake counterinsurgency like operations against rebels or peace-enforcements roles as observed in the long-drawn conflicts. Peacekeeping forces are traditionally called in following a peaceful negotiation or as a sequel of agreement following peace-enforcement actions sponsored by the UN Security Council (UNSC) and by forces of any regional power or an alliance. There are many such successful models where the regional forces fought their way in an ongoing conflict leading to a truce amongst parties and then handover peacekeeping roles to UNSC authorised force to implement the peace agreement. The same model has been successful for decades, whereas peacekeeping forces switching gears to undertake peace-enforcement in the absence of peace or collapse of truce has not been working well. Experts thus recommend leaving the peace-enforcement roles to regional power or an alliance to intervene in the conflict in the absence of peace and peacekeepers operate fully within the boundaries of the principles and mandates of peacekeeping. Such setting in West Africa and in the Balkans, where French, ECOWAS or NATO forces executing peace-enforcement have been effective in the recent past. Involvement of regional powers in some form of operational relationship with peacekeeping mission is essential and such operational relationship need to be authorised by the UNSC.

Numerous UN internal reports points on the compromise of desired standard of the peacekeeping troops and contingents from member states. Lack of required training to deal with diverse threats from armed group using suicide tactics and Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) continue to hinder performance of peacekeepers. The UN and member states need to deploy well-trained and duly verified contingents to operate not only to perform mandate effectively but also to ensure own protection. 'Chapter VI' syndrome resulting defensive posture, abandonment of initiative, hindrance to freedom of movement, and slow response to hostile actors results from inadequate training and preparation. IED threat mitigation capacity in CAR and Mali needs to be addressed by suitably

quipping the contingents. UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO) and the contributing countries also need to address inappropriate and inadequate equipment to the threat environment, terrain and weather including associated logistical backup. Random downsizing mainly due to financial constraints resulted overstretched deployment that compelled contingents to dedicate maximum operational capacity for escort and self-protection. This has seriously reduced Infantry contingent's capability to respond timely to ensure protection of civilians. Moreover, while authorising mandates, the UNSC need to focus on allocating appropriate resources in terms of strength, mobility, and protection equipment so that the task is realistic and achievable. Moral and ethical issues relating to sexual exploitation and abuse remain a challenge despite 'zero tolerance' at all levels. In addition to measures already in place, more vigilance and speedy disposal of disciplinary actions may help improve the situations.

## **CONCLUSION**

UN peace operations have accomplished enormous responsibility in saving human life and sufferings in the most remote communities and helped nations to exit cycles of violence. The triumph over seven decade's active presence and being bestowed with the 'Nobel Peace Prize for Peace' is an incredible achievement for UN and the contributing nations. Despite criticism, for grave failures mostly during the expansion phase post-Cold War setting, peace operations served as the most pragmatic method to deal complex emergencies emerging from conflicts and calamities. Given the complexity of the precarious political setting and involvement of international armed groups adopting means of terrorism, the hurdles for peacekeepers will continue to grow in the days to come. The quality of troops and contingents has been an old issue affecting the performance of peace operations. The DPO needs to enhance measures to ensure its best practices in terms of policies, guidelines and oversight on conduct and discipline. Experimenting with peace enforcement roles by peacekeepers are against the fundamental principles that the peace operations came into being, needs a rethinking. The UN also need to balance the resources against attainable mission mandate to make the peace operations effective.

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