

# PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE SOLDIERS WHO PROTECT

Ghana and India in United Nations peacekeeping

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## Abbreviations

<b>COIN</b>	Counterinsurgency
<b>DDR</b>	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
<b>DPKO</b>	UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>GAF</b>	Ghana Armed Forces
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>MILOB</b>	Military Observer
<b>MINUSMA</b>	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
<b>POC</b>	Protection of Civilians
<b>PSO</b>	Peace Support Operations
<b>TCC</b>	Troop Contributing Countries
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNAMID</b>	United Nations-African Union Hybrid Mission in Darfur
<b>UNAMIR</b>	UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda
<b>UNAMSIL</b>	UN Mission in Sierra Leone
<b>UNIFIL</b>	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
<b>UNMISS</b>	UN Mission in South Sudan



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today the United Nations (UN) is deploying peace-support operations in increasingly violent contexts, leaving it suspended between traditional peacekeeping and peace enforcement. Peacekeeping revolves around three fundamental principles: consent of the host nation, impartiality towards the conflicting parties and the non-use of force, except in self-defence. Limited resources, political hesitation and technical incapacity have hampered the UN's ability to move robustly beyond these principles, while being mandated by the Security Council to respond to state collapse and violent conflict (as in Mali and the Central African Republic). The gap between resources and expectations accentuates this tension in current peacekeeping operations.

More extensive and complex mission mandates were introduced in response to a perception that intrastate conflicts were on the rise in the post-Cold War era and that this constituted an increasing threat to individuals. Also, the UN, among others, failed to prevent atrocities against humans during the 1990s. Together with a greater focus on a UN role in enforcing and building peace, rather than just keeping it, this resulted in an emphasis on the protection of civilians in conflict. Protection of civilians is now integral to robust UN-led peace support operations such as those in Mali and the Central African Republic. It is a response to atrocity crimes, as well as to threats posed by, for example, targeting civilians in war, sexual exploitation and abuse, and the deliberate blocking of urgent humanitarian aid.

This report explores how India and Ghana, two of the main countries contributing troops to UN missions, define, approach and experience in-mission protection of civilians. What do they consider its key components to be? What do they think is required to protect well? And what combat experiences do they draw on in


implementing the protection of civilians when they deploy? The report concludes that how the protection of civilians is conceived and approached in the UN's peace-support operations reflects the combat experience of troop-contributing countries. Peace-support operations are constituted by a range of armies that differ in size, combat experience, levels of funding, etc. Different historical trajectories, technical capabilities and political motivations in respect of peace-support operations shape their views on the tasks allocated to them by the UN Security Council, as well as their ability and willingness to carry them out.

In order to grasp the multiple practices, perceptions and discourses that shape peacekeeping, including the protection of civilians, this report suggests that we must understand how differences are played out across missions when they deploy and how they may fragment them. One way of doing this is to explore how troop-contributing countries understand and respond to their roles while thus deployed.

A close-up photograph of several United Nations (UN) peacekeepers. They are wearing blue helmets with the UN logo and the letters 'UN' printed on them. The focus is on a peacekeeper in the foreground, looking slightly to the left. The background shows other peacekeepers, some out of focus. A green horizontal bar is overlaid on the image, containing the text 'INTRODUCTION' in white capital letters.

## INTRODUCTION

When the Cold War ended, UN peacekeeping was confronted with a dilemma that continues to challenge the global organisation's execution of peace-support operations (PSOs) to this day. In the early 1990s, as peacekeepers began deploying in the Balkans, John Ruggie pointed out that the UN was entering 'a vaguely defined no-man's-land lying somewhere between traditional peacekeeping and enforcement – for which it lacks any guiding operational concept' (1993: 26). The genocides in Rwanda (1994) and Bosnia-Herzegovina (1995) proved that in practice peacekeepers, being small in numbers and with limited military capability, were unable to produce results on the ground that could enforce political settlements and thus protect civilians under threat.




**The UN has found itself caught between what have proved to be irreconcilable categories of intervention: traditional peacekeeping, and peace enforcement.**

In response to these challenges, the UN has found itself caught between what have proved to be irreconcilable categories of intervention: traditional peacekeeping, and peace enforcement. The former revolves around the three founding principles of peacekeeping: consent of the host nation, impartiality towards the conflicting parties and the non-use of force, except in self-defence (Kenkel 2013:162; Bellamy and Griffin 2010:173-174). Limited resources, political hesitation and technical incapacity have hampered the UN's ability to move explicitly beyond these principles while being mandated by the UN Security Council to respond to increasingly violent and asymmetrical conflicts. The gap between resources and expectations has accentuated the inherent tensions in contemporary peacekeeping. Initially, therefore, to avoid militarizing peacekeeping head-on, a conflict transformation approach was pursued, involving a civilian lead for, inter alia, the 'organisation of elections [...] human rights promotion, refugee assistance, and government capacity-building' (Kenkel 2013: 129).

The expansion and greater complexity of mission mandates responded to the perception that intrastate conflicts were on the rise in the post-Cold War era and constituted an increasing threat to individuals (Hultman 2012: 61). Together with an increasing focus on the UN's role in enforcing the peace rather than just keeping it, this resulted in an 'explosion of norm-building regarding protection of civilians threatened by conflict' (MacFarlane and Khong 2006: 165). Incorporating a mandate to protect civilians for the first time in 1999 during the peacekeeping mission to

Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was therefore a response to the failure to prevent atrocities against humans during the 1990s – a tendency that partially came to define the decade. The policy of protection of civilians (POC), which has subsequently become integral to more robust peacekeeping missions, is a response not only to atrocities, but also to the less extreme threats posed by the targeting of civilians in war, such as sexual exploitation and abuse, forced displacement, the use of starvation as a weapon and the deliberate blocking of urgent humanitarian aid. (United Nations 2000).

In this report, we wish to shift the analytical focus on POC away from debates that emphasise the inability of UN peacekeeping missions to perform this task in increasingly violent conflicts (Karlsrud 2015; Berdal and Ucko 2015; Hunt 2017; Albrecht et al. 2017). We do this by exploring how two of the main troop-contributing countries (TCCs) to UN peacekeeping, India and Ghana, define, approach and experience the POC role. What do they consider the key components of POC to be? What do they think is required to do it well? And what experiences do they draw on in performing this role when they deploy as peacekeepers?



**PSOs are undertaken by a multiplicity of militaries with widely different historical trajectories, technical capabilities and political motivations for engaging.**

In our investigation of these questions, we argue that the way in which POC is conceived and approached in PSOs reflects TCCs' different combat experiences. PSOs are undertaken by a multiplicity of militaries with widely different historical trajectories, technical capabilities and political motivations for engaging in PSOs that shape their views on the tasks they are allocated by the UN Security Council, as well as their ability and willingness to carry them out. **On the one hand**, exploring how individual TCCs define and seek to deliver on their POC responsibilities suggests that to grasp what shapes peacekeeping fully, we must understand how differences are played out across missions when they deploy and how they may fragment them. One way of elaborating on this perspective is to explore how TCCs understand and respond to their roles when they deploy. Certainly, we cannot simply assume, as much analysis does, that PSOs are deeply political, and then still approach them as de facto coherent units of analysis (Albrecht 2015; Albrecht and Cold-Ravnkilde 2020; Albrecht and Haenlein 2016; Balas 2011; Brosig 2015; Weiss and Welz 2014).

**On the other hand**, exploring peacekeeping from the perspective of TCCs differs from the main body of the literature of peacekeeping and PSOs, which tends to focus on the effects of missions on the countries that host them and on the reasons why countries make such contributions in the first place. The complexities and challenges of peacekeeping relating to the operational effectiveness of missions, relations between military and civilian components and the difficulties in attracting enough troops are well-known (Adebajo 2011; Doyle and Sambanis 2010; Benson and Kathman 2014). Furthermore, significant efforts have been made to uncover how national interests are played out in PSOs (Albrecht and Cold-Ravnkilde 2020; Bove and Elia 2011; Stojek and Tir 2015) and how they drive TCCs to deploy troops in the first place (Cunliffe 2013; Lebovic 2004; Albrecht and Haenlein 2015). In the following, we shift the focus to the micro-level of how troops, soldiers and commanding officers from Ghana and India define and approach POC in practice, showing how they draw on their experiences of internal security operations.

The report first outlines some methodological reflections on how primary and secondary data were collected for the study. Second, it analyses the position of civilians in contemporary conflicts and the evolving approaches to the protection of the civilian individual in PSOs. This discussion is followed by a presentation of the types of countries, primarily from the global South, that are often willing to send their troops to serve in UN PSOs. Understanding both is important to acquire an overview of the context in which the international community expects POC to be implemented and the countries that are prepared to carry out this task. The report then presents the two empirical cases of the report, Ghana and India, showing how they conceptualise POC, how they have approached POC in their PSOs, mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa, and how both countries draw on their respective combat experiences in both interpreting and conducting POC.



**Map 1. UN peacekeeping operations – 2020**



Source: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/where-we-operate>

**Table 1. UN peacekeeping operations – 1948-2019**

ACRONYM	MISSION NAME	START DATE	END DATE
UNTSO	United Nations Truce Supervision Organization	May 1948	Present
UNMOGIP	United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan	Jan. 1949	Present
UNEF I	First United Nations Emergency Force	Nov. 1956	June 1967
UNOGIL	United Nations Observation Group in Lebanon	June 1958	Dec. 1958
ONUC	United Nations Operation in the Congo	July 1960	June 1964
UNSF	United Nations Security Force in West New Guinea	Oct. 1962	April 1963
UNYOM	United Nations Yemen Observation Mission	July 1963	Sept. 1964
UNFICYP	United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus	March 1964	Present
DOMREP	Mission of the Representative of the Secretary-General in the Dominican Republic	May 1965	Oct. 1966
UNIPOM	United Nations India-Pakistan Observation Mission	Sept. 1965	March 1966
UNEF II	Second United Nations Emergency Force	Oct. 1973	July 1979
UNDOF	United Nations Disengagement Observer Force	June 1974	Present
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon	March 1978	Present



ACRONYM	MISSION NAME	START DATE	END DATE
<b>UNGOMAP</b>	United Nations Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan	May 1988	March 1990
<b>UNIIMOG</b>	United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group	Aug. 1988	Feb. 1991
<b>UNAVEM I</b>	United Nations Angola Verification Mission I	Jan. 1989	June 1991
<b>UNTAG</b>	United Nations Transition Assistance Group	April 1989	March 1990
<b>ONUCA</b>	United Nations Observer Group in Central America	Nov. 1989	Jan. 1992
<b>UNIKOM</b>	United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission	April 1991	Oct. 2003
<b>MINURSO</b>	United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara	April 1991	Present
<b>UNAVEM II</b>	United Nations Angola Verification Mission II	June 1991	Feb. 1995
<b>ONUSAL</b>	United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador	July 1991	April 1995
<b>UNAMIC</b>	United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia	Oct. 1991	March 1992
<b>UNPROFOR</b>	United Nations Protection Force	Feb. 1992	March 1995
<b>UNTAC</b>	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia	March 1992	Sept. 1993
<b>UNOSOM I</b>	United Nations Operation in Somalia I	April 1992	March 1993
<b>ONUMOZ</b>	United Nations Operation in Mozambique	Dec. 1992	Dec. 1994
<b>UNOSOM II</b>	United Nations Operation in Somalia II	March 1993	March 1995
<b>UNOMUR</b>	United Nations Observer Mission Uganda-Rwanda	June 1993	Sept. 1994
<b>UNOMIG</b>	United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia	Aug. 1993	June 2009
<b>UNOMIL</b>	United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia	Sept. 1993	Sept. 1997
<b>UNMIH</b>	United Nations Mission in Haiti	Sept. 1993	June 1996
<b>UNAMIR</b>	United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda	Oct. 1993	March 1996
<b>UNASOG</b>	United Nations Aouzou Strip Observer Group	May 1994	June 1994
<b>UNMOT</b>	United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan	Dec. 1994	May 2000
<b>UNAVEM III</b>	United Nations Angola Verification Mission III	Feb. 1995	June 1997
<b>UNCRO</b>	United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia	March 1995	Jan. 1996
<b>UNPREDEP</b>	United Nations Preventive Deployment Force	March 1995	Feb. 1999
<b>UNMIBH</b>	United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina	Dec. 1995	Dec. 2002
<b>UNTAES</b>	United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium	Jan. 1996	Jan. 1998
<b>UNMOP</b>	United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka	Feb. 1996	Dec. 2002
<b>UNSMIH</b>	United Nations Support Mission in Haiti	July 1996	July 1997
<b>MINUGUA</b>	United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala	Jan. 1997	May 1997
<b>MONUA</b>	United Nations Observer Mission in Angola	June 1997	Feb. 1999

ACRONYM	MISSION NAME	START DATE	END DATE
<b>UNTMIH</b>	United Nations Transition Mission in Haiti	Aug. 1997	Dec. 1997
<b>MIPONUH</b>	United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti	Dec. 1997	March 2000
<b>UNCPSG</b>	UN Civilian Police Support Group	Jan. 1998	Oct. 1998
<b>MINURCA</b>	United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic	April 1998	Feb. 2000
<b>UNOMSIL</b>	United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone	July 1998	Oct. 1999
<b>UNMIK</b>	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo	June 1999	Present
<b>UNAMSIL</b>	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone	Oct. 1999	Dec. 2005
<b>UNTAET</b>	United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor	Oct. 1999	May 2002
<b>MONUC</b>	United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Nov. 1999	June 2010
<b>UNMEE</b>	United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea	July 2000	July 2008
<b>UNMISET</b>	United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor	May 2002	May 2005
<b>MINUCI</b>	United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire	May 2003	April 2004
<b>UNMIL</b>	United Nations Mission in Liberia	Sept. 2003	March 2018
<b>UNOCI</b>	United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire	April 2004	May 2017
<b>MINUSTAH</b>	United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti	June 2004	Oct. 2017
<b>ONUB</b>	United Nations Operation in Burundi	June 2004	Dec. 2006
<b>UNMIS</b>	United Nations Mission in the Sudan	March 2005	July 2011
<b>UNMIT</b>	United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste	Aug. 2006	Dec. 2012
<b>UNAMID</b>	African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur	July 2007	Present
<b>MINURCAT</b>	United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad	Sept. 2007	Dec. 2010
<b>MONUSCO</b>	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	July 2010	Present
<b>UNISFA</b>	United Nations Organization Interim Security Force for Abyei	June 2011	Present
<b>UNMISS</b>	United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan	July 2011	Present
<b>UNSMIS</b>	United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria	April 2012	Aug. 2012
<b>MINUSMA</b>	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali	April 2013	Present
<b>MINUSCA</b>	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic	April 2014	Present
<b>MINUJUSTH</b>	United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti	Oct. 2017	Oct. 2019

Source: [https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/unpeacekeeping-operationlist\\_3\\_1\\_0.pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/unpeacekeeping-operationlist_3_1_0.pdf)

# METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS



This report is based on two case studies, including interviews undertaken either remotely or during fieldwork in Ghana and India respectively. The authors carried out interviews with military officers who had been deployed at least once in PSOs across the African continent in particular, but also in the Middle East and Europe. Primary data have been combined with secondary sources on the history and rationale behind POC and peacekeeping or PSOs more broadly, as well as the different historical trajectories of Ghana's and India's respective approaches to and involvement in UN peacekeeping.

Data collection in Ghana was carried out during fieldwork in September and October 2019, funded by the Danish Ministry of Defence and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' project, 'Domestic Security Implications of UN Peacekeeping (D-SIP)'. Thirty interviews were carried out among military officers in Ghana's capital, Accra, and in the Northern Region, specifically Tamale, where Ghana's armed forces are involved in many internal operations. Combined, these interviews provide us with insights into the experience of doing peacekeeping, as well as the intersectionality of military experiences between international peacekeeping and internal operations.

In India, data for this research were collected through semi-structured interviews with military officers, both retired and still in active service, and from different ranks ranging from major to lieutenant general. Due to the Indian government's unwillingness to allow researchers access to active military personnel, a purposive sampling strategy was followed by reaching out to retired senior military officers who were willing to take part in the study and who agreed to make further introductions allowing the researcher to access active Indian military officers who had served in recent UN peacekeeping missions. Interviewees took part in the study under conditions of strict anonymity, which has been honoured here.

The difficulties in accessing active Indian military officers with UN peacekeeping experience makes this study the first of its kind. Interviews with retired military officers were conducted in person during a field trip to New Delhi, India, in March and April 2018 and with officers serving in various UN missions, as well as by Skype, e-mail and telephone from August to October 2019. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Interviews were also conducted with policy analysts researching peacekeeping issues in New Delhi and with officials at the United Nations Centre for Peacekeeping.



# THE NORM OF HUMANITARIAN PROTECTION



The first time that the word 'civilian' was mentioned in international humanitarian law was in the Geneva Conventions of 1949 following the Second World War (Geneva Convention 1949). The period that followed marked the transformation of conflict from taking place primarily between states to the post-Cold War period, which was dominated by the proliferation of conflict within the territories of states that are often characterised as 'weak' or 'fragile' (Wallensteen 2011). States like Sierra Leone in West Africa, which experienced a prolonged war in the 1990s, led the international community to question the unassailability of state sovereignty and, for similar reasons, to begin articulating the notion of an international responsibility to protect civilians (Wallensteen 2011: 27).

The nature of protection differs depending on the type of conflict in question. Many wars today are civil wars (non-international armed conflicts) as opposed to international armed conflicts, and how international humanitarian law is applied depends on the type of war in question. The outline of what protection entails is more detailed and focused with respect to international armed conflict, although civilians are targeted in both types of conflict. The development of POC as a norm began after the end of the Cold War in the context of UN peacekeeping missions and their failures to respond adequately to the genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina (Diehl and Druckman 2010; Wills 2009). By the end of the 1990s, the UN mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was the first to receive an explicit mandate to protect civilians (Hultman 2012).

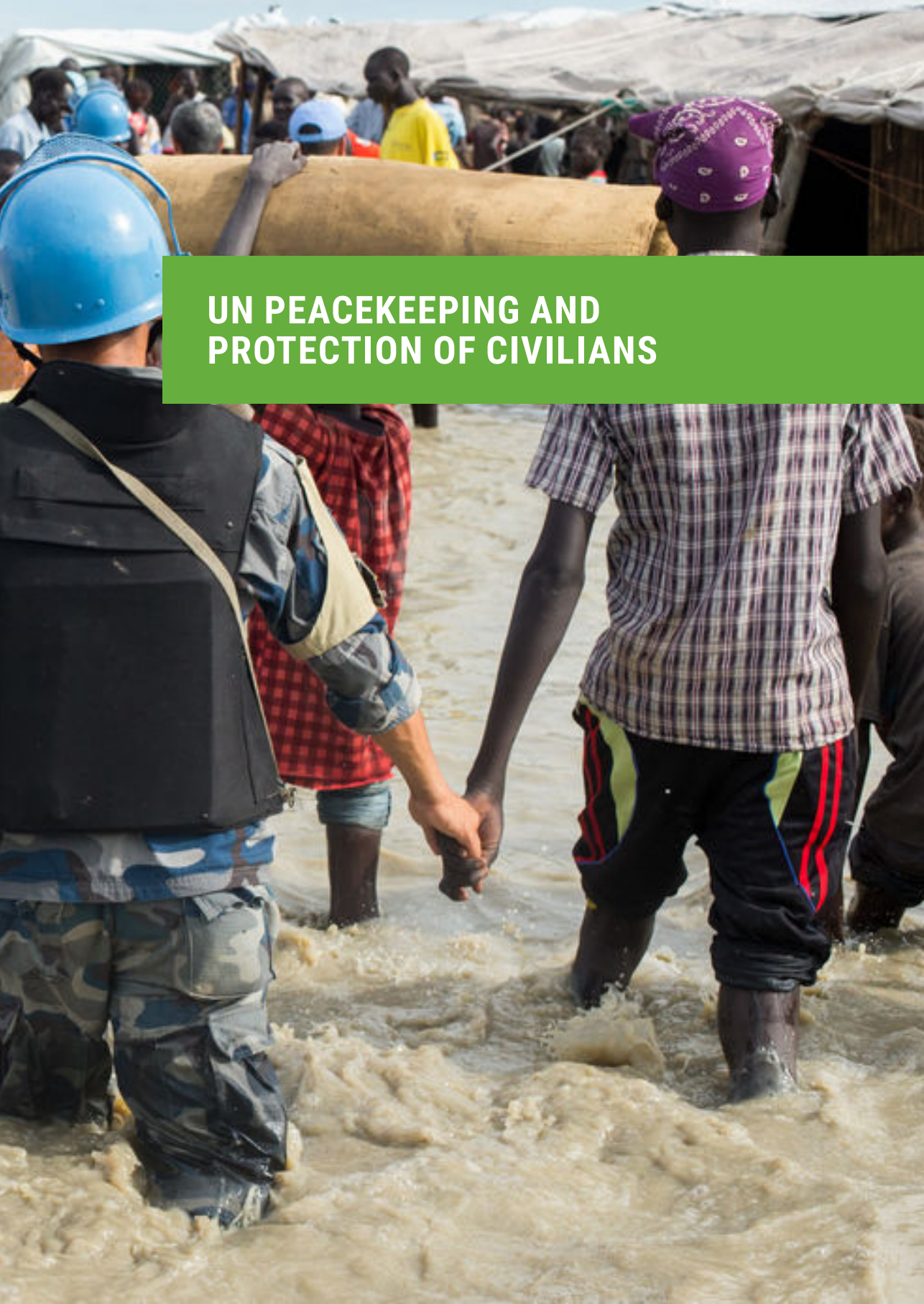
Much research places the norm of humanitarian protection within the context of a rational-choice cost-benefit analysis from the perspective of those who wage war. In **Targeting Civilians in War** (2008), Alexander Downes suggests two reasons why civilians are targeted. First, long-term participation in a conflict decreases a state's willingness to risk casualties, leading it to pursue civilians instead as a cost-optimising strategy. In short, it is cheaper to target wider areas that include civilians. Second, targeting civilians is often a strategy to change the demography of conquered areas by either countering future rebellions or removing the incentives for an opponent to reclaim territory (Downes 2008).

Downes (2008) and others, like Hugo Slim (2008), suggest that war-making represents a move towards the goal of winning at all costs. In turn, this approach is increasingly influencing the humanitarian space, turning POC into one of the UN's primary goals. This became more acute when PSOs were deployed in Mali and Chad, where there was and is no peace to keep, giving rise to a more substantial and urgent need to protect civilians.









## UN PEACEKEEPING AND PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

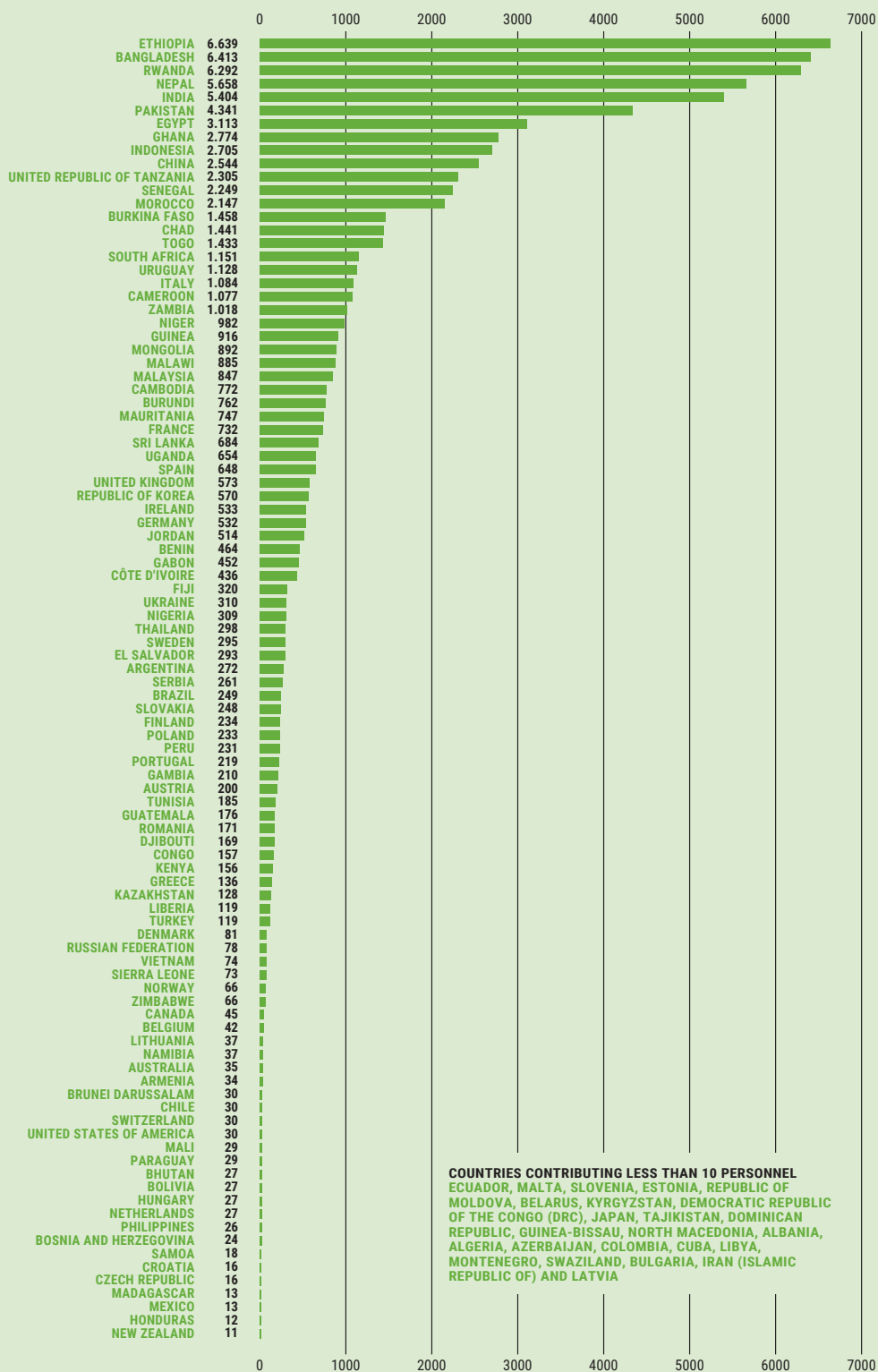
Kenkel (2013) refers to traditional peacekeeping, mandated under Chapter VI of the UN Charter, as a 'Holy Trinity', as it is structured around three principles: 1. having the consent of the host nation, which maintains its right to non-intervention; 2. impartiality towards the conflicting parties, ensuring credibility with as many of the warring parties as possible; and 3. non-use of force by UN troops, except in self-defence (Kenkel 2013: 162; see Bellamy and Griffin 2010: 173-4). The post-Cold War tectonic shift with the prevalence of conflict within states also had considerable implications for UN interventions, not least because traditional peacekeeping was considered to freeze rather than resolve conflicts due to the organisation's reactive and passive operational mandates (Kaldor 2013).

Reluctant to increase the presence of the military in conflict zones, which would challenge the three basic principles of peacekeeping just outlined, the second generation of UN PSOs pursued a conflict-transformation approach by adding a list of civilian tasks to peacekeeping. These included 'the organisation of elections [...]; disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR); humanitarian aid delivery; human rights promotion, refugee assistance, and government capacity-building' (Kenkel 2013: 129). In his **Agenda for Peace**, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali stated that, because of the greater complexity of conflicts in the post-Cold War era, peace operations had become equally complex. As a consequence, it was suggested, it would be helpful to distinguish between Chapter VI (preventive diplomacy, peace-making and peacekeeping) and Chapter VII activities (Kenkel 2013: 128). Chapter VII stands out in that it challenges the peacekeeping principle of the non-use of force.

This shift addressed the failures to prevent or end the genocides in Rwanda (1994) and Bosnia-Herzegovina (1995), for instance, and sought to deal with the challenge of spoilers in peace processes. In this context, discussions took place on how to justify humanitarian interventions to protect civilians, even though this may infringe the principle of the unassailability of a state's sovereignty. These debates led to the notion of a responsibility to protect in the UN's Brahimi report as well, which has led PSOs away from neutrality towards becoming impartial and robust instead (Kenkel 2013: 129; Murthy and Kurtz 2016). Moreover, the changing nature of UN interventions and the growing set of roles that the UN was expected to play in ever-more violent contexts created gaps that still exist in the means that are available to a mission, 'both for mandate completion and self-defence' (Kenkel 2013: 129).

These discussions reflect Andrea Everett's (2017) more recent point on the discrepancy between the ideal of civilian protection and the design of PSOs that are based on UN mandates. Usually there is an insufficient match between the political and strategic ambitions of protection and the resources available when the UN deploys PSOs. Everett (2017: 4-5) calls this the 'ambitions-resource gap', which results in insufficient protection of civilians in conflict areas and puts the deployed troops at risk. One solution to this challenge is to deploy larger numbers of soldiers and police officers, which can then safeguard areas, separate the combatants and send a signal of commitment to populations in conflict (Hultman et al. 2013; Kreps 2010; Evans 2008). As peacekeeping missions were given expanded mandates by the Security Council to include substantial components of peacebuilding, the ambitions-resource gap became more apparent, since the expansion of mission roles was not reflected in an increase of resources (Everett 2017; Kenkel 2013: 132).


**Table 2. Ranking of contributions by country (number of personnel as of 31 March 2020)**



Source: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors>

## WHO CONTRIBUTES TROOPS?

The task of contributing personnel to PSOs is an example of burden-sharing and reflects the UN's desire to ensure a balanced geographical representation of the forces it deploys. However, since the end of the Cold War, a major decrease in the number of military personnel globally has been contrasted with a growing demand for UN peacekeeping troops, as well as a transition from larger nation-based military contributions to smaller professional and more flexible militaries. Furthermore, the imbalance in wealth between UN member states and the lack of work opportunities in 'less-developed' countries underpin major differences in states' contributions of soldiers to PSOs. Wealthier countries send fewer but better educated and equipped troops, while the opposite is the case for most security personnel sent by the global South (see Albrecht et al. 2017). One aspect of this is the economic underpinning of supply and demand, which is indicated by the fact that around 90 percent of the troops that are deployed on UN missions come from Africa, Asia and Latin America (Weiss and Kuele 2019). Another aspect is the inequality reflected in choosing which countries are deployed to the most lethal locations in a mission area (Albrecht et al. 2017; Cold-Ravnkilde et al. 2017). Such inequalities, whereby the global North displaces the physical risk of doing POC on to the global South, have become an inherent part of PSOs (Cunliffe in Hughes 2014: 354).



**Wealthier countries send fewer but better educated and equipped troops, while the opposite is the case for most security personnel sent by the global South.**

In his discussion of 'fragile states' or 'developing countries', Arturo Sotomayor (2004, 2014) suggests that participation in peacekeeping missions may inspire greater civilian control of armed forces in the countries that make troop contributions and thereby reduce the military's political influence. This is because peacekeeping missions and PSOs are led by civilians, thus underscoring the military's subordinate, apolitical position (Sotomayor 2014: 3). The rationale is that the liberal values underlying peacekeeping operations and PSOs have a transformative effect on militaries because they are preoccupied abroad and experience socialization (Findlay 1996: 9). Conversely, based on the examples of Bangladesh, Fiji and the Gambia, Philip Cunliffe (2018) argues that participation in peacekeeping operations has had the opposite result, namely in producing illiberal and anti-democratic outcomes. This is because of some countries' growing dependence on peacekeeping revenues and the socialization of anti-liberal values such as the Non-Aligned Movement.

While the UN's PSOs have become increasingly complex in terms of both mandate and institutional arrangements, as well as their deployment in increasingly violent contexts like Mali and Chad, they have also paved the way for a more substantial representation of TCCs from the global South. However, the TCCs from the global South are a heterogeneous lot, despite some ideological commonalities. In the case of Ghana and India, this is apparent in their support for non-alignment in international politics and their different trajectories of military development following the end of British colonialism. This offers important points of comparison.



A black and white photograph showing two men in a formal setting. The man on the left is older, with light hair, wearing a dark suit and a white shirt. The man on the right is younger, with dark skin, wearing a light-colored, patterned overcoat over a dark suit and a patterned tie. They are shaking hands. In the background, another man in a dark suit is partially visible. The setting appears to be an indoor space with a tiled floor and some architectural elements.

**THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT  
AND POST-COLONIAL MILITARIES**



Adekeye Adebajo (2016: 1187) interprets the politics of intervention and peacekeeping through a West/non-West lens of analysis and links it to the independence movements of 1945 to 1960. Launched at the high-level meeting of the Bandung Conference in 1955, discussions on non-alignment with any major power bloc (east or west) took place with three aims in mind: 1. the creation of new norms in intervention politics; 2. the affirmation of the sovereign status of Asian and African countries that were formerly or still currently colonised by the west; and 3. a call for universal collective security and universal sovereign rights (Adebajo 2016: 1191). A mixture of Ghanaian-led pan-Africanism, Egyptian-led pan-Arabism and South American and Asian scepticism of intervention at Bandung led to the founding of the Non-Aligned Movement at a summit in 1961 (Adebajo 2016: 1192). Among other things, the Movement was an articulation of pan-African solidarity, as represented by, for example, Nigeria's engagement in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a sense that African wars represented the continuation of colonial subordination, and the idea that an ethos like the responsibility to protect was essentially an articulation of regime change by means of western military intervention (Tardy 2012; Adebajo 2016).

These political dynamics are naturally intertwined with, and influence, the militaries of TCCs from the global South. In **Military Cultures in Peace and Stability Operations**, Chiara Ruffa (2018) argues that military culture – the set of attitudes, values and beliefs instilled into an army and transmitted across generations of those in uniform – influences how soldiers behave at the tactical level. When soldiers are abroad they are usually deployed in units, and when a military unit deploys its military culture follows. By investigating where that military culture comes from, we can help explain why military units conduct themselves the way they do.

Ghana and India are both legacies of British colonialism, and especially since the mid-1990s, the two countries have consistently been dominant contributors of troops to UN missions. Several attributes of the British military establishment have influenced, to varying degrees, successor forces in post-colonial Asia and Africa. While the British were present in their African colonies for far shorter periods of time than in South Asia and invested much less effort in building the former's armies than the British Indian Army, some of their policies were broadly similar. Characteristics such as colonial indirect rule, military recruitment from specific sections of society and managing ethnic factionalism in the military through alliances with specific groups, to name but a few, shaped the evolution of military professionalism, military effectiveness and the nature of civil-military relations in the post-colonial period.

Independence from British rule may have created a de facto break from Britain, but it left a legacy behind. In the African continent, the creation of an army loyal to the state emerged as one of the most important institutional tasks of post-colonial leaders (Barany 2014: 599), while in South Asia somewhat stronger civilian control over the military was established. It is to be expected that a regime-centric or loyalist army versus one that is under greater civilian control differs in its interactions with civilian populations and its willingness to use force in tackling internal threats to security such as armed insurgency and terrorism. In Ghana, there has been a high degree of centralization in military decision-making, weak democratization until the Fourth Republic emerged in 1992 and involvement of the military in politics under President Jerry Rawlings. These factors have given rise to a high degree of political interference in and control of the country's security institutions, including the military, but also the police and other agencies. In India, the political system has been marked by stronger political as well as civilian control of the military, and a different approach to internal security operations has developed. The trajectories of these developments and how they, in turn, have shaped the understanding of and approaches to POC when they deploy in PSOs will be explored in the next two sections with regard to Ghana and India respectively.




# GHANA AND PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS



Peacekeeping has played a central role in shaping Ghana's position in the world and has created a focus and an identity for the armed forces both within and outside the country since independence in 1957 (Aning and Aubyn 2013; Aning and Edu-Afful 2017; Aubyn et al. 2019). As an indication of this, in the late 1950s and early 1960s a personal relationship between the prime ministers of Ghana and Congo, Kwame Nkrumah and Patrice Lumumba, drove the former to support the United Nations Operation in the Congo (UNOC) that deployed in 1960. Both leaders considered peacekeeping to be one of the instruments that could cut the colonial ties between Africa and Europe. Nkrumah in particular saw a response to the Congolese crisis as part of his 'grand strategy' of decolonization, Pan-Africanism and non-alignment on the continent (Edu-Afful et al. 2019; Biney 2011). Since then, and throughout changing governments that have included civilian and military leaders, Ghana has been committed to making troop contributions to peacekeeping and PSOs.

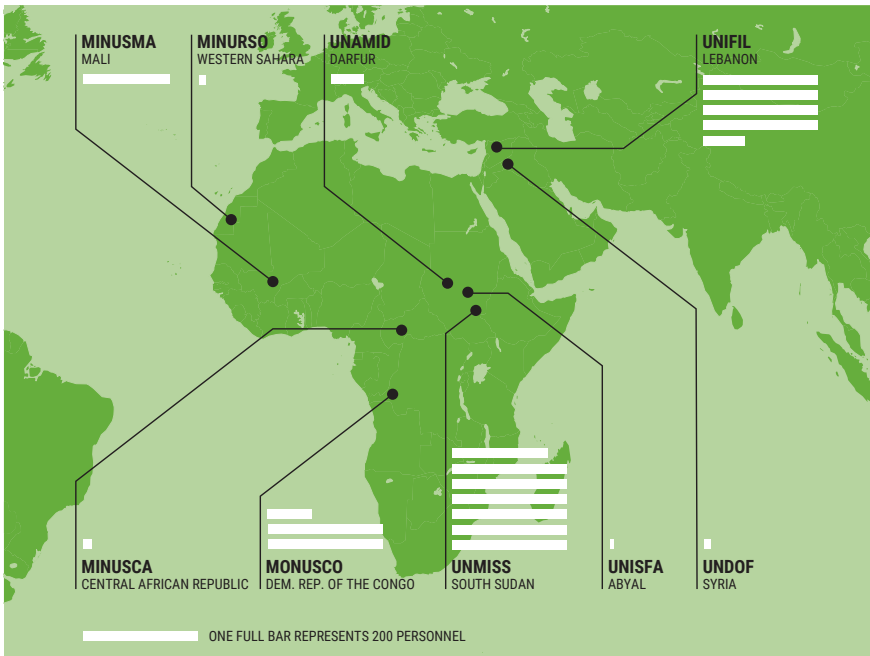
The changing dynamics of conflict in the wake of the Cold War, together with regional cooperation and self-protection, were increasingly aligned in Ghana's approach to peacekeeping. West African countries like Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire, and later Mali, experienced partial or complete bureaucratic collapses and civil wars in the 1990s and 2000s. They all prompted comprehensive PSOs by the UN, and especially in the former three cases, Ghana played a central role on the ground as a TCC. Other countries in the region, such as Guinea, Niger, Burkina Faso and Nigeria, have experienced military coups and locally sustained attacks by insurgent groups. Both President Rawlings, a military officer who took over the leadership of Ghana in a coup d'état in 1981 and oversaw Ghana's transition to democratic rule in 1993, and John Kufuor, his successor (2001-2009), considered peacekeeping an important domestic and international policy instrument. Rawlings, who as a former military officer had an intuitive understanding of what motivated military officers, 'ran the army from his office,' as one of Kufuor's key advisers noted (interview, Accra, February 2019) and spent the earnings from UN peacekeeping on stabilising his relations with the armed forces (Hutchful 1999:52).



**From within the political establishment in Ghana, the ability to make contributions to peacekeeping was considered to have a stabilising effect on domestic politics and, equally urgently, on a region that was, and still is, experiencing conflict.**

When Kufuor, the first civilian president of the Fourth Republic, came to power, he too quickly reached the conclusion that peacekeeping had a positive effect on the army by giving them a focus, something to work towards, boosting the income of

## Map 2. Ghana's peacekeeping operations – 2020



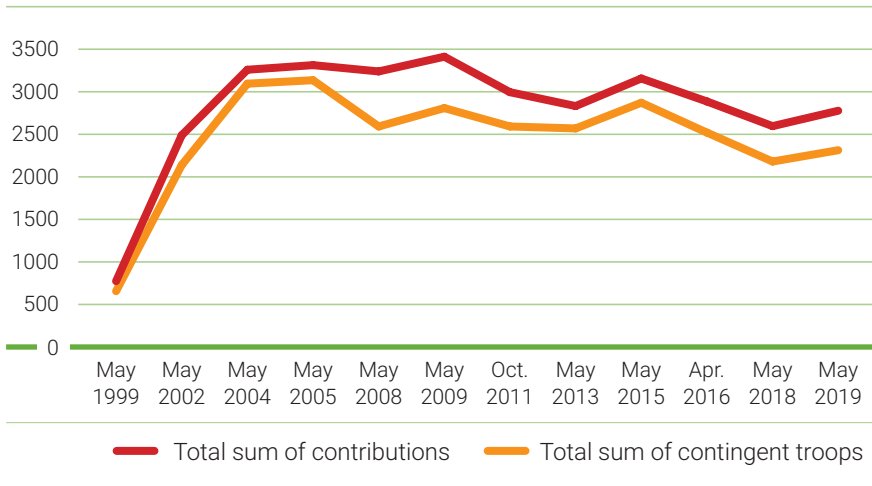
Source: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/ghana>

individual soldiers and supporting the army's overall funding (Aning and Aubyn 2013). Coming from the political class rather than the rank and file of the army, Kufuor also saw peacekeeping contributions as a way of fostering good relations with Ghana's neighbours and stabilising the region. Ultimately, this was a policy of self-preservation: 'Very early', the adviser to Kufuor noted, 'in 2001 [when Kufuor took office], as part of the cardinal targets of Kufuor's foreign policy was to build excellent relations in the region – it was a conscious effort to secure the stability of Ghana' (interview, Accra, February 2019). Thus, from within the political establishment in Ghana, the ability to make contributions to peacekeeping was considered to have a stabilising effect on domestic politics and, equally urgently, on a region that was, and still is, experiencing conflict.

This brief background indicates the central role that peacekeeping has played in shaping both the army's position domestically and Ghana's relations with other countries in the region and beyond. Moreover, peacekeeping and PSOs have increasingly been dominated by Asian and African TCCs since the mid-1990s, giving Ghana a position among the ten main contributors in the world. Of the 2,797 personnel that Ghana currently deploys, the majority (2,310) come from the armed forces. For this report, and drawing on other research carried out in Ghana,<sup>1</sup> dozens

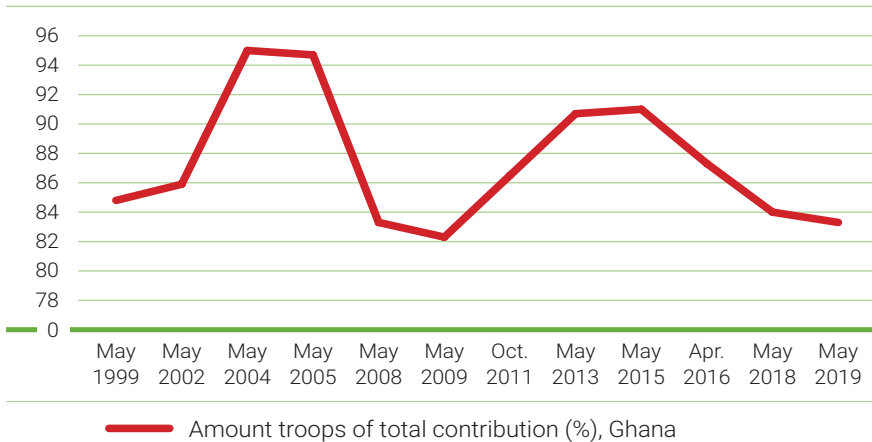
of police and military officers were interviewed about their peacekeeping experiences. It is clear that, while many police officers have been on one, two or even three PSOs during their careers, by the time they reach the ranks of lieutenant colonel or colonel military officers have often been on seven to ten missions (and, while unverified, officers interviewed for this report estimated that between 70-90% of military personnel in Ghana have been deployed in PSOs). Military officers are systematically sent on PSOs, which is where they garner most of their practical experience, along with their engagement in internal operations, as described below.

**Figure 1. Peacekeeping troops from Ghana over the years: contributions, total and troops**



Source: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/open-data-portal>

**Figure 2. Ghana's participation in PSOs: total deployments including troops**



Source: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/open-data-portal>



## HOW GHANAIAN OFFICERS DEFINE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

'There is no training on POC alone', the director of training at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre noted; 'the training is for general peacekeeping, and POC is part of it'. While most officers draw on experience in the field when defining POC, some have also been directly involved in developing the POC policy for the UN, again indicating Ghana's central role in both practising and developing policies and concepts of peacekeeping. 'My familiarity with the policy [...]', the recent deputy commander of the military academy in Accra explained (who at the time of the interview was expecting to go to Ghana's UN mission in New York as Defense Attaché):

[...] stems from the headquarters in New York, where I was for three years between 2012 and 2015, developing the policy on POC, which I subsequently trained on in Brazil and China [among other places].... Why are they [peacekeepers] there if they are not protecting the civilians? So the core essence of a UN mission is protection of civilians, peace and security, economic development, but the key focus of a mission should be the well-being of the civilians.

-Interview, Accra, September 2019.

POC, the deputy commander went on to explain, challenges basic military training, and explaining how this was the case, he reflected what most of the military officers interviewed for this report considered to be specific to POC: 'People should be trained to protect civilians; the normal training does not train you to do that [...] traditional training arms you to destroy the enemy.' The implication of this is not that, without POC training Ghanaian peacekeepers would simply search out and 'destroy the enemy'. What he meant was that doing POC well requires a particular contextual awareness that in turn requires interacting with and understanding members of the local communities that the peacekeepers deploy to:

If you don't give the soldiers this key training [on the importance of community outreach essentially], they will sit in one location, and just next door, people are harmed. For example, when they get to a location, they must network with the locals to know what is happening. Local informal groups – they must network with them, otherwise, they [the peacekeepers] are blind. They need the locals to be their eyes and ears.

-Interview, Accra, September 2019.

Engaging with local communities is thus something that must be actively pursued as a priority while still recognizing that dignitaries and leaders in a locality are considered crucial for any state representative to do his or her job in Ghana. On the one hand, doing so potentially clashes with UN regulations that aim to restrict, as far as possible, casual interaction with populations that are hosting the PSO in order, for example, to prevent cases of sexual exploitation and abuse. On the other hand, it feeds into another aspect of peacekeeping that has risen up the UN agenda and that was emphasised as important to carrying out POC effectively: the ability to gather, collate and analyse intelligence. Intelligence in the context of UN peacekeeping and PSOs has long been controversial because it explicitly places peacekeeping in contexts of open conflict and warfare, thus challenging the transparency and neutrality of traditional peacekeeping.

Following this, many studies have focused on intelligence efforts (Shetler-Jones 2008; Duursma 2017). Moreover, UN reports and policies such as **The Future of Peace Operations** (2015), the first **UN Peacekeeping Intelligence Policy** (2017) and the **Action for Peacekeeping** initiative launched in March 2018 by the UN Secretary-General stress the need for effective intelligence to identify threats to peacekeepers (as such, therefore, this is not discussed as an issue unique to POC). Certainly, the difficulties of establishing appropriate intelligence mechanisms in peacekeeping has been one of the greatest challenges to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), where significant efforts have been made to set up an All Sources Information Fusion Unit (ASIFU) for that purpose (Albrecht et al. 2017). Thus, MINUSMA deploys both highly specialised intelligence components provided by Swedish and Dutch intelligence, and Surveillance and Reconnaissance units, as well as traditional UN information-gathering units (Rietjens and Ruffa 2019: 385).

In the context of POC, some level of intelligence-gathering and analytical capacity is considered vital. While 'the UN is shy of talking about intelligence,' one officer noted, 'nobody wants to do information work, [but] they need proper intelligence' (interview, Accra, September 2019). Again, this was cast in the context of understanding the area in which the peacekeepers deploy: 'There is a UN camp here, and a massacre there, and the UN does not know what is happening. If they have intelligence, they will not be surprised' (interview, Accra, September 2019).

Finally, a defining feature of effective POC since 1999, when the policy was included in a mission mandate for the first time, in Sierra Leone, is a willingness to use force. The question is not if it should be used, but rather how much of it is necessary to accomplish set POC goals. For instance, both the UN's **POC Policy** (2015) and

**Guidelines on the Use of Force by Military Components** (2017) make a distinction between deadly force and minimally required force, while emphasizing the graduated application of increasing levels of force. ‘There are a lot of examples,’ the deputy commander of the training academy noted, without specifying further, ‘of units that have known that there was a POC situation, and they did not take action’ (interview, Accra, September 2019). In short, national caveats that dictate where forces from a country might deploy and what their roles in a mission can be mean that in some cases forces cannot be used without checking back with their respective capitals.

The willingness and ability to use force in peacekeeping is an aspect of broader debates on the UN’s role in peace enforcement and whether the UN is equipped to take it on. First of all, enforcing POC carries real risks for UN peacekeepers. Certainly, as Ghanaian officers also indicated, the POC mandate, vital though it is, produces unrealistic expectations of what the UN Security Council, which mandates PSOs, expects of peacekeepers. Moreover, war-affected populations, who, as in the 1990s in Rwanda and Srebrenica, might flock to under-equipped and under-resourced peacekeepers for safety. Alternatively, peacekeepers might refrain from delivering on a POC mandate, either to prevent casualties, which is considered politically unacceptable in the countries that sent them, or because they are overstretched. They may only carry out POC-related activities that reflect the resources available, leading them to prioritise in a way that does not deliver on this part of their mandate overall.

The above considerations are based on discussions of POC as an approach, a policy, how doing it right differs from what soldiers are trained to do and what is required to do it well – community engagement, intelligence gathering and the willingness to use force. When soldiers described their concrete in-mission experiences in interviews, they would rarely talk abstractly about the challenges of doing peace enforcement rather than peacekeeping in terms of the available resources. Rather, they would outline what they could achieve regarding POC, without dwelling much, if at all, on their limitations or on how they would go about POC in the context of those limitations.

## **RWANDA: PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS BEFORE POC**

Peacekeeping is the protection of civilians, as one major noted, reflecting on his time with PSOs in Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia and the DRC: ‘If you don’t protect, then why are you there?’ Yet, as indicated above, implementing POC in the context of an ongoing civil war, rather than when patrolling and monitoring a ceasefire along an internationally

recognised border, carries very real risks to the lives of peacekeepers. In MINUSMA, a reluctance to engage forcefully is reflected in a clear line of division between soldiers from poor, often African countries, who are deployed to the most dangerous parts of the mission, and their European counterparts, who are well-equipped and well-trained (Cold-Ravnkilde et al. 2017). In Rwanda, where Ghanaian officers were deployed both during and after the genocide that cost more than 900,000 lives, 'the UN did not know what to do', as one officer, now a retired general, remarked (interview, Accra, August 2019). He was one of over four hundred troops from Ghana who ignored the orders of the UN Security Council to withdraw as the crisis in Rwanda escalated and stayed with the beleaguered UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR). A year later, another officer described what the UN's inability to protect civilians in the starkest sense of the term had meant:

Rwanda, we were the second [Ghanaian] battalion. The first experienced the genocide. It was also the consolidation process of genocide recovery [when we arrived]. I was there for the first anniversary of the exhumation of the Rwanda genocide. The bodies had not decomposed. If you knew somebody, you could recognise them. Every place was littered with corpses. Piles of decomposing bodies. You could see little children, lying, very traumatic. There is no after-mission therapy to avoid post-traumatic stress disorder. You came, and you had to live with whatever you saw.

-Interview, Accra, August 2019.

Rwanda represents a situation in which poorly equipped and often outnumbered UNAMIR forces failed to protect hundreds of thousands of Tutsis and showed what the failure to do so meant. Yet, Ghanaian forces remained in Rwanda, and according to UNAMIR's force commander, Romeo Dallaire, a Canadian lieutenant-general at the time, they helped save approximately 30,000 lives (Stein 2014). The genocide in Rwanda had considerable implications for how the UN was perceived, as well as for how the organisation perceived itself. Rwanda thus led to a significant and continuous process of transforming peacekeeping as an instrument of intervention, specifically with respect to POC. What the atrocities in Rwanda also provide insights into is what POC looks like in a context that entirely overwhelmed a mission like UNAMIR and the role that Ghana played in this regard, doing protection prior to the articulation of POC in policy. Understandably, Ghana's role in providing safety to refugees from both sides of the conflict did not drip through the news coverage of the mass atrocities that unfolded in Rwanda. However, the Ghanaian decision to stay behind as UNAMIR collapsed provides insights into what one TCC can achieve in terms of POC, as well as to the failure of the UN as an organisation in the face of overwhelming atrocities.



As one Ghanaian colonel mentioned in an interview, looking back at his time in Rwanda, 'as a young officer you don't get to understand the mission mandate, you are at the tactical level' (interview, Accra, September 2019). At the same time, however, looking back, he reflected:

■ We did a lot of protection of civilians. We escorted VIPs, did humanitarian convoys, protection of some communities to prevent clashes. I remember one incident; it happened around hotel Mille Collines [known for safeguarding 1,268 Hutu and Tutsi refugees from the Interahamwe militia]. We realised that some Hutus were trapped on the side of the rebel forces, and some Tutsis were trapped on the side of the government forces. There was an agreement to exchange IDPs [Internally Displaced Persons]. So, in this case, the Hutus would be moved to the government area, and the Tutsis would be moved to where the rebels were. We were to facilitate this exchange. ■

-Interview, Accra, September 2019.

The importance of dwelling on Ghana's role in Rwanda is to show two things that might lead to slightly conflicting conclusions. On the one hand, the political will to deploy troops in open conflict is essential, and while Ghana's positive role is drowned out by the magnitude of the crisis in Rwanda, it shows what a UN mission with the right mandate and political will from the capitals that send troops might be able to achieve, localised though these achievements might be. On the other hand, it shows that POC is a basic principle of peacekeeping that was put into a formula as missions have been deployed in progressively more violent conflicts since the late 1990s (e.g. UNAMSIL). Its importance has been accentuated, and has reached a partial culmination, in a mission like MINUSMA, which has itself become a terrorist target, challenging the UN in a different way than was the case in Rwanda, yet equally obstructing the ability of the mission to fulfil its POC mandate (Albrecht et al. 2017: 29; Boutellis and Fink 2016: 13).

## **EVERYDAY PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN THE MISSION**

The report now turns to the contexts in which Ghanaians have carried out POC routinely, such as Sierra Leone, Darfur, South Sudan and Côte d'Ivoire. As indicated above, debates on the UN's role in POC often revolve around the global organisation's failure to fulfil the role effectively, both before and after UNAMSIL. In South Sudan, for instance, POC sites have been far from safe. Attacks in February 2016 on the Malakal POC site in northern South Sudan and ineffective responses by the UN to

the fighting in Juba, South Sudan's capital, in July 2016 were stark reminders of this. Violence in South Sudan's POC sites not only comes from the outside, it is integral to life in the camps, reflecting the communal tensions that fuel the South Sudanese conflict. The UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), like MINUSMA, has been under considerable pressure to deliver on POC but is ill-prepared to do so due to the magnitude of the task (for MINUSMA see Albrecht et al. 2017; Cold-Ravnkilde et al. 2017).

While the UN's capacity to carry out POC effectively is measured against the organisation's ability to manage situations of armed attack and its consequences for the civilian population, POC represents also a more mundane, everyday practice of peacekeeping. It is something that is prepared for and practised in often unspectacular ways across all missions. By taking this as our point of departure, our aim is to bring out and accentuate some key characteristics of Ghana's approach to POC, which emphasises affiliation and partial familiarity with the population that is hosting the peacekeeping mission or PSO through everyday engagement, inclusion and the removal of separation.

Most of the missions discussed by the Ghanaian officers we interviewed for this report were located in Sub-Saharan Africa. Some were considered successful: indeed, UNAMSIL is described as 'the most successful peacekeeping mission in UN history' (Olonisakin 2007). Others, such as UNMISS and the United Nations-African Union Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), have received considerably more criticism. In addition to these post-Cold War multidimensional missions, many Ghanaian soldiers have done several tours with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). As a peacekeeping mission that was established during the Cold War, UNIFIL provides important insights into the activities of this earlier generation of peacekeeping that resemble present-day POC.

As part of POC for peacekeeping broadly speaking, the UN emphasises dialogue and political advocacy to enable the host government to protect its population, as well as a willingness to use force if necessary to provide physical protection and to support the establishment of a protective environment.<sup>2</sup> In practice, these principles are translated into a range of activities, depending on the context in which a given mission is deployed. One officer explained: 'Once you deploy in an AOR [Area of Responsibility], you have to meet the various leaders involved in the conflict and let them know why you are there. You are not there to fight them, but to ensure that the civilians are safe. You let them know the terms of conditions if they misconduct themselves' (interview, Accra, September 2019).


In Darfur, to deter conflict-related sexual violence, Ghanaian forces have been involved in 'firewood patrols', where twice a week UNAMID armoured personnel carriers have escorted women from the refugee camps to the surrounding forests to collect firewood and grass to feed their animals. Such activities are similar to the 'harvest patrols' that UNIFIL has undertaken on the border between Israel and Lebanon to allow farming on the frontline between the two countries. Similarly, UNMISS troops in South Sudan conduct frequent vehicle and dismounted patrols in a weapons-free zone around the Juba POC sites and lead firewood patrols around most POC sites.

While POC-related activities seem straightforward – 'whenever there are threats against civilians, we move in to protect them', as one Ghanaian officer explained (interview, Accra, September 2019) – and are either manageable or insurmountable, Ghanaian soldiers put a particularly strong emphasis on community engagement as integral to POC when deployed. First, this is a matter of self-preservation through awareness of the area in which the peacekeepers operate, and essentially a matter of ensuring that peacekeeping is intelligence-led, even if the information they gather is not officially referred to as intelligence. Second, community engagement is understood in a broad and inclusive sense, not simply as involving the civilian population, as one officer explained with reference to his time with UNAMSIL: 'I was working in a rebel-held area.... We had to work together with the rebels to ensure that the civilians were protected. Mostly, we moved, conducted patrols to various flashpoints, to ensure that there were no attacks on the populace' (interview, Accra, September 2019). In the context of Sierra Leone, discussing the importance of engaging combatants, one officer noted: 'It is important that you work with them; you are supposed not be seen as biased' (interview, Accra, September 2019).

The interactions with combatants that were described in this interview involved taking care of them in the camps of the peacekeepers. This was explicitly not considered to be part of the formal DDR, which the interviewed officer did not play an active role in. It was explained as POC for the combatants themselves as they were given support to transition out of their war-time roles, but of course also for the civilian population because it kept the combatants preoccupied. 'We achieved a lot by good rapport with the combatants,' one officer noted; 'we became friendly with them, understood their problems, and said that they could not achieve what they wanted to by force' (interview, Accra, September 2019). The indication in numerous interviews was that there was an affinity, a familiarity, that reduced the distance between the peacekeepers and those whose peace was being kept. This was particularly conspicuous, and perhaps not very surprising, when Ghanaian soldiers were deployed to missions in West Africa, such as those to Sierra Leone and

neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire. Indeed, when Ghana went into Côte d'Ivoire as part of Opération des Nations Unies en Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI), despite it being officially a French-speaking country, Ghanaians and local Ivorians were able to communicate in Twi, an Akan language that is widely spoken in Ghana and eastern Côte d'Ivoire.

Effective POC is often discussed in the context of the UN's ability or willingness to use force. As discussed earlier, this debate is caught up in the gap between the ambition to protect civilians and the resources available to do so (Everett 2017). The main insight we acquire from exploring Ghanaian peacekeepers' interpretations of what doing POC entails is their understanding of what protection means in the everyday, as well as how they perceive their role vis-à-vis other TCCs, especially beyond Africa. This relates to the previous observation that, in order to be able to do POC, it is necessary to establish good relations with the community in which the peacekeepers operate and that Ghanaians are in a privileged position compared to peacekeepers from India, for instance.



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In our interview with him, one young officer who had deployed in several missions, including UNMISS, referred to community engagement as doubling the security system:

**[In the IDP camps in South Sudan]** we got to interact with the people, civilians, the young guys that would not go to school – you go and talk to them, find out their experiences, give them some hope that things will get better. Over the period, you gave them food to eat. **Sometimes you did not follow UN rules, you get close to them**, you feel the empathy. It makes people free to talk to us, they open up to us, they tell us things.

**One good experience from South Sudan** from interacting with the locals: doing so made us understand those fighting, [because] they have relations with those fighting. In South Sudan it was two tribes. The people who did not want to be involved in the fighting came into IDP camps, but they still had contact with the fighter, so we got information from these people [i.e., the IDPs]. We passed on the information to the



higher command. When raising the security levels, **doubling the security system**, once you do that, it prevents hostilities, because your friendship with the locals means that you get that information from them. You even know when they are going to fight. ,

-Interview, Accra, September 2019.

The underlying rationale, which at times was made explicit in interviews, was that ethnic, cultural and even racial affinities with populations hosting the PSOs allowed Ghanaian forces both to interact with them and to protect them better:

‘ **Mongolians and their relationship to the civilians was different.** The language barrier was one thing. They [i.e., the IDPs] speak English, we do too. We probably would understand them better than the Mongolians did. He [the South Sudanese] sees me as his brother, I understand him. He approaches, and I should also be ready to listen, be open. You are Danish. I don’t hear of people from Denmark complaining about Africans being this or that, trying to influence other countries, politicking, but you are very much aware that there are world powers that are trying to do that. For instance, the US had interests in Liberia, so a Liberian will not necessarily see that a guy from the US has his interests; the guy from the US is serving his own interests.

**If I, as a black man, go**, the Liberian will think that I go there to help him, not to prolong the war for my own gain. There is this understanding that our grandfathers were probably brothers. Same blood. Besides, we are all seen as one, whether we are or not. It was the colonial masters that sat down and divided Africa. We don’t see that much of a difference. The difference may be in the vegetation, maybe language, the temperature. For me, difference is a result of foreign influence. It’s political ideology: we are torn between the French and Portuguese and English ideology. ,

-Interview, Accra, September 2019.

This report is not concerned to measure the effectiveness of POC in peacekeeping missions and PSOs, but rather to explore how Ghana and India approach POC in practice and the experiences they draw on in doing so. The importance of cultural affinity, a theme underlying Ghanaian officers’ explanations of how they approach POC, plays into broader academic debates. On the one hand, it has been claimed, peacekeeping forces are more likely to succeed if they come from the same region as the conflict, because, as indicated by the officer quoted above, such affinity

creates trust and legitimacy (Diehl 1994: 124). The rationale, as Duffy (2000: 151) suggests, is that 'maintaining good relations with the local community, a prerequisite for successful missions, relies on peacekeepers' understanding of the local population's culture and respect for their cultural traditions'. The opposite view is that proximity to the conflict breeds mistrust because regional peacekeepers are biased and therefore not trustworthy. This dynamic is played out in both MINUSMA and the African Union (AU)-led Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), where neighbouring troop contributors act pursuant to national interests, rather than those of the two missions (Albrecht and Cold-Ravnkilde 2020).

## **PEACEKEEPING AND INTERNAL OPERATIONS**

What practical experiences beyond training and whatever they pick up when deployed to peacekeeping missions and PSOs do Ghanaian soldiers draw on when they carry out POC? In a region that, as noted above, has experienced considerable instability, prolonged conflict and hosted a number of PSOs, Ghana stands out. The country has not experienced war on its own territory and has remained relatively stable and peaceful at the national level since the Fourth Republic came into existence in January 1993. Even though Ghana's own political history before 1993 was quite turbulent, with several coup d'états and prolonged periods of military rule, no serious ethnic or religious violence has taken place at the national level. That said, Ghana has experienced a range of small and medium-scale conflicts that range from long-term chieftaincy disputes to agro-pastoralist, election-related and inter-ethnic conflicts.

Two protracted conflicts within Ghana were the Nkonya-Alavanyo land dispute and the Dagbon chieftaincy dispute. The former relates to the drawing of boundaries between the territories of two ethnic groups, the Nkonya and Alavanyo, in the early nineteenth century, and division of a piece of land that is believed to have deposits of gold, clay and bauxite. The Dagbon dispute is also linked with the transformation of state authority and administrative procedures introduced during the colonial era, which culminated in conflict between the Abudu and the Andani royal families in 2002. This led to the assassination of the then sitting King, Yaa-Naa Yakubu Andani II, and the loss of over forty lives, as well as property.

The aim of this section is not to provide a detailed analysis of these disputes in Ghana, but to suggest the kinds of internal operations that the military take part in within the countries' borders. The army's involvement in internal operations is not something that only happens occasionally, as one officer posted to Ghana's northern

region remarked: 'We are always deployed in these conflict areas... It has become a permanent thing' (interview, Tamale, October 2019).

In order to contain localised outbreaks of violence, as in Yendi, successive governments have typically responded by deploying the Ghana Police Service with support from the Ghana Armed Forces to enforce peace and create the conditions required for other interventions such as dialogue and mediation. These forces are currently responsible for the maintenance of peace and security in Ghana's three northern regions, including Dagbon. Operation Gong Gong is one of several internal security operations that the armed forces are engaged in. Other internal operations, in which Ghana's armed forces participate jointly with the Ghana Police Service, are intended to curb armed robbery and violent crime, as in Operation Calm Life. Alongside this, Operation Cowleg and Operation Sit Down Look have been established to combat the destruction of crops in rural communities and to monitor the movement of people, goods and ammunition. Operation Conquest Fist has been established to patrol activities on the northern border. The involvement of Ghana's armed forces in internal security operations, in other words, is comprehensive in both the quantity and the types of issues that soldiers are called upon to engage in. Unlike many other countries that recognise the principle of military aid to the civil power, Ghana deploys soldiers pre-emptively, not as a last resort in support of the state's civil authorities, that is, the police. 'We are always pre-emptive,' one officer in headquarters in Accra overseeing peacekeeping noted about internal operations; 'we don't want it to degenerate, we are always there to prevent it from escalating' (interview, Accra, September 2019).

In this capacity, soldiers carry out roles which, on some level, resemble routine activities in peacekeeping, as one soldier serving in Yendi (in the Dagbon conflict) explained:

We do patrols, day and night, and palace [i.e., the chief's residence] guard duties. We mount checkpoints, we check vehicles and personnel. Sometimes we do cordon and search, in case we have a report on hidden rifles, or if somebody is expected to carry arms. Gong Gong helps to bring down hostile activities; I think it decreases the fear of the civilians in case something happens at their villages, and we are around, it decreases their fear. As long as the military is around, everything is OK.

-Interview, Accra, October 2019.

Certainly, as one retired general was quick to point out, echoing others: 'Internal operations are always to support the police, so [they are] purely police duties, but some of the activities, operations, happen in very remote areas, where the police way of doing business would not be suitable to counter threats, so we team up with the police to be effective' (interview, Accra, September 2019). Even so, there is no doubt that the involvement of soldiers in police operations leads to blurred responsibilities, instances of abuse and the excessive use of force. The blurred boundaries between the respective roles of the police and the military are reinforced by the military's lack of trust in the police's capacity, as one officer regularly involved in internal operations noted: 'We go in because we know that our society really doesn't have much respect for the police; most often they [the population] challenge the police when they are out on operation' (interview, Tamale, October 2019). This lack of respect for the police was partially linked to corruption, which in turn was seen as having a spill-over effect on Ghana Armed Forces personnel: 'Our guys are learning so many bad things from the police – how to take money, for instance' (interview, Tamale, October 2019).

**Fortunate or unfortunate, the African states use the military for internal operations. In Africa we cannot afford to create more services, and we gain some of our experiences from internal operations.**

These observations reflect the internal dynamics in Ghana, both what is perceived as the pervasive politicization of the police, and the steady abrasion and contamination that Ghana's armed forces experience when they engage in internal operations led by the police. What they also reflect is the interplay between experiences in international peacekeeping and internal operations. On one level the latter becomes a training ground for the former, but on another level it is equally the case that experiences from peacekeeping spill over into how internal operations are approached. Thus, one officer in charge of peacekeeping policy in Accra remarked:

Fortunate or unfortunate, the African states use the military for internal operations. In Africa we cannot afford to create more services, [and] we gain some of our experiences from internal [operations]. **Internal operations have given us a lot of experiences when it comes to POC.** We have a training school that trains us to do this, the Jungle Warfare School. We train for internal operations. When we go outside [to PSOs], we translate those experiences into the POC task, **which is just internal operations in another country.**

-Interview, Accra, September 2019.



Thus, while the approach Ghanaian forces take to POC when they deploy in international missions draws on their experiences in Ghana, peacekeeping also shapes how the military approaches activities at home. 'Because of international laws' that the officers learned about in peacekeeping, one major serving in northern Ghana noted, much less violence is used. 'We go for peacekeeping,' he continued, 'and they say that we have excelled, respected people, their customs – if you learn **theirs**, why won't you learn **yours**?' (interview, Tamale, October 2019). Precisely what was emphasised as important when conducting POC abroad was considered important regarding internal operations as well, namely the willingness and ability to engage in dialogue with the communities in which they are deployed: 'Before you deploy, you should go and visit the opinion leaders, and peacekeeping has reinforced the importance of doing that.... So that is why I say we carry [our approach] to the international, and also bring [the international] to the local' (interview, Tamale, October 2019).



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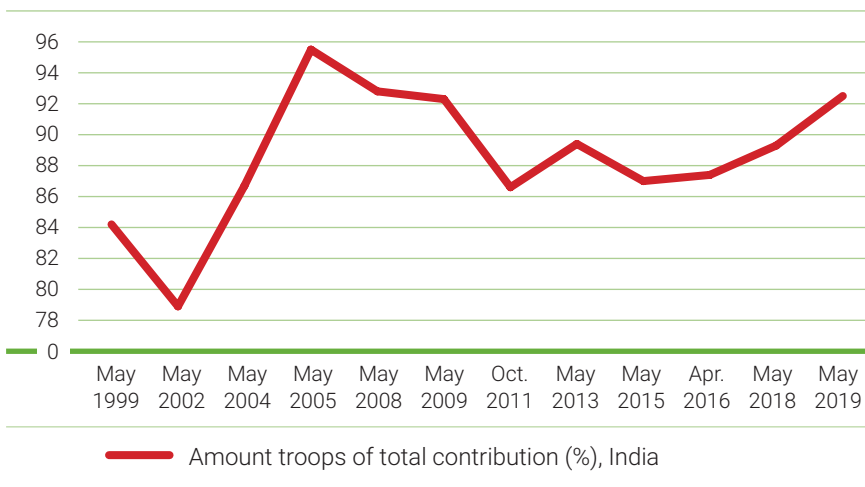
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# INDIA AND UN PEACEKEEPING



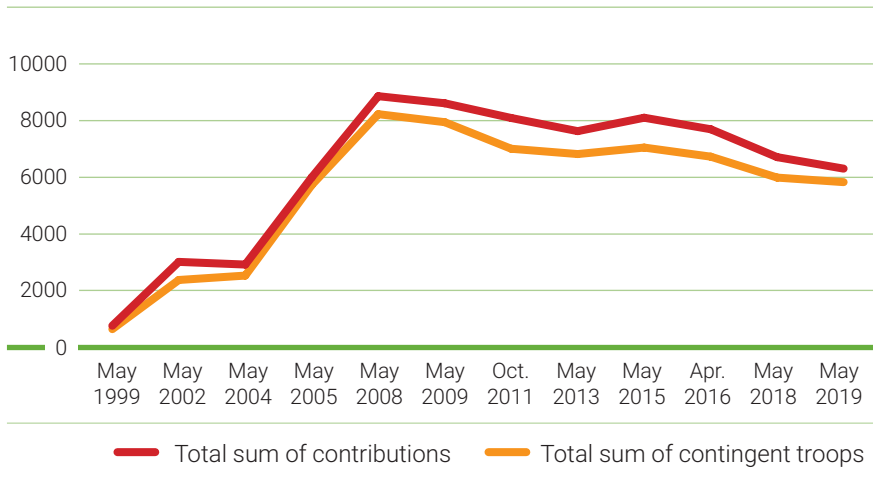
Like Ghana, India has been committed to UN peacekeeping since the UN's very first mission, established in the DRC in 1960 (Chinna 2009; Choedon 2013; Banerjee 2013; Hansel and Möller 2014). Indeed, India was a key participant not only in that mission, but has been in over thirty missions since. India has contributed not only military personnel across all service branches, but also key equipment, civilian personnel, training and field infrastructure such as hospitals. For decades, the country has been known for its national commitment to peacekeeping, as well as the competence and professionalism of its soldiers (see Figures 1 and 2). Historically, India's primary motivation for such sustained involvement in UN peacekeeping has been to support and maintain the UN as the world's most important multilateral institution (Mohan and Gippner 2015; de Carvalho and de Coning 2013). This is in line with India's long-standing ideological commitment during the Cold War to avoid alignment with either ideological bloc, focusing instead on developing more equitable international institutions. Since 1960, India has participated in UN peacekeeping missions both to enhance the authority of the UN as an organisation and to bolster India's own reputation and influence on the world stage (Aoi et al. 2007). Particularly since the end of the Cold War, this desire for recognition has been focused especially on the goal of exerting an influence within the UN Security Council, with the stated aim of acquiring a permanent seat on the Council. In addition to gaining prestige at the international level, India also sees its participation in UN peacekeeping as a way to develop further economic and diplomatic ties with the countries it has operated in under the UN flag (Blah 2017).

**Figure 3. Peacekeeping troops from India over the years**



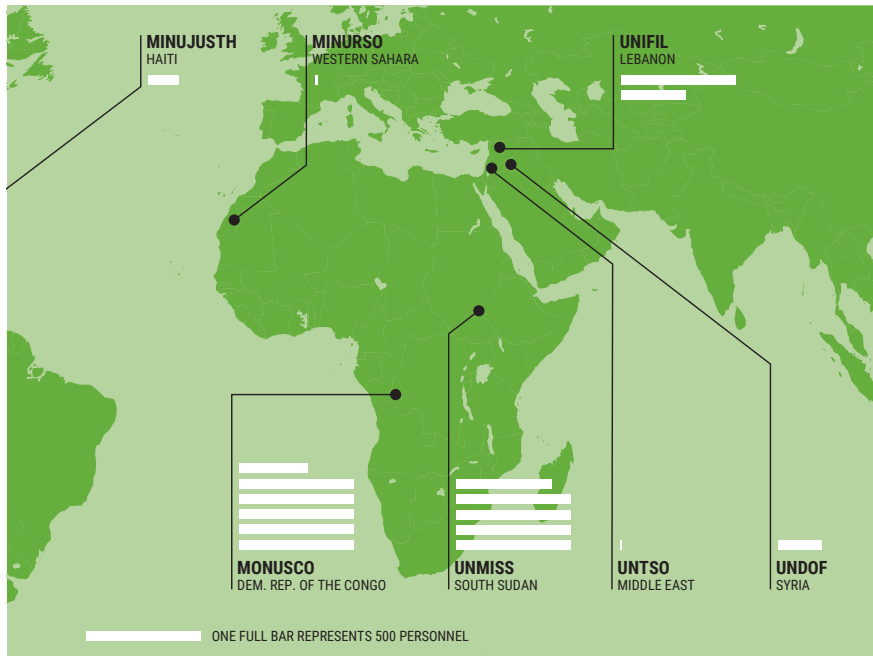
Source: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/open-data-portal>

**Figure 4. India's participation in PSOs: contributions, total and troops**



Source: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/open-data-portal>

**Map 3. India's peacekeeping operations – 2020**



Source: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/india>



This is perhaps one of the main motivations for India becoming involved in so many different missions, as well as for it prioritizing humanitarian and training competencies rather than strictly military ones (Sidhu 2016). One of the ways India does this is by recruiting and deploying female units in its peacekeeping contributions, who, while banned from combat positions, can nevertheless serve important training functions (Press Trust of India 2018). While achieving further political influence within the UN seems to be the main reason behind India's firm participation in peacekeeping, its military strategic mindset has been less receptive to conducting robust operations against fragmented armed groups in recent PSOs. At least, that is the main criticism levied against Indian and other South Asian troops in UN documents, as well as in interactions with UN political administrators (interviews with UN officials and Indian diplomatic representatives to the UN). To interrogate this link between this strategic and military mindset and the execution of POC tasks in recent PSOs, in this study respondents were asked five main questions that will be discussed below: What do they understand by POC and associated tasks? What experiences do they draw on in conducting POC tasks? How is POC done in the field? What are their reflections on their experiences? And what is their response to the criticism of non-robustness routinely levied by international observers and UN bureaucrats?

## **WHAT IS PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS FOR INDIAN TROOPS?**

Murthy (2012) argues that, as a traditional troop contributor, India's views on POC are aligned with those of traditional peacekeeping. UN peacekeepers cannot and should not protect everyone from everything. The UN Security Council's role does not end with the generation of mandates for POC. The Security Council designs mandates and should be held accountable if unachievable mandates are generated out of political expediency or if inadequate resources inhibit performance. It thus bears the responsibility for differentiating between threats that require a military response from those that require a rule of law response. Nationally India endorsed the findings of the Independent Study commissioned by the UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in 2009, which admitted that the ultimate responsibility for the inadequate protection of civilian populations lies with the host state. Mirroring this national line, all respondents agreed that in essence POC is the primary responsibility of the host national government. Only three of our 25 respondents interpreted POC in terms of the UN POC concept as developed by the UN DPKO and the Department of Field Support. POC in the UN consists of or operates around three tiers, namely 1. 'protection through dialogue and engagement', 2. 'provision of physical protection' and 3. 'establishment of a protective environment'. The UN POC concept also makes reference to four phases: prevention, pre-emption, response

and consolidation (DPKO/DFS 2015). In terms of the POC concept, the Indian military aligns itself with Tier 2 deliverables (providing a security blanket), while the UN is engaged with Tier 1 (peace-making and community reconciliation).

When breaking down the understanding of POC tasks, respondents admitted that the bulk of POC activities consist of patrolling, picketing, supporting local communities through vocational training (e.g. agriculture, auto-mechanics), rebuilding infrastructure (schools, bridges), providing food, medical and veterinary support, and building trust to source reliable informants in order to gather human intelligence from civilians, often through community liaisons. Almost half of our respondents felt that counterinsurgency (COIN) experience at home in India enables Indian peacekeepers to relate to civilian communities more readily. With an Indian population of 1.3 billion and an estimated 3,462,500 personnel, the Indian Army sends only a limited number of its personnel overseas for peacekeeping (Ioanes 2019). Units that are selected for UN PSOs are those that do well in operations in COIN areas (Jammu and Kashmir, the northeast) or along the line of control with Pakistan on, for example, the Siachen glacier. Respondents felt that learning from internal operations shapes personnel in their approach to engaging with civilian communities, while learning from peacekeeping experiences was of limited use and did not apply to the internal context.

## **LEARNING FROM COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS**

The official narrative of COIN operations suggests that the Indian Armed Forces follow a people-centred policing approach (Thorat 1986:182-184). Besides deploying troops, the Indian government has contained insurgencies in the turbulent northeast, implementing a range of non-kinetic measures alongside people-centred policing. At various points in time, the Indian government has pursued devolution of political power within federal arrangements by creating states such as Nagaland in 1963, and by entering into political negotiations with insurgent leaders. Through this approach, which involves negotiations and the devolution of powers, the political and military leadership has succeeded in accommodating grievances through negotiated ceasefires such as the Naga Accord of 1997. This does not imply that there has been little or no violence. Efforts to intern or resettle Nagas forcibly into protected villages has spurred broad discontent (Dasgupta 2004).

Popular resistance was countered by devolving policing in the Naga Hills to paramilitary troops from the Assam Rifles. Made up of local recruits better accustomed to the region's terrain and culture, this element of adaptation produced positive results.

Efforts were also made to encourage civil-society actors to engage with the insurgents to resolve the conflict, including peace rallies in 2009. This political accommodation approach has been accompanied by a hearts and mind strategy supported by the ethos of a developmental army. For example, as part of its Operation Sadhbhavana campaign, launched in 1998, the Indian Army has undertaken various campaigns to improve literacy, public health, relief and rehabilitation in the insurgency-affected areas of Jammu and Kashmir and the northeast. Through the provision of medical facilities, including veterinary doctors, and building and repairing roads, bridges and schools, the army has attempted to present a pro-people face. Many military civic action programmes aimed at reaching out to the hearts and minds of the civilian population have been launched with the aim of dissuading civilian youth from supporting militant recruitment in Kashmir (Singh 2009).

**Through the provision of medical facilities, including veterinary doctors, and building and repairing roads, bridges and schools, the army has attempted to present a pro-people face.**

These practices appear to have been adapted to the peacekeeping environment. Recent PSOs in the DRC and South Sudan were described by respondents as 'counterinsurgency'-type environments, the feeling being that COIN campaigns cannot be successful without engaging with civilians. As one respondent noted:

Counterinsurgency is similar to recent peacekeeping operations in that these are both intra-state conflicts. It involves fighting rogue elements, who are often civilians that are recruited in support of a competing political ideology or due to identity related conflicts. In both cases, operations must be people-centric; it is about protecting innocent civilians and minimizing collateral damage.

-Author interview, 2018/2019.

Cultural sensitivity and building a rapport with local communities was cited as a further commonality between the two types of operations, namely peacekeeping and COIN:

In traditional counterinsurgency operations, the Indian Army, being a constellation of different sub-cultures, has witnessed tensions when local people felt that soldiers were disrespectful towards them, for

example in the northeast. The issue of cultural sensitivity in people-centric operations translates equally into the peacekeeping context. Spanish and French units in Lebanon are seen driving around in high-speed cars, throwing chocolates out of their windows for children. They do not come out of the car, which would be expected as a basic courtesy. Neither do they try to establish a rapport with the locals. The Indians reach out to civilians' communities better. Their engagement is less mechanical. Indians do not go by the rule book. They rely on counter-insurgency experience in Jammu and Kashmir and the northeast. By providing rations to locals, free medical check-ups and medicines, we create rapport in ways that enable us to develop reliable informants to source information. ,

-Author interview, 2018/2019.

There is a wider field evidence to support this application of learning from COIN. From Somalia to Sierra Leone, Liberia and the DRC, and more recently in South Sudan, Indian troops have provided medical and veterinary facilities to local populations close to their deployments, in addition to supporting educational initiatives such as re-building schools and providing vocational training support. In the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) (March 1993-December 1994), the Indian Army deployed 66 Infantry Brigade groups under Brigadier M.P. Bhagat. The Indian Brigade covered nearly 70% of UNOSOM II's total operational area. Apart from escorting refugees and humanitarian convoys, medical facilities were extended to the villagers. The Indians started orphanages, reconstructed schools, dug borewells, treated livestock and offered vocational training for unemployed young people in fields like motor-mechanics. Training in the rule of law was offered to the police, and Indian personnel helped re-establish village and district councils.

While these humanitarian and developmental efforts were positively received by the local populations, this did not deter armed attacks on them. The Somali political leaders reportedly wrote to the Indian government asking it not to withdraw Indian peacekeepers until the country returned to normality. More recently, in South Sudan, Indian troops have set up army hospitals in Juba and Malakal. The Indian medical units in Malakal have assigned a veterinary doctor with a dedicated office and support team to cater to the 'wealth in cattle' that is a reality in South Sudan. This intuitive response to local and cultural sensitivities draws on what the Indian Army has learned from COIN operations. On the one hand, the importance of catering to the needs of the local population has won accolades for the Indian troops in South Sudan (UNMISS 2019). On the other hand, local appreciation of the Indian troops

and their efforts is tempered by routine Western criticisms of the lackadaisical response of Indian troops (among other TCCs) in countering armed attacks on civilians in these very contexts (Centre for Civilians in Conflict 2016). It is unclear, therefore, whether there is a mismatch between expectations and performance or whether the task's implementation has been misinterpreted, a point analysed in greater depth in the next section.

## **EXECUTING PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS TASKS: FAILINGS OR MISUNDERSTANDINGS?**

One respondent who had served as a military observer (MILOB) in Beni, DRC, during 2006 admitted to handing out leaflets encouraging combatants from the Allied Democratic Front-Nalu faction to surrender. In approaching the rebels informally, he was less cautious and less compliant in following the security protocols that restricted other TCCs. His soft approach to intelligence gathering was not viewed favourably by MILOBs from other countries, as it meant his flouting security protocols:

Other MILOBs adhere to rules of engagement, which require that they travel as a group. However, rebels feel threatened by such group movements, and do not come forward to surrender. Indians go by the task; they do not worry about the means or the rules. The ends justify the means.

-Author interview, 2018/2019.

As a Special Forces member of the Indian Army, this officer had a more pragmatic approach and made his own assessment of the situation. His culture of **jugaad** or adaptive hustling was helpful in bringing about the surrender of 143 Allied Democratic Front-Nalu rebels. While his colleagues were appreciative of this feat, they were not willing to take such risks. This application of self-assessment has invited criticism from Western peers (Libben 2017). Several of our respondents emphasised the pitfalls of exercising judgement and adhering to a more restrained approach in the use of force as inviting Western criticism. Recalling the experience of serving in the North Kivu Brigade in charge of patrolling nearly 5000 km<sup>2</sup> of territory, one respondent noted that:

...the North Kivu Brigade had too little resources at hand. It is easy to blame peacekeepers for not achieving the peace while providing them with limited resources. We face criticism when we show a lack of willingness to engage when told. In short, we face criticism for exercising



agency. In 2005-2006, after an attack on one of the South American contingents, the Pakistani contingent went with infantry fighting vehicles and tanks and attacked civilians. In contrast, during 2007-2008, when local **Mai Mai** youth attacked the Indian Army posts in Beni [DRC], the Indians did not retaliate, as they had come armed only with machetes. The Indian officers' part of the North Kivu Brigade made their own decisions in not fighting with the **Mai Mai** rather than following Western instructions on robustness. The **Mai Mai** were seen as community defence forces, a necessary security force for the civilians, in a context where the state was failing to provide security. ,

-Author interview, 2018/2019.

**The West does not understand POC – they have a cut and dried approach to it. Most UN peacekeeping contingent doctors will not attend to local civilians due to UN protocol. Indian brigades, on the other hand, are capable of humanitarian assistance, they are often the first to reach a place, they offer food aid based on local needs, a vet, and a medical team accompanies the troops.**

Other respondents who had served in UNAMSIL (2000) felt that the Western interpretation and application of POC was too technical and did not respond to local needs intuitively.

, The West does not understand POC – they have a cut and dried approach to it. Most UN peacekeeping contingent doctors will not attend to local civilians due to UN protocol. Indian brigades, on the other hand, are capable of humanitarian assistance, they are often the first to reach a place, they offer food aid based on local needs, a vet, and a medical team accompanies the troops. They also serve the locals. Indian units undertake road repair, and [they] revived areas where they were present in Sierra Leone, such as Daru, Kailahun, Pendembu. These villages were burnt and destroyed. The Indians studied the local population, we tried to raise their morale, we set up competitions over 'healthy baby' and 'clean villages' [...] all at little cost to the Indian troops. There was no preaching or sensitization. We did not provide complicated infrastructure that the locals could not maintain. Being pro-people and pro-active, however, invites accusations of treading on NGO/humanitarian territory. ,

-Author interview, 2018/2019.

## THINKING ON THE USE OF FORCE

It is well known that Indian troops have often demonstrated reticence when using force to protect civilians against armed groups during PSOs. The reasons for adopting a conservative approach to the use of force during peacekeeping again draw parallels with learning from COIN:

During counterinsurgency operations within India, the rules of engagement while dealing with civilian communities and 'do's' and 'don'ts' for all ranks are strict. They are meant to ensure the sound discipline of troops. We follow respectful dealings with civilians during the conduct of search operations, patrols or at checkpoints during the counterinsurgency operations. We also opt for minimal use of force during search operations. Such a strategy reduces any collateral damage and possible human rights abuses.

-Author interview, 2018/2019.

According to some respondents, the standard approach of offering an 'iron' fist in a velvet glove applies to peacekeeping, although the rules of engagement in COIN were viewed as 'considerably different from the requirements of robust peacekeeping', as one respondent noted:

In Jammu and Kashmir, and the northeast, use of force is always of last resort. The army is faced with stone pelters, or suicide bombers. The army tries to influence people, their own countrymen, and its purpose is to protect them from the insurgents, who are only a small percentage of the population. Chance encounters or brief encounters may take place, but most rule of law issues are tackled by the police.

ROE [Rules of Engagement] in India and in the UNPKO [United Nations Peacekeeping Operations] are very different. The Army is not used in civil situations until the situation gets out of hand. In a counterinsurgency context the rules are clear, there is no ambiguity. The orders are clear, and the chain of command is very clear. The Indian Army fires for effect not to scare people. This is not possible in UNPKOs, there is too much ambiguity.

-Author interview, 2018/2019.

Besides, UN regulations restrict the use of force in peacekeeping contexts. In addition, each TCC has its own country rules of engagement, which reinforce these rules, such as superior orders to fire, and national chains of command in both the

field and their home country. These multiple levels of decision-making can make tackling armed actors through the use of force rather tricky (Wills 2009). One of our respondents was a sector commander in the DRC. During his tenure he commanded several national contingents, including an Indian brigade. This offered him a fair insight into the national priorities and perspectives of different contingents:

Despite the fact that in the UN missions troops are provided [with] detailed operating orders, including standardised tactical incident reaction procedures, on when to use force, rules of engagement are interpreted by the troops, and standard operating procedures can be applied differently.

Besides, the presence of a large number of human rights agencies and NGOs was another major factor in the controlled and at times delayed responses by some contingents [due to possible human rights abuses]. Troops needed clear orders for every task and contingency, including at times clearing from their national headquarters.

-Author interview, 2018/2019.

Respondents opined that, if anything goes wrong when the UN deploys missions, the flack is taken by the country that provides the troops, not individual officers, as is the case with domestic operations in India. The potential for a diplomatic debacle makes peacekeepers wary of using force (Blocq 2010; Hultman et al. 2013; Williams 2013; Hunt 2017).

## **TACKLING THE CRITICISM OF NON-ROBUSTNESS AND REFLECTION ON EXPERIENCES**

Respondents understood that robust peacekeeping is necessary for civilian protection. They also admitted that peacekeepers cannot be bystanders, given that, in recent PSOs in Mali, DRC and South Sudan, the primary concern of the UN PSO mandates is POC. However, they admitted that the practical execution or enforcement of POC remains a grey area. As one officer noted:

Given that the armed actors are fragmented, armed opposition groups and the national army [host government] are creating human rights abuses. The troops need to be careful – they cannot fire against the host government [due to the fear of diplomatic and reputational problems].

-Author interview, 2018/2019.

In other cases, the military and political leaderships of the UN PSOs may have different ideas about when to be robust. When the Indian Force Commander wanted to fire rockets at the locations of the Allied Democratic Front-Nalu (June-August 2010) and asked for attack helicopters to be deployed, the civilian leadership in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) was hesitant and dissuaded the Indians from this escalation (Mampilly 2018). Therefore, even when robust action was desired by the (Indian) military leadership in the DRC, the UN's civilian leadership refrained from taking the fight to some of the rebels. In many respects, in the view of the study's respondents, these mixed messages concerning the importance of when to be robust and the pullback based on worries around escalation, retaliation and further civilian casualties can explain the innumerable instances of inaction in the DRC and other cases. In other cases, selective reporting means that peacekeeping successes are underplayed. During a battle near Goma in 2013, when Indian peacekeepers were trying to defeat the M23 rebels, some members of the Indian unit prevented gross civilian abuses by the rebels, which was overlooked amidst scathing criticism of the M23 advance into Goma (Reynaert 2011). These criticisms often ignore the underlying factors that result in negative outcomes. As one officer explained:

■ The real reasons for the M23 advance lay in a lack of coordination with [the National Army of the DRC]. The UN forces were in the DRC in support of the National Congolese Army, and as such had limited control over their actions. This element was another contributing factor to problems with protecting civilians. In November 2012, the sudden withdrawal of the Congolese Army of 8 Mil Region [approx. 6,000 troops] from a position of strength allowed the M23 rebels to make an unhindered advance into Goma and thereafter Sake. Only a few elements of the UN forces were available which put up some resistance, prioritizing the protection of UN assets, the airport and related POC tasks. Without strong control and coordination with the Congolese forces, protection was problematic. ■

-Author interview, 2018/2019.

Respondents felt that criticism of the actions of peacekeepers is relatively easy and that it shifts the focus away from the structural problems of UN peacekeeping to focus on the behaviour of specific units instead. These include a lack of resources and problems with command and control and intelligence sharing. There is also a perceived lopsided labour dynamic that characterises the enthusiasm of

peacekeepers from the global South (Henry 2012; Cunliffe 2013). One officer explained:

The main problem is that certain countries contribute finances, but want contributing troops to fall in line with their ideas. However, without Western boots on the ground, it gives the impression that non-western lives are less valuable and more disposable. The Western perspective, that ‘we are giving money, please deliver on the ground according to our instructions’, needs to change. Asians and other third-world countries want Western countries to also place boots on the ground. The Chinese model of putting money and boots on the ground seems the most sensible for a P5 country.

-Author interview, 2018/2019.

It is a structural condition that African forces especially, but also Asian forces, as indicated in this section, take on some of the most demanding and dangerous tasks, at times with inadequate support from their home countries, and especially the UN. These inequalities, which materialise inside the mission and have to do with the differing conditions imposed by individual TCCs, hamper collaboration and coordination between African, Asian and European contingents (Cold-Ravnkilde et al. 2017; Albrecht and Cold-Ravnkilde 2020).

**The main problem is that certain countries contribute finances, but want contributing troops to fall in line with their ideas. However, without Western boots on the ground, it gives the impression that non-western lives are less valuable and more disposable.**

## **‘THANKLESS’ PEACEKEEPING AND THE SEARCH FOR RECOGNITION**

Recognition has also been a considerable challenge for the Indian military, among others. As one of the respondents who served in UNMISS noted, the sacrifices and good work done by the troops must be better publicised. This is further illustrated by anecdotal evidence obtained in a conversation with an officer about the challenges during the 2013 conflict in Malakal, South Sudan. Here, civilians were caught up in clashes between government troops – the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army – and the opposition. The officer explained:



Both sides left their injured soldiers outside my gate to take care of them. At one point, each of my three Level One hospitals were holding more than thirty gunshot wound cases in makeshift tents. Who feeds them? And their attendants?

INDBATT [Indian Battalion] had medicines to cater for its own troops only. No paediatric or gynaecological medicines at all. The so-called humanitarians [Médecins Sans Frontières, Red Cross, World Health Organisation] had all evacuated their staff. My troops had risked their lives to fetch thirteen of their doctors from the Bor City Hospital amidst heavy gunfire to extricate them. My lady Medical Officer had not slept for six days at a stretch. I had to order her to go to her room and not get back for the next eight hours. She returned in five.

We lost 84 children below five years of age to an outbreak of measles [in the POC site]. The most difficult job for my men was to bury those little bodies inside the protected area as per the Red Cross manual. The post-traumatic stress disorder can be devastating.

-Author interview, 2018/2019.

Respondents unanimously felt that, despite years of doing peacekeeping, it was still difficult to convince international players to take Indian peacekeepers seriously and to decolonise their perceptions about Indian troops as a post-colonial, third-world army lured by the UN's financial payments for peacekeeping. 'Indians do not know how to project their work. We have remained unsung heroes', as one officer lamented (Skype interview, 2019). This speaks strongly to what was discussed above: inequalities between troops, depending on whether they are from the global North or global South. Certainly, it is the global South that carries the main burden when it comes to the distribution of danger and supplies in the mission.

# CONCLUSION



Studying Ghana's and India's role in peacekeeping and the two countries' views on POC offers some important and less well-known insights into how the troops of the governments that send them understand and implement their POC function. This report has captured the types of military operations, including internal ones, that have shaped Ghana's and India's respective approaches to peacekeeping, and shown POC to be an integral part of this. Both are postcolonial militaries, legatees of the British Empire, and ideologically affiliated with the Non-Aligned Movement. They are both in the top ten of TCCs. Unsurprisingly, they also represent different historical and learning trajectories, policy priorities, and thus also different approaches to POC.

In the case of India, within policy circles peacekeeping is not mainstream. While most commentators would agree that peacekeeping is part of India's wider ambitions in relation to its global status, in practice India's Ministry of External Affairs does not have a specific peacekeeping doctrine. Participation is often ill-informed and has little influence, if any, on how the armed forces conduct their internal and border operations. In a well-known anecdote, when 23 Indian soldiers were taken hostage by the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone, the then defence minister raised a pertinent but telling question in parliament: 'What strategic interest did India have in participating in a small country in West Africa?' (Bullion 2001: 81). The army scrambled for an answer.

Not much has changed since then. Nevertheless, at the macro-level, peacekeeping is considered part of India's economic and defence engagement in the international arena. In Sub-Saharan Africa specifically, where most of the UN's PSOs deploy, it is part of India's strategic engagement with the continent. Indeed, as India's role in the world has risen, Indian diplomats have used the UN as one of the main venues for status-seeking, emphasizing how they have supported the UN Charter and the maintenance of global peace and security (de Estrada and Foot 2019). Given the inhospitable and dangerous deployments that the UN is increasingly undertaking while insisting on POC and the dwindling economic benefits of being a TCC, the average officer is disenchanted with the prospect of going on mission. Indeed, most military personnel would say that it is a thankless task.

For Ghana, from a policy perspective, peacekeeping became important to the country's perception of itself after independence as pursuing peace and security in Sub-Saharan Africa specifically, as well as globally. Contributing troops to PSOs has had a pacifying effect on the army by giving them a focus outside Ghana's own borders, something meaningful to work towards. It has also boosted the income of individual soldiers and, to a lesser degree, yet still substantially, supported the army's overall funding. Especially when President Kufuor came to power, taking over from

Rawlings in 2001, peacekeeping contributions were considered a way both to foster good relations with Ghana's neighbours and to stabilise the region in an act of self-preservation. Continued contributions to UN peacekeeping are considered to have had a stabilising effect on domestic politics and equally urgently on a region that was and still is ridden by instability and open conflict. Democratization of the army, a key feature of security-sector reform, has been one of the side-effects of peacekeeping-related training and participation in PSOs and thus an important gain for Ghana. Furthermore, there is a connection between the types of roles they play at home and abroad in POC, which generally, despite the robust turn in peacekeeping, are similar in their respective tasks, including patrolling, manning checkpoints and escorting vulnerable populations in their daily tasks (a central POC role).

When it comes to internal operations, any Ghanaian officer will argue that the army acts **only** in support of the police and that using force is a last resort. However, the army, and the Ghanaian population in general, have limited trust in the police, which is politicised and under-funded (this in turn leads to petty as well as more substantial corrupt practices). This has meant that the army is drawn increasingly into internal security, partly due to political pressure from the executive. In India, the use of the military in internal operations remains a last resort. Because of the more central role of peacekeeping to Ghana since independence, the army's learning from this experience has been considerable, for instance, by working under civilian leadership in PSOs, especially in light of the country's military regime under Rawlings from 1982 to 1991. For the Indian army, learning from peacekeeping has been limited in comparison. With a stronger tradition of democratic control vis-à-vis the armed forces, India has faced other security challenges, such as internal insurgencies, long-standing tensions with its neighbours and the ever-growing disparity between rich and poor.

While serving in PSOs and approaching their protective role, in the field Ghanaian troops intuitively emulate what is considered good practice back home, that is, interacting with local leaders who are known to respect and understand the importance of the hierarchies that these leaders represent and the knowledge they have about the area in which they live. In general, where Ghanaian troops have been deployed they have tended to integrate, relatively speaking, with the local populations, for instance, by teaching Sierra Leonean ex-combatants skills that could help them transition out of conflict and by including the local population in religious services. This approach by Ghanaian forces, including POC, has to a large extent been shaped by a sense of identification with populations they associate themselves with culturally, ethnically and even racially. In turn, the Indian approach is inevitably more disconnected, and Indian respondents considered it to be more developmental, drawing on experiences from its role in COIN.

The importance of intelligence-gathering through community engagement is recognised by both countries, as is a deep-rooted scepticism around the use of force except in self-defence. Both armies lament the unrealistic expectations placed on them, while also noting the trauma that some soldiers may suffer as a consequence of protecting civilians and witnessing death at close quarters. The increasing demands for POC, in parallel with the increasingly violent contexts that PSOs deploy to, are likely to make countries like India and Ghana more reluctant to make contributions. This is a problem because it is countries like these that the UN depends on for reliable and continued contributions to its PSOs.

## NOTES

- 1 More specifically, data are drawn from work relating to Domestic Security Implications of UN Peacekeeping in Ghana (D-SIP): <https://www.dsis.dk/en/projects/d-sip-domestic-security-implications-of-un-peacekeeping-in-ghana>.
- 2 <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/protection-of-civilians-mandate>



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