

## PAKISTAN'S ROLE IN UN PEACEKEEPING: CONTRIBUTIONS, CHALLENGES, AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

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**Amidst many conflicts and humanitarian crises, the United Nations (UN) plays an important role in peace-keeping operations, mitigating conflicts and sustaining peace. As one of the leading contributing countries to UN peacekeeping missions, Pakistan has been a significant player in global efforts to promote peace and stability.**

The UN peacekeeping is a unique and dynamic instrument that helps countries affected by conflicts to create conditions for sustainable peace. It is a manifestation of global partnership that brings together the General Assembly, Security Council, Troops-Contributing Countries (TCCs) and host government(s) in a combined effort to maintain international peace and security.<sup>1</sup>

From the beginning of the UN peacekeeping operations, member states of the UN have been contributing peacekeepers. With the end of the Cold War, the contributions of the developing countries in UN peacekeeping operations have increased significantly. Developing countries take on the effort in managing inter-state and intra-state disputes through peacekeeping operations.<sup>2</sup> United Nations peacekeeping occupies a major place in Pakistan's foreign policy agenda. In particular, the

<sup>1</sup> Shafaat Ullah Shah, "Pakistan and United Nations Peacekeeping: Experiences and Opportunities," ISAS Working Paper, 2020, <https://www.isas.nus.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/330.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Deepjyoti Chand, "Active Participation of Developing Countries in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Cases Comparison of India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh," 2020, <https://ornak.icm.edu.pl/handle/item/3644>

early 1990s were an active period for Pakistan, which served as a UN peacekeeper in various trouble spots throughout the world.<sup>3</sup>

### Pakistan's Role in UN Peace-Keeping Operations

Pakistan has made large contributions to UN Peace-Keeping Operations (UNPKO). The country is one of the largest troop-contributing countries globally. Pakistan's involvement has been significant, with a notable presence in many peacekeeping missions. The country's peacekeepers have played pivotal roles in conflict resolution, humanitarian efforts, and civilian protection, strengthening the UN's endeavors towards peace and stability in conflict-affected regions. Despite facing security risks and resource constraints, Pakistan's commitment to UN peace-keeping has showcased its dedication to global peace and security.

Since becoming a member of the United Nations on September 30, 1947, Pakistan has engaged in numerous UN peacekeeping missions worldwide. Focusing on armed forces, Pakistan has emerged as one of the largest and most dedicated troop providers to the UN. Praised for their efficiency and productivity, Pakistani peacekeepers have earned acclaim for their valuable contributions in UN operations.

#### Timeline of Pakistan's Role as a Peacekeeper

Ser No	UN Mission		Year(s)	Force
01.	UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN CONGO	ONUC	1960-1964	400
02.	UN SECURITY FORCE IN WEST NEW GUINEA	UNSF	1962-1963	1500
03.	UN TRANSITIONAL AUTHORITY IN CAMBODIA	UNTAC	1991-1993	1106
04.	UN OPERATIONS IN SOMALIA	UNOSOM I & II	1992-1995	7200
05.	UN MISSION IN HAITI	UNMIH	1993-1997	525
06.	UN PROTECTION FORCE IN BOSNIA HERZEGOVINA	UNPROFOR	1992-1995	3000
07.	UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN EAST TIMOR	UNAMET	1999-2002	N/A
08.	UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE MISSION IN SIERRA LEONE	UNAMSIL	1995 – 2005	5000
09.	UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN LIBERIA	UNMIL	2003 - To Date	2741
10.	UN MISSION IN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO	MONUC	2003 – 2010	1258
11.	UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE	UNOCI	2004 - To Date	364
12.	UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN BURUNDI	ONUB	2004 - 2006	1185

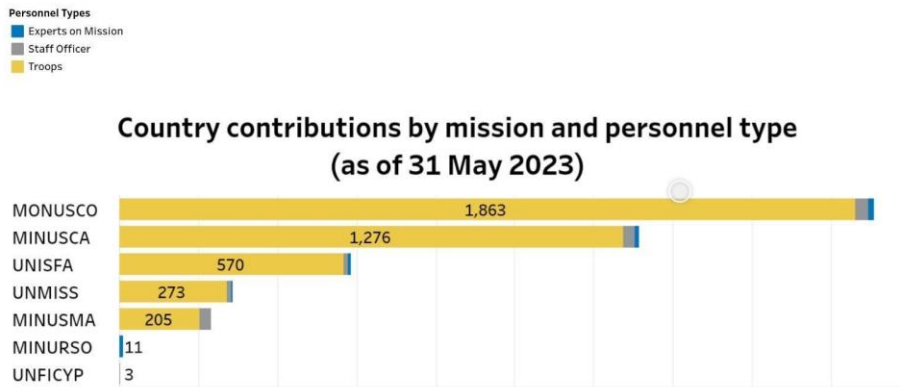
<sup>3</sup> Kabilan Krishnasamy, "Pakistan's Peacekeeping Experiences," *International Peacekeeping* 9, no. 3 2002: 103-120, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/714002736>

13.	UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN	UNMIS	2005 – 2011	1542
14.	UNITED NATIONS – AFRICAN UNION HYBRID MISSION IN DARFUR	UNAMID	2007 - To Date	1051
15.	UN STABILIZATION MISSION IN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO	MONUSCO	1999 - 2010	2726
16.	UN – MULTIDIMENSIONAL INTEGRATED STABILIZATION MISSION IN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC	MINUSCA	2014 - To Date	1250

**Source:** Peace Characterization of Pakistan: Corroboration From Pakistan’s UN Peacekeeping Missions<sup>4</sup>

Since 1960, Pakistan has been one of the main troops and police contributors to the UN peace operations with more than 200,000 men and women sent to 46 UN missions. Currently, over 4000 Pakistani peacekeepers serve in eight peace operations.<sup>5</sup> There may have been as many as 157 peacekeepers killed, including 24 Pakistani police officers. Pakistanis account for almost 10 percent of all casualties sustained by UN peacekeeping missions.<sup>6</sup>

Pakistan has contributed in all domains of UN but mainly in military, para-military and civilian police. Being one of the largest and oldest troops-contributing countries gives Pakistan a unique niche within the community of peacekeepers. In addition to the quantity, the quality and output of Pakistani Peacekeepers has been appreciated.<sup>7</sup>



**Source:** Pakistan Troop and Police Contributors United Nations Peacekeeping<sup>8</sup>

4 Khalid Mahmood Shafi, and Arshi Saleem Hashmi, "Peace Characterization of Pakistan: Corroboration From Pakistan’s UN Peacekeeping Missions," ISSRA Papers 12 2020: 101-112, <https://issrapapers.ndu.edu.pk/site/article/view/54>

5 Minurso’s Peacekeepers: National Day Of Pakistan, United Nations Peace Keeping, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/minursos-peacekeepers-national-day-of-pakistan>

6 Muhammad Imran, Ghulam Murtiza, and Muhammad Sulyman Akbar, "Pakistan's Role in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: An Analysis," Journal of Political Studies 30, no. 1 2023: 1-15, [http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/pols/pdf-files/1-v30\\_1\\_2023.pdf](http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/pols/pdf-files/1-v30_1_2023.pdf)

7 Ibid

8 Pakistan Troop and Police Contributors United Nations Peacekeeping, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors>

## Contributions of Pakistani Women in UN Peacekeeping Missions

Pakistan has assiduously worked on enhancing the active participatory role of women in the UN Peacekeeping missions and successfully achieved the UN goal of sending 15 percent female staff officers to the mission in 2020.<sup>9</sup> Women's participation in peacekeeping operations helps to gain local community confidence and promotes peacekeeping activities in conflict zones. In addition, the participation of women alongside men enables the regulation of the role of the peacekeepers and strengthens the image of the peacekeeping missions.<sup>10</sup>

### Pakistan's UN peacekeeping pledges

#### *Current Pledges:*

Pakistan's commitment to UN peacekeeping is evident through various pledges aimed towards the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. One such commitment is the deployment of women officers in roles such as staff officers, medical officers, and armed forces nursing services. This promotes gender diversity and the importance of women's participation in all facets of peacekeeping. Additionally, Pakistan's dedication is evident in its provision of training support at the Pakistan Peacekeeping Training Centre in National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST).

They focus on ensuring that peacekeepers are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to operate in conflict environments. Furthermore, Pakistan's investment in training extends to observer, staff officer, and protection of civilian courses, further emphasizing its focus on professionalism and capacity building. By contributing training teams to other troop-contributing countries, Pakistan enhances the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping missions, solidifying its reputation as a committed and valuable partner in the global pursuit of peace and security. The figure below shows a breakdown of the peacekeeping pledges made by Pakistan in November 2017 at the Canadian Defense Ministerial meeting.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Wardah Gull, and Shehryar Qaisar, "Female Labour Force Participation: The case of women in armed forces of Pakistan," SADIQ Journal of Pakistan Studies 2, no.2 2022, <https://journals.iub.edu.pk/index.php/sjps/article/view/1501>

<sup>10</sup> Hamnah Saleem Akhter, "Women In Blue Helmets," <https://journal.kinnaird.edu.pk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/12.-Hamnah-Qureshi.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Providing for Peace - Peacekeeping Pledges, <https://www.providingforpeacekeeping.org/capabilities-summits/united-nations-peacekeeping-pledge-counter/>

**Figure:** Pakistan's Peacekeeping Pledges.

Current Pledges	Advanced Pledges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Deployment of women officers as staff officers, medical officers and, armed forces nursing services.</li> <li>● Training support at Pakistan Peacekeeping Training Centre.</li> <li>● Training of officers in observers, staff officers and, protection of civilian courses</li> <li>● Provision of training teams to other troops.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Infantry battalion to rapid deployment level.</li> <li>● Logistic battalion to rapid deployment level.</li> <li>● Engineer Company</li> <li>● Level 2 hospital to rapid deployment level.</li> <li>● Increase deployment of women officers.</li> <li>● Aviation unit.</li> <li>● Tactical Unmanned Aerial System Unit.</li> <li>● Signal Company.</li> <li>● Canine Platoon.</li> <li>● Three Formed Police Units.</li> <li>● Riverine Platoon.</li> <li>● Air Support Unit.</li> <li>● Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit.</li> <li>● 50 military observers/staff officers to UNHQ.</li> <li>● Provision of training teams to other Troops-Contributing countries.</li> <li>● Provision of training teams to UN training centers.</li> </ul>

### ***Advanced Pledges***

Pakistan's advanced pledges in UN peacekeeping commits towards the efficiency of peacekeeping operations by elevating its infantry battalion and logistic battalion to rapid deployment levels, demonstrating agility in crisis management. Pakistan has further commitment to deploy an engineer company ensures vital infrastructure support, crucial for stability in conflict zones upgrading a level 2 hospital to rapid deployment status to critical medical assistance during peacekeeping missions.

Pakistan also aims to increase the deployment of women officers, from its current ratio to reinforce gender diversity and recognizing the invaluable role women play in promoting peace and security. The addition of an aviation unit and Tactical Unmanned Aerial System Unit signifies Pakistan's dedication to leveraging modern technology for improved situational awareness and rapid response capabilities. In line with its commitment to communication and coordination, Pakistan's provision of a Signal Company and Canine Platoon enhances operational efficiency and security. The inclusion of

three Formed Police Units and a Riverine Platoon showcases the nation's dedication to maintaining law and order in challenging environments.

The establishment of an Air Support Unit and Explosive Ordinance Disposal Unit further amplifies Pakistan's role in countering emerging threats, while deploying 50 military observers/staff officers to UNHQ highlights its involvement in shaping policy and strategy at the global level. Lastly, Pakistan's commitment to providing training teams not only to other Troops-Contributing countries but also to UN training centers reinforces its role as a leader in peacekeeping excellence, sharing its expertise for the collective advancement of global peace and security. Pakistan's peacekeeping pledges exemplify the nation's unwavering commitment towards global peace and stability. The country has demonstrated its dedication to upholding the principles of the UN Charter. Pakistan continues to advance towards the collective goal of international peacekeeping.

### **Challenges to in UN Peacekeeping**

There are several challenges in UN peace-keeping efforts. These challenges often stem from modern conflicts and the complexities of peacekeeping missions:

#### ***International***

1. ***Skill-Based Challenges: Enhancing Peacekeeping Expertise:*** Addressing skill-based challenges requires the creation of a database cataloging the diverse skill sets of peacekeepers. This resource ensures assignments aligned with their expertise. It is important to have a liaison capacity to identify suitable skill forces among peacekeepers. This approach enables the deployment of personnel with the right skills to specific missions. The establishment of several global contingency plans is crucial to address varying skill-specific demands across different conflict scenarios. By preparing for diverse challenges, peacekeeping operations gain flexibility and readiness, enhancing their ability to swiftly adapt and respond.
2. ***Stronger Commitment for Peacekeeping Excellence:*** Achieving excellence requires strong commitments of all stakeholders, encompassing political and operational dimensions. Collaborative efforts are vital to overcoming challenges and ensuring the success of peacekeeping missions. While regional partnerships play a critical role, their ability to deliver the necessary political impact is sometimes limited. Strengthening these partnerships through collaboration can amplify their effectiveness.

3. **Political Dynamic: Challenges in Achieving Peace:** A significant political challenge lies in deploying peacekeeping missions in the face of weak political agreements, diminished consent, or stalled peace processes. Overcoming such obstacles demands innovative diplomatic solutions to facilitate effective peacekeeping operations. Deploying missions with vague exit strategies highlights the intricacies of political dynamics. Addressing this necessitates careful planning to ensure a successful transition from peacekeeping to sustainable peace.
4. **Safety and Security: Protecting Peacekeepers and Communities:** Ensuring the safety of peacekeepers is a priority, as they often become targets in conflict zones. Safeguarding them requires heightened security measures, including comprehensive risk assessments and protective protocols. Addressing incidents of sexual exploitation, abuse, and other misconduct within peacekeeping missions is crucial for upholding credibility and integrity. Holding perpetrators accountable through robust mechanisms is essential to maintaining ethical standards. The unregulated spread of new-generation weapons poses significant threats to peacekeeping efforts. Efforts to curb arms proliferation are essential to prevent further destabilization in conflict-affected regions.

### **Pakistan**

1. **Enhancing Peacekeeping Expertise and Skill-Based Strategies:** An effective solution lies in constructing a comprehensive database to cataloging the skills peacekeepers possess. This resource facilitates strategic task assignment, thus ensuring the precise skill sets required for each mission. To further address skill-based challenges, establishing a dedicated liaison capacity is crucial. This mechanism serves to align suitable skill forces and peacekeepers with mission-specific requirements. A multi-pronged approach involves establishing multiple contingents on a global scale. This strategy strengthens the capacity to address diverse challenges by ensuring the availability of specialized skills, enhancing adaptability and preparedness.
2. **Promoting Cost-Effective and Efficient Practices:** A cost-effective measure entails skill assessment mechanisms for new peacekeeping recruits. By evaluating essential skills during the recruitment process, resources are allocated to personnel best suited for respective roles. The involvement of former peacekeepers in informative sessions offers a cost-effective means of sharing invaluable insights and experiences. Their firsthand knowledge contributes to improved training and better-prepared personnel.



3. **Strengthening Training Initiatives:** Embedding the curriculum of international peacekeepers within police and army training institutes, as well as medical training, creates a firm foundation. This approach ensures that peacekeeping knowledge becomes an integral aspect of pre-service training. On the other hand, devising specialized training modules catered to the unique challenges of peacekeeping roles is essential. Offering tailored training to peacekeeper recruits equips them with the necessary skills, enhancing their readiness and confidence for mission deployment.
4. **Navigating Complex and Uncertain Conditions:** Recognizing that peacekeepers often become targets in conflict zones, strategic security measures should be prioritised. Risk assessment and protective protocols are critical components of ensuring the safety of personnel. The interconnectedness of peacekeeping with organized crime underscores the need for multidimensional strategies. Equipping peacekeeping recruits with skills tailored to new mission requirements prepares them to navigate evolving conflict landscapes. Counteracting the unregulated spread of new-generation weapons requires concerted efforts. Strategies to prevent weapon proliferation safeguard peacekeepers and communities' alike, curbing destabilization and maintaining mission integrity.

Addressing these challenges requires strategic planning, training, diplomacy, and unwavering commitment to ensure the effectiveness of its contributions to UN peacekeeping missions. Pakistan has built strong communication channels, fostered collaboration, and has engaged in regular dialogue with all stakeholders involved. Furthermore, adapting to the evolving complexity of mandates demands flexible approaches, integrating diplomatic solutions and operational strategies to successfully navigate uncertain and intricate peacekeeping environments.

### **Effectiveness and Impact**

Peacekeeping operations prevent conflict from breaking out or recurring. The task of maintaining peace in a post-conflict situation was the original intention of peacekeeping.<sup>12</sup> Since its first peacekeeping venture in 1960, Pakistan has marked a niche and become a household name amongst

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<sup>12</sup> Håvard Hegre, Lisa Hultman, and Håvard Møkleiv Nygård, "Evaluating the conflict-reducing effect of UN peacekeeping operations," *The Journal of Politics* 81, no. 1 2019: 215-232, <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/700203>



the troop-contributing countries. It has maintained the credibility of contributing and participating diligently in UN peacekeeping missions.<sup>13</sup>

Pakistan's peacekeepers have demonstrated a significant impact in UN peacekeeping missions worldwide. Their professionalism, discipline, and commitment to upholding UN mandates have earned international recognition. Their contributions have been instrumental in protecting civilians, damage control, and encouraging dialogue among conflicting parties. Their efforts have made a tangible difference in the lives of affected communities. Pakistan continues to contribute to UN peacekeeping, reinforcing the importance of multilateral cooperation.

Armed conflicts are rapidly transitioning from inter-state disputes to intra-state complexities, involving armed groups with terrorist tactics and links to organized crime. In this changing landscape, peacekeepers have become targets. Attacks on peacekeepers have become frequent occurrences, underscoring the challenges they face in increasingly dangerous environments.

Amidst these evolving conflicts, political solutions seem increasingly elusive, often lacking clear exit strategies and genuine political agreements. Peacekeeping mandates have grown broader and more complex, imposing staggering tasks and responsibilities on missions, while regional partnerships sometimes struggle to deliver the necessary political impact.

Performance issues persist in peacekeeping, demanding well-structured, equipped, and trained forces, inclusive participation of women, and accountability for perpetrators of misconduct. Additionally, restrictions on freedom of movement hamper peacekeeping effectiveness, hindering swift responses, protecting civilians, and investigating human rights violations.<sup>14</sup>

To address these challenges, a stronger commitment is needed from all actors involved, encompassing both political and operational aspects. Achieving peacekeeping excellence requires efforts, support, and continuous improvement to ensure the safety and success of peacekeeping missions in the face of rapidly changing armed conflicts.

## Conclusion

Pakistan's role has been significant in advancing global peace and security. As one of the most dedicated troop-contributing countries, Pakistan has demonstrated its commitment to peacekeeping

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<sup>13</sup> Bakare Najimdeen, "UN Peacekeeping Operations and Successful Military Diplomacy: A Case Study of Pakistan," NUST Journal of International Peace and Stability 2020, <https://njips.nust.edu.pk/index.php/njips/article/download/37/42>

<sup>14</sup> UN Peacekeeping - Challenges, United Nations Peacekeeping, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/a4p-factsheet-challenges.pdf>

missions throughout the globe. The country's peacekeepers have navigated challenges, including security risks and evolving conflict with professionalism. Through their efforts they have made a significant impact protecting civilians, mediating dialogue and encouraging stability in conflict-affected regions.

Since 1960, over 200,000 of Pakistan's service men and women have served with honour and valour in 46 UN Missions distinguishing themselves in every mission across all continents with 169 making the ultimate in the line of duty for the cause of international peace and security.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, Pakistan must address challenges such as resource constraint, coordination, and capacity building to continue contributing to UN peacekeeping. Strengthening training programs, cooperating with stakeholders, and capacity building will further empower Pakistani peacekeepers on their endeavors.

Amidst the changing nature of armed conflict and the broader complexities of peacekeeping mandate, Pakistan's steadfast commitment remains essential in ensuring the effectiveness and success of UN peacekeeping efforts. By upholding its reputation as a reliable peacekeeper and actively engaging in multilateral cooperation, Pakistan can continue to play a vital role in advancing the collective goal of international peace and security. As global security landscapes continue to evolve, Pakistan's contribution to UN peacekeeping will remain indispensable in creating a more peaceful and stable world.

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<sup>15</sup> Pakistani peacekeepers continue to exemplify country's steadfast commitment to world peace, <https://mofa.gov.pk/pakistani-peacekeepers-continue-to-exemplify-countrys-steadfast-commitment-to-world-peace/>