

# United Nations Peacekeeping

The United Nations Peacekeeping operations are policing and peacebuilding actions carried out by the UN to bring order and stability in wartorn nations.

The UN Peacekeepers are known as 'Blue Helmets' or 'Blue Berets'. Its personnel consist of soldiers and military officers, police officers and civilian personnel from many countries.

Jean-Pierre Lacroix is the Head of the Department of Peace Operations. He took over from the former Under-Secretary-General Hervé Ladsous on 1 April 2017.

This article will give further details about United Nations Peacekeeping within the context of the IAS Exam.

## Role of United Nations Peacekeepers

The United Nations Peacekeepers monitor and observe peace processes in post-conflict areas and assist former combatants in implementing the peace agreements they may have signed. This assistance may include confidence-building measures power-sharing arrangements, electoral support, strengthening the rule of law, and economic and social development.

The United Nations Charter authorises the United Nations Security Council to take collective action to maintain international peace and security. Due to this, it falls on the UN Security Council to deploy peacekeepers in order to ensure stability and security in conflict regions.

## Structure, Financing and Formation of UN Peacekeeping

### **Structure**

Peacekeeping forces are contributed by member states on a voluntary basis. As of 30 June 2019, there are 100,411 people serving in UN peacekeeping operations (86,145 uniformed, 12,932 civilian, and 1,334 volunteers).

Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh are among the largest individual contributors with around 8,000 units each. African nations contributed nearly half the total, almost 44,000 units.

### **Formation**

When a peace treaty is signed or negotiated, the parties involved might request the United Nations to deploy a peacekeeping force to maintain order and ensure that the elements of the agreed-upon peace treaty are implemented.

If and when the Security Council approves the creation of a mission, then the Department of Peacekeeping Operations begins planning for the necessary elements. At this stage, the senior leadership team is selected. After which the department will seek contribution from member nations since the UN has no standing force or supplies. It must form an ad hoc coalition for every task undertaken. Doing so results in both the possibility of failure to form a suitable force and a general show of strength.

While the peacekeeping force is being assembled, a variety of diplomatic activities are being undertaken by UN staff. The exact size and strength of the force must be agreed to by the government of the nation whose territory the conflict is on. The Rules of Engagement must be developed and approved by both the parties involved and the Security Council.

When all the agreements are in place, the required personnel assembled and final approval given by the Security Council, the force is deployed to the region in question.

Once a force has been deployed a United Nations Special Committee for Peacekeeping Operations oversees the general conduct and day-to-day operations in the deployed area.

## **Finance**

The financial resources of UN Peacekeeping operations are the collective responsibility of UN Member States. Decisions about the establishment, maintenance or expansion of peacekeeping operations are taken by the Security Council. According to the UN Charter, every Member State is legally obligated to pay their respective share for peacekeeping. Peacekeeping expenses are divided by the United Nations General Assembly based upon a formula established by the Member States which takes into account the relative economic wealth of Member States among other things.

## **India's role in UN Peacekeeping**

Till date India has taken part in 49 Peacekeeping missions, contributing over 180,000 troops. The Indian peacekeepers were lauded for their role in preventing a carnage in the South Sudan Conflict in 2014.

So far India has provided two military advisors - Brigadier Inderjit Rikhye and Lt Gen RK Mehta, one deputy Military Advisor (Lt Gen Abhijit Guha) and 14 Force Commanders along with numerous Police Commissioners in various UN Missions. The Indian Army has contributed a large number of its medical corps in the conflict zones it has deployed. The first all-women contingent in a peacekeeping mission was from India, deployed to the UN operation in Liberia.

Lt Gen Satish Nambiar, a former Indian Army Lieutenant General served as the United Nations Protection Force commander from March 1992 to March 1993. He also served on the "High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change" of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Indian Peacekeeping Forces have been deployed to many conflict zones in Asia and Africa such as the Golan Heights, Lebanon, South Sudan, Congo etc where they continue to serve with distinction.