

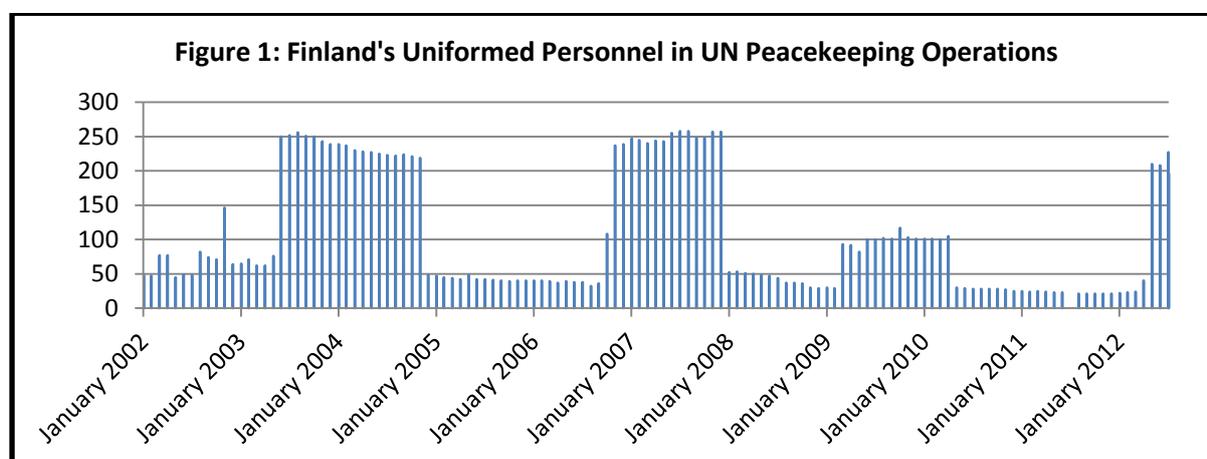
Country Profile: Finland

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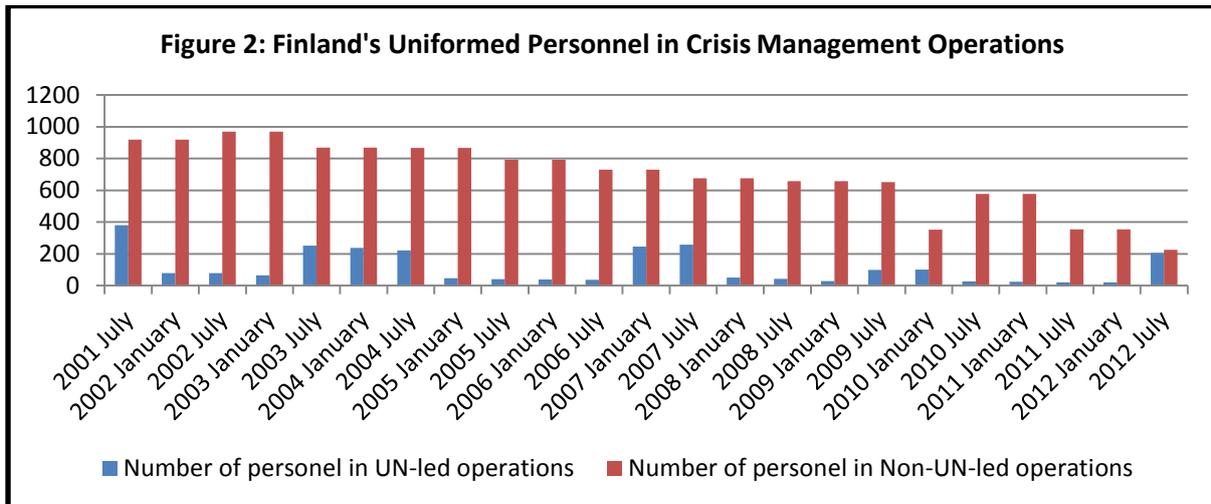
Active Armed Forces ¹	Helicopters	Defense Budget	Uniformed UN Peacekeepers	UN Contribution Breakdown	Other Significant Deployments
21,200	Huges 500 D/E: 7	2010: €2.73bn (1.45% of GDP)	196 (3 female) (31 August 2012)	UNMIL: 2 troops	ISAF: 192 (5 women)
World Ranking (size): 91	Medium transport NH90: 10	2011: €2.86bn (1.48% of GDP)	Ranking: 51	UNTSO: 16 experts + Force Commander	KFOR: 21 (5 women)
Army: 16,000 Navy: 3,500 Air Force: 2,600		2012: €2.85bn (1.41% of GDP)	(7 th largest contributor from EU states)	UNIFIL: 172 troops (3 female)	EULEX: 31 (15 women)
Paramilitary (Border Guard): 2,875				UNMOGIP: 6 experts	EU ALTHEA: 8 EUMM (Georgia): 19 (10 women) EUTM (Somalia): 6 EUPOL COPPS: 4 EUPOL-Afghanistan: 36 (5 women)
Defense spending / active troop: ² US\$173,000 (compared to global average of approx. \$59,000)					

Part 1: Recent Trends

Finland's participation in UN-led missions has decreased significantly during the past two decades. During the past decade participation has averaged 114 uniformed personnel, with a range between approximately 50 and 250; the latter number being reached during brief 12-18 month periods in 2003-04 and 2007. The primary reason for the decrease in participation in UN-led operations has been participation in EU and NATO-led operations. However, during the past decade, participation even in EU and NATO-led operations has decreased from nearly 1,000 to around 200. Calls for increasing participation in UN-led operations are frequently heard in the Finnish parliament, but a preference for EU and NATO-led operations, budgetary restrictions and the lack of suitable operations (from Finland's perspective) have frequently hampered moving from the rhetorical commitment for UN operations to actually increasing participation. Participation has increased from summer 2012 onwards, with Finland's reentry into UNIFIL.



Finland’s overall contribution to international missions has decreased from a high of about 2,000 during the mid-to-late 1990s to currently around 400 soldiers and 100 civilians (see figure 2). The primary reason is economic; Finland’s budget for international operations has not increased in proportion to the increasing costs associated with deployment (equipment, support, salaries). This is amplified with regard to UN-led missions, where contributing one “minimum” battalion-size infantry unit which the UN frequently desires would consume much of the annual budget. During the past decade, Finland has also sought to develop its participation in “civilian” operations, such as the European Union’s civilian crisis management missions (EUPOL in Afghanistan and EULEX in Kosovo being the largest). Because the type of contributions is different (more general Rule of Law than police in EU operations), these contributions at most have a marginal effect on Finland’s ability to contribute to UN operations.



The priority afforded to EU and NATO-led operations emerged out of a desire to support the EU as an organization and strengthen the implementation of its common foreign and security policies, and a view that participation in NATO-led operations is more beneficial for Finland. The two most frequently cited benefits of participating in NATO operations (despite not being a member) are that cooperation enhances the development of the Finnish Defence Forces (particularly ISAF, generally through the Planning and Review Process) and that operations (particularly in the Balkans) are relevant to Finnish/European security. NATO operations are also seen as more effective and safer from a Finnish casualty point of view. Finland has participated in nearly all EU civilian missions and most military missions. Participation in civilian missions is focused on field experts in rule of law (police, prosecutors, etc.).

Part 2: Decision-Making Process

Finland’s decision-making process for participation in UN-led operations is governed by domestic law. The most recent [law on military crisis management from 2006](#), describes the decision-making process for all international military operations. The process described below is well known, followed, and results in a binding joint decision by the President and the government. However, it requires significant amounts of information, and once a decision is made on the form of participation, it is relatively fixed (in terms of numbers of soldiers etc.).

The decision-making process begins with the receipt of an initial inquiry about potential participation from the UN (in the case of UN operations). The foreign and defense ministries then lead preparations for an initial position on whether participation can be considered. Following this (subsequent to more detailed discussions between Finnish representatives and the UN), participation is discussed in general terms in the [Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Security Policy](#) (UTVA in Finnish), with membership that includes the President of the Republic and relevant government ministers, as well as military advisors. At this point the defense ministry can provide initial guidance to the Finnish Defence Forces to begin preparations, in terms of planning, recruiting and acquisition of any necessary additional equipment. As it prepares its final proposal for participation, the government is responsible for organizing a hearing for the [Parliament's foreign affairs committee](#). If the operation is deemed especially challenging or (for NATO or EU missions) there is no UN Security Council mandate, the government must provide the full Parliament with a report, which it then votes on. If participation is limited to ten soldiers or less, only the foreign affairs committee needs to be heard (this partially explains why Finland participated in UNSMIS with exactly ten observers). The official decision to participate is made by the president based on the government's proposal. Frequently this official decision is made when training and preparation for participation is well under way.

Finland has the capacity to deploy battalion-sized units within 30 to 60 days from the preliminary participation decision. However, since Finland recently has participated in ongoing operations, where deployments can be planned a year or more in advance, it has not been necessary to do so.

There are four documents that guide Finnish participation in international operations. The law governing participation in military crisis management operations "[Act on Military Crisis Management](#)" describes the decision-making process and provides a legal foundation for participation; it is available in English. The [Finnish Security and Defence Policy white paper from 2009](#) provides the overall security policy context for participation, and the [Programme of the Finnish Government](#) (June 22, 2011) provides some guidelines and goals for current and near-term participation. The comprehensive crisis management strategy ([Suomen kokonaisvaltainen kriisinhallintastrategia](#)) (2009) provides an overview of Finland's participation and how it should be developed in the coming years.

Part 3: Rationales for Contributing

Finland participates in international operations for a number of reasons, ranging from helping those ravaged by crisis to contributing towards the development of a more peaceful world, as a member of nations. The current [government program](#) highlights the three primary reasons for participation in the following manner: "Participation in crisis management missions supports the restoration of security and stability in crisis situations, while strengthening our own defence capability and enhancing Finland's weight in international politics" (p.33).

Political Rationales: These have traditionally played a large role in Finland's decisions to participate. Starting with its contribution to UNEF I in 1956, peacekeeping has been viewed and described as a pillar of Finnish foreign policy. During the Cold War, participation enabled Finland to emphasize its "neutrality." The importance of strictly political rationales has decreased during the past two decades; however, the timing of Finland's recent return to UNIFIL was likely connected to its bid for a Security Council seat for 2013-2014.

Economic Rationales: The desire to benefit economically plays no role in Finland's decisions to participate in UN operations. Costs of participation are significantly higher than current UN reimbursements.

Security Rationales: Security rationales are always described as reasons for participation. The most common argument is that if Finland assists other countries in need, it will make it more likely that Finland would be supported if it ever needed assistance. During the past two decades the need to contain instability has also emerged as a security rationale for participation (e.g. in the Balkans and Afghanistan).

Institutional Rationales: Institutional rationales have recently played a stronger role in determining the composition of Finland's participation in international operations. The government expects participation to benefit the development of the defense forces, in terms of testing materiel, training, tactics or improved interoperability. This is one reason why NATO-led operations (particularly Afghanistan) are often preferred by the Finnish Defence Forces. International operations only take up between 3-5% of the national defense budget, and are not needed nor used to justify the existence of the defense forces, nor the size of the defense budget. If defense budget cuts are seen as necessary, however, the Finnish public usually lists participation in international operations as the first place to cut expenditure.

Normative Rationales: A central reason for Finnish participation in international operations, and especially UN operations is the idea that Finland has a responsibility to participate in the maintenance of peace, and to support global institutions such as the United Nations. More specifically, Finland has emphasized the need for women to participate in crisis management and peacebuilding, and tries to ensure that both in peacekeeping mandates, as well as the operational level, the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 is taken seriously. In support of this, Finland published its [first 1325 implementation strategy in 2008](#), and has assisted other UN member states in the crafting of similar documents. The latest plan focuses on the [period 2012-16](#).

Participating in UN-led peacekeeping and other international operations has long been seen as an important pillar of Finland's foreign and security policy. It will continue to be seen as such. According to [polls](#), a significant majority of the population supports continued participation in international operations, with the exception of the NATO-led ISAF operation, in which only 30% of the public supports continuing with a military component beyond 2014.

Part 4: Barriers to Contributing

Alternative institutional preferences for crisis management: As a small state, Finland sees its own interest in strengthening multilateral institutions. However, during the past fifteen years Finland has preferred to contribute to international operations that are mandated by the UN, but led by either the European Union or NATO. This preference has to do with security policy considerations, and a view, especially within the military, that the EU and NATO provide safer and more efficient avenues for participation.

Resistance in the Military: UN-led operations are widely seen within the military as being less useful for purposes of improving national defense than NATO-led operations. NATO-led operations are seen to provide more relevant operational experience, improve interoperability with relevant countries, and frequently support fulfillment of mutual PARP-goals.

Financial costs: Budget limitations play a key role in Finland's decisions to participate in and shape its contributions to UN peacekeeping. Reimbursements from the UN do not impact decisions, though the money is certainly welcomed. The budget allocated for international operations has grown approximately 60% during the past decade (from €72 million to €115 million), while costs per soldier in an average operation have more than tripled, from around €70,000 to over €260,000.

Part 5: Current Challenges and Issues

The current government has sought to increase participation in UN-led peacekeeping operations. Accordingly, Finland has returned to the UNIFIL operation, contributing approximately 175 soldiers to a battalion led by Ireland. This return is borne out of a genuine belief in the importance of supporting the UN, but the timing of Finland's return to UNIFIL is also connected to its bid for a Security Council seat for 2013-2014. However, there is a political desire, supported by public opinion, to further increase participation in UN-led operations. Currently the primary reasons for a lower than desired level of contribution are related to budget restrictions, and to the problem of finding a suitable operation. 'Suitability' depends on a combination of factors, such as the availability of partners, the importance of the region or country to Finland, previous experience in the region or operation, and whether the operation is on track to meet its mandate. For contributions of individual officers, Finland finds it problematic that it must propose specific individuals in the initial stages of committing to an operation; it would prefer to simply commit to sending a specified number of Finnish officers of a certain type and then name them at a later stage of preparations.

The global financial and economic crisis has little to do with budgetary pressures as they relate to UN peacekeeping. The budget is unlikely to decrease significantly due to budgetary issues. However, it is also unlikely to increase appreciably, in the short-term due to overall budget shortfalls and in the medium-term because Finland is focused more on contributing to civilian crisis management and mediation.

The relative lack of potential partners to contribute jointly to a complete UN-battalion, will continue to be an issue for Finland. Technically Finland has no problems producing and delivering a battalion, but it would consume almost the entire annual budget for international operations. Contributing smaller units with specific skills is possible, but would also require suitable partners, for everything from force protection to food, hygiene and health-care provision.

The concluded drawdown of forces from KFOR in Kosovo and ongoing drawdown from ISAF is freeing up some additional resources, which Finland has in practice committed to the UN, specifically the UNIFIL operation. Barring more pressing new operations, this may enable Finland to contribute a full battalion to a UN mission in coming years. A change in government is unlikely to have an impact on Finland's contributions to UN operations.

Part 6: Key Champions and Opponents

Support for peacekeeping is broad. The president and senior figures in all parliamentary political parties support participation in UN peacekeeping operations. A number of force commanders, past and present, speak to the importance of strengthening Finland's overall international contributions; publicly the best known is General Gustav Hägglund. There are no notable opponents of UN peacekeeping. However, when asked for their opinion, most military officers will argue that participation in EU and NATO operations is more useful to Finland.

Finland has a long tradition of developing both practical and structural approaches to peacekeeping and crisis management. The Finnish Defence Forces International Center ([FINCENT](#)), formerly the UN Training Centre, was founded in 1969. Its current mandate is to develop and provide courses, seminars and exercises within UN, NATO/Partnership for Peace, and EU frameworks. Crisis Management Center Finland ([CMC Finland](#)) is responsible for training and development of civilian crisis management expertise. Both of these institutions publish frequently on peacekeeping and crisis management experiences and future developments. The [National Defence University](#) also publishes peacekeeping related material. The [Finnish Institute of International Affairs](#) focuses on crisis management more broadly, including UN peacekeeping, peacebuilding and mediation efforts.

Part 7: Capabilities and Caveats

The Finnish Defence Forces possess a full range of capabilities, but only a subset of these are fully available in peacetime, and an even more limited set is offered to international readiness lists. The capabilities offered change over time, as the military focuses on different areas of competence it wishes to develop. Currently Finland could contribute a mechanized infantry battalion, an engineering battalion, special operations forces, military observers, CIMIC-personnel, staff elements, naval boarding and ranger units and some Navy and Air Force units. Finland is unlikely to offer its limited helicopters to UN operations, especially in areas where proper servicing and support would be very expensive or difficult.

Finland has previously offered high-quality enabling units to international organizations, such as engineers to the UNIFIL operations, or medical units to the EU (Congo 2006). The relative safety of such contributions is a positive, but their relatively low contribution to national defense development currently makes them less attractive as potential units to contribute. Supporting police and rule of law functions is a priority for Finland, and strong efforts are likely to be made in the coming years to increase contributions to such areas.

Finland's contributions are unlikely to be limited by national caveats, for example regarding the use of force. However, any participation is conditional on adequate support functions (logistics, food, hygiene, health). This is particularly relevant as Finland is generally going to contribute smaller units, which are not self-sufficient.

Part 8: Further Reading

- M. Langinvainio (ed.), [*The Many Faces of Military Crisis Management: Lessons from the Field*](#) (FINCENT Publication Series, 1: 2011).
- O. Eronen (ed.), [*Needs of Comprehensiveness: Building Blocks for Finnish Crisis Management*](#) (FINCENT Publication Series: 1:2008).

Notes

¹ Unless otherwise stated, data is drawn from IISS, *The Military Balance 2012* (London: IISS/Routledge, 2012).

² Armed Forces Spending is a country's annual total defense budget (in US dollars) divided by the total number of *active* armed forces. Using figures from IISS, *The Military Balance 2012*.