

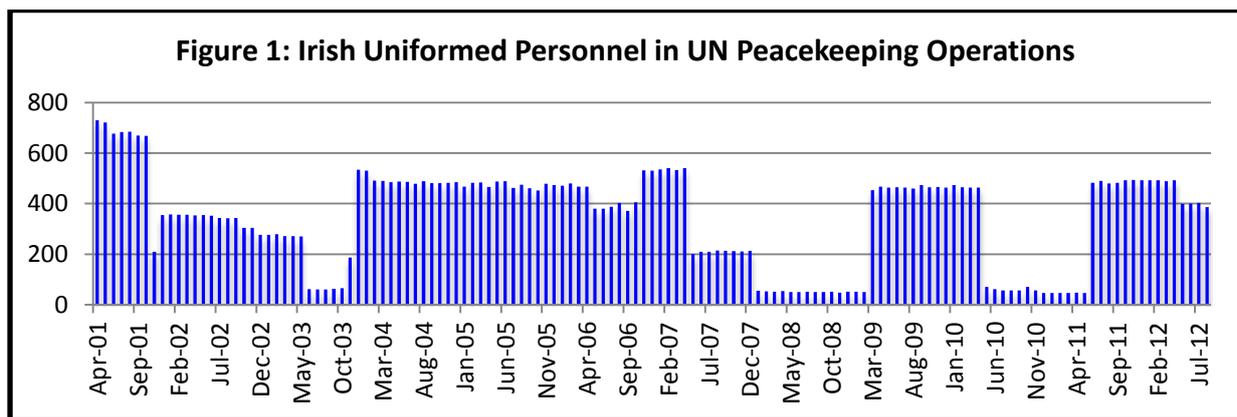
## Contributor Profile: Ireland

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Active Armed Forces <sup>1</sup>	Helicopters & APCs <sup>2</sup>	Defense Budget	Uniformed UN Peacekeepers	UN Contribution Breakdown	Other Significant Deployments <sup>3</sup>
9,650 World Ranking (size): 124  Army: 7,850 Navy: 1,015 Air Force: 785	Multi-role: 6  Transport: 2 (light)  MOWAG APC (heavy): 65 Light Tactical Armored Vehicles: 27	2010: \$1.26bn / €953m (0.006% of GDP)  2011: \$1.31bn / €933m (0.005% of GDP)	387 (14 female) (31 August 2012)  Ranking: 41  (5 <sup>th</sup> largest contributor from EU states)	MINURSO 3 milex MONUSCO 3 milex UNFICYP 12 police UNIFIL: 355 troops (12 female) UNOCI 2 milex UNTSO 12 milex	ISAF: 7 EUFOR (Bosnia-Herzegovina): 7 OSCE (Bosnia-Herzegovina): 4 KFOR (Serbia): 12 OSCE (Serbia): 2 OSCE (Kosovo): 4 EUTM Uganda: 10
Defense Spending / troop: <sup>4</sup> US\$135,751 (compared to global average of approx. US\$59,000)					

### Part 1: Recent Trends

The most significant political developments in Irish participation in peace support operations in recent years are the publication of the Government White Paper on Foreign Policy (1996) and a [White Paper on Defence \(2000\)](#). Although both were vague in many respects, the chapters dealing with overseas peace support operations did set out the background to Irish involvement, and the factors that inform the government's consideration of requests for troops were enunciated in clear terms. They also detailed the guiding principles the government should consider in deciding whether or not to participate in enforcement operations. Decisions as to the nature of an operation and whether to participate are made on a case to case basis.

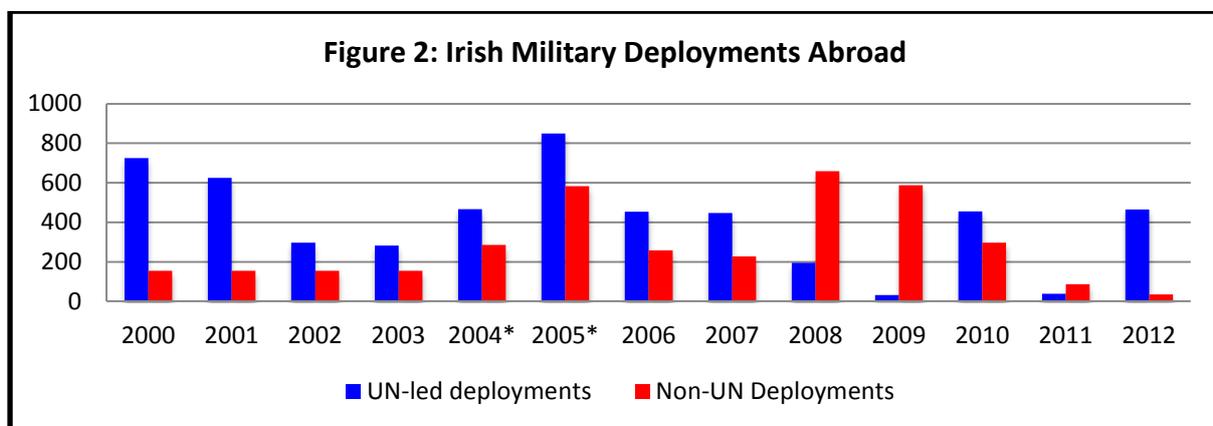


In recent years, the Defence Forces have progressed from participation in Chapter VI UN-led peacekeeping missions to deploying highly mobile mechanised units for Chapter VII peace enforcing missions in support of UN mandated operations. These developments reflect the increasing capability and capacity of the Defence Forces to contribute effectively to international peace support operations. Figure 1 shows that the most significant recent deployment is the commitment of a mechanised infantry battalion to UNIFIL in 2011. In 2009, the Government approved Ireland's participation in the Nordic Battle Group from 1 January 2011 to 30 June 2011. Ireland is currently part of the German Battle Group.

The [Department of Defence and Defence Forces Strategy Statement 2008–2010](#) emphasizes that a high-level goal of its Defence Organisation is “to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security through participation in approved UN-mandated peace support, crisis management and humanitarian relief operations.” According to the most recent [Department of Defence and Defence Forces Annual Report \(2010\)](#), Ireland’s international security and defence policy context is defined by a policy of military neutrality, an active political and operational role in support of the UN, commitments to the UN Standby Arrangements System (UNSAS), participation in the European Union’s (EU) Common Security and Defence Policy and in NATO’s Partnership for Peace.

In 2010, Ireland abruptly withdrew its mechanised infantry battalion from MINURCAT. Uncertainty over the mandate and the cooperation of the government of Chad led Ireland to make the unilateral decision to withdraw. The withdrawal of the Norwegian Level-II hospital at the same time may also have influenced the decision. The 41 Infantry Group was also withdrawn from KFOR (Kosovo) in April 2010 and not replaced. Financial considerations were the main factor in this decision as the economic crisis have led to downsizing of the Defence Forces from around 18,000 in 1990 to 9,500 today.

Figure 2 shows the major deployments to UNIFIL (ongoing), UNMIL (2003-07), EUFOR Chad/CAR (2008-09), MINURCAT (2009-10), and the more recent increased commitment to UNIFIL. With the withdrawal from MINURCAT, the large contribution to UNIFIL in 2011 suited Ireland as it was familiar with the mission and area of operations. The government and Defence Forces were eager to participate in a UN led mission of this nature.



## Part 2: Decision-Making Process

UN authorization is a key factor in deciding whether or not to participate in peace operations. Before agreeing, certain conditions must be satisfied and these are referred to as the “[triple lock](#)”: (1) the operation must be authorized/mandated by the UN; (2) it must be approved by the Government (a recommendation to Government is made by an interdepartmental committee comprised of personnel from Foreign Affairs, Defence and the Defence Forces); and when the size of a Defence Forces contribution is more than twelve personnel, (3) it must be approved by way of a resolution of Dáil Éireann (Irish Parliament). Ireland is equally happy to contribute to UN-led and UN-authorized EU operations. An important consideration today is the reimbursement of costs. As such, while participation in UN-authorized coalitions of the willing is possible, UN-led or UN-authorized EU operations are preferred.

Today, participation is governed by the [Defence \(Amendment\)\(No. 2\) Act, 1960](#) as amended, which was intended as the permanent legislation to authorize the despatch of contingents of the Permanent Defence Force for service outside the State with international forces established by the UN Security Council or the General Assembly, for the performance of duties of a police character.

Despite the ongoing involvement in UN and UN-authorized peace support operations, there is surprisingly little debate on the issue in Ireland. In 1993, Ireland revised and updated the municipal legal basis for troop participation in UN-led operations to allow Ireland to contribute soldiers to UNOSOM II in Somalia (1993-95). This brought about a fundamental change in policy, after which participation in peacekeeping forces not specifically of a police nature was permitted. At the time, this generated some debate as to whether Ireland should contribute forces to new kinds of military action undertaken by the UN.

Ireland's status as a military neutral state limits the Defence Force's activity abroad and complicates its involvement in UN-authorized peacekeeping missions under Chapter VII. The position regarding Defence Force's potential involvement in non-UN authorized humanitarian operations and EU-led peacekeeping or monitoring missions was unclear. The [Defence \(Amendment\) Act 2006](#) sought to clarify some of these issues. Section 1 defines "International United Nations Force" so as to reflect the changes in UN-supported international peace operations and the increased importance of UN-sanctioned operations conducted by regional organizations. The Act defines such a Force as "an international force or body established, mandated, authorized, endorsed, supported, approved or otherwise sanctioned by a resolution of the Security Council or the General Assembly of the United Nations."

*Guidelines for participation in peace support operations:* In view of the number, size and complexity of international peace support operations, it was deemed necessary by the Irish Government in 1996 to develop a selective response to requests from the UN based on certain factors:

- assessment of whether a peacekeeping operation is the most appropriate response to the situation;
- consideration of how the mission relates to the priorities of Irish foreign policy;
- the degree of risk involved;
- the extent to which the particular skills or characteristics required relate to Irish capabilities;
- the existence of realistic objectives and a clear mandate which has the potential to contribute to a political solution;
- whether the operation is adequately resourced;
- and the level of existing commitment to peacekeeping operations and security requirements at home.<sup>5</sup>

The [White Paper on Defence 2000](#) outlined additional factors for consideration, including ongoing developments in UN-led peace support operations, the evolution of European security structures, and the resource implications for the defense budget. The guidelines are broad and imprecise and they could thus be used to avoid participation in certain operations. The degree of risk involved to Irish personnel, assessment of whether a peacekeeping operation is the most appropriate response and level of existing Irish commitments are likely to be key factors.

*UN peace enforcement operations:* Taking into account the experience of UNOSOM II in Somalia, the Irish government's approach to participation in future UN-led enforcement operations will be guided by certain criteria:

- that the operation derives its legitimacy from decisions of the Security Council;
- that the objectives are clear and unambiguous and of sufficiency and urgency and importance to justify the use of force;
- that all other reasonable means of achieving the objectives have tried and failed;
- that the duration of the operation be the minimum necessary to achieve the stated objectives;
- that diplomatic efforts to resolve the underlying disputes should be resumed at the earliest possible moment;
- that the command and control arrangements for the operation are in conformity with the relevant decisions of the Security Council and that the Security Council is kept fully informed of the implementation of its decision.<sup>6</sup>

### **Part 3: Rationales for Contributing**

*Political Rationales:* Membership in the UN has been a cornerstone of Irish foreign policy since 1955. The maintenance of an effective UN, especially in the area of conflict prevention, forms a key objective of Irish foreign policy within which peacekeeping operations have come to play a central role. Ireland wants to enhance its international prestige and influence by supplying personnel to peace operations. Participation also helped Ireland's case for election to a non-permanent seat on the Security Council, which it did in 1962, in 1981-82 and in 2001-02. There is cross-party support for involvement in peacekeeping operations and a change of government will not have any significant impact.

*Economic Rationales:* There are no significant national security or economic rationales for providing UN peacekeepers. In the cases of the UN-mandated but NATO-commanded Stabilisation Force (SFOR) and Kosovo Force (KFOR) missions in the former Yugoslavia, the government agreed to pay all the expenses associated with Irish participation. The recent crisis in the Irish economy would make such an arrangement most unlikely in the foreseeable future. Individuals of all ranks can benefit from "overseas allowances" and this is a factor in individual decisions to volunteer.

*Institutional Rationales:* The decision to apply for membership in the UN was probably motivated by a fear of Ireland being isolated and denied any role on the world stage. In this way, the decision was based on pragmatic considerations. There are interesting parallels with the debate regarding membership in the NATO-sponsored Partnership for Peace and Irish participation in SFOR and KFOR. There was a fear among officials in the Department of Foreign Affairs and the military that if Ireland did not join the Partnership for Peace program, it could become isolated and out of touch with international developments in peacekeeping training and doctrine. It is questionable if such fears were valid.

*Normative Rationales:* Ireland sees itself as a good international citizen with a vested interest as a small state in UN multilateralism. Today, participation by Defence Forces and Gardai (police) in a range of UN-sponsored activities is commonplace. This involvement has become a significant element of Irish foreign policy, and a concrete manifestation of commitment to the UN and the maintenance of world peace. Furthermore, the effects of Ireland's policies over a range of issues including decolonisation, disarmament, human rights, and its history under colonial rule and non-membership of a military alliance, combined to make it acceptable as a contributor to peacekeeping and related activities.

#### **Part 4: Barriers to Contributing**

*Degree of risk to Irish personnel:* Although the Irish commitment to the UNOSOM forces in Somalia in the 1990s was quite small (c.180 personnel), the decision to participate had significant political and military implications. It was the first time Irish soldiers participated in a Chapter VII peace enforcement operation and it set a precedent that helped pave the way for the participation in SFOR in the former Yugoslavia. It marked a watershed in Irish involvement in peacekeeping activities, and a realisation that Ireland could be left behind in the changing nature of the international security environment unless it too adapted to events. Though the UN operation in the Congo (ONUC, 1960-4) involved a degree of enforcement action to which the Irish contingent was a party, the decisions to participate in SFOR, KFOR, UNAMET (East Timor) and later Chapter VII missions were conscious decisions made in response to the changed international environment.

*Financial costs:* At one time there was controversy regarding Irish participation in UN peacekeeping owing to the backlog in reimbursement of expenses from the UN. Newspaper reports gave the impression that Ireland was losing considerable sums of money, especially in Lebanon. The financial implications are not as simple as might appear at first glance, and it can be argued that, far from being a loss-making exercise, UN operations can be a net contributor to the Irish exchequer, especially as commitments were met from within existing resources. This was especially evident in 1986 when the Secretary of the Department of Defence informed the Committee of Public Account that Ireland had made some £5 million profit from its involvement in UNIFIL, and would at that time have made a further net gain of nearly £16 million if defaulting nations had paid their dues at the UN (see *The Irish Times*, 10 September 1986). In contrast, more recent UN-approved operations in Bosnia and Kosovo were paid for entirely from Ireland's own resources.

#### **Part 5: Current Challenges and Issues**

The "downsizing" of the Defence Forces is a major challenge to participation in UN peace operations. The key issue relating to peacekeeping and Irish foreign policy arising from the White Paper on Foreign Policy (1996) was the focus on maintaining military neutrality while fostering a security role within Europe. If the Defence Forces are to retain the skills and reputation acquired to date in the new context of European security, then it may be necessary to participate in the organizations where best contemporary practice is developed. This is all the more so with the UN engaging in more complex peace support operations and regional operations conducted with UN approval. This was a significant development for Ireland that should assist in ensuring that the prominent role played by the Defence Forces to date in peacekeeping operations is not diminished in the future. This is an important consideration as some of Ireland's attributes for traditional peacekeeping, namely the non-membership in NATO and its small armed forces, could be barriers to participation in future UN-authorized but NATO-led regional operations.

#### **Part 6: Key Champions and Opponents**

The Defence Forces themselves are strong advocates of participation in UN-led and UN-authorized missions. In this regard they are supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs. Irish participation in UN-led operations is not a controversial issue, but the growing need of recent years to authorize regional organizations such as NATO or the EU to conduct peace support operations can present certain dilemmas for a country that has sought to avoid controversial decisions on security and defense matters.

#### **Part 7: Capabilities and Caveats**

*Capabilities:* Although the strength of the Defence Forces is small by international standards, the level of training and the equipment issued to ordinary soldiers is high. The Defence Forces

have progressed from participation in Chapter VI peacekeeping missions to deploying highly mobile mechanised wheeled infantry units for Chapter VII missions most recently in Lebanon and Chad. In the area of logistics, there has been a shift away from traditional reliance on UN support to the Defence Forces, to deploying self-sustaining units to green field sites.

Ireland also has the capability to deploy Explosive Ordnance Disposal/Improvised Explosive Device Disposal components and did so to the first EU Battle Group in January 2008. Irish Special Forces (Army Ranger Wing/ARW) have been deployed on peace support operations. In Liberia, the ARW was designated the Special Operations Task Group and came under the direct command of the Force Commander UNMIL. The ARW was also deployed as part of the Initial EU Entry Force to Chad (EUFOR Chad/CAR) and to East Timor (UNTAET). Also in Liberia, the 450-strong Infantry Battalion took on the task of providing UNMIL's Quick Reaction Force (QRF). At the heart of the QRF is the Armored Personnel Carrier (APC) Company, equipped with 22 Mowag APC's.

*Caveats:* The safety of Irish personnel is of paramount concern to the Irish government. This is reflected in the use of heavy APC's on peace missions. There may be caveats in missions involving crowd control and the use of force e.g. Kosovo, where national policy did not permit Irish personnel to use gas or rubber bullets.

The small size of the Defence Forces and the economic circumstances of the Irish state are also factors. Ireland is not in a position to participate in self-funded operations and it has a limited number of personnel available for "overseas operations." Ireland has a commitment of 850 personnel to UNSAS, but this is more notional than real. Similar to other states, Ireland retains national command of Defence Forces personnel when on UN operations. However, Irish participation has always been based on the premise that full operational command in the field must reside with the Force Commander or Head of Mission, as appropriate. Participation in the NATO-led, albeit UN-mandated operations, placed Irish troops under the *de facto* command of NATO for the first time. There are significant legal and constitutional difficulties involved in command and/or control of Irish forces by non-defense force personnel, but successive governments to date have quietly ignored these. Despite this, Irish military and other personnel have adapted successfully to such missions, but there remains an ongoing need to keep up to date in training and to ensure equipment levels and standards complement this.

### **Part 8: Further Reading**

Department of Foreign Affairs, *Challenges and Opportunities Abroad, White Paper on Foreign Policy* (Dublin, 1996).

Department of Defence, [\*White Paper on Defence 2000\*](#) (Dublin, 2000).

Department of Defence and Defence Forces Annual Reports, at [www.defenceforces.ie](http://www.defenceforces.ie)

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### **Notes**

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

<sup>2</sup> Data provided by the Defence Forces Information Officer, August 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Data provided by the Defence Forces Information Officer, August 2012.

<sup>4</sup> 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*. In the case of Ireland, the Defense Budget figure includes about 1000 civilians on the payroll and pensions for retired personnel.

<sup>5</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs, *Challenges and Opportunities Abroad: White Paper on Foreign Policy*, (Dublin: 1996), pp.194-95, and Department of Defence, *White Paper on Defence* (Dublin: 2000), p.63.

<sup>6</sup> *White Paper on Foreign Policy*, pp.199-200.