

CONTRIBUTOR PROFILE: SWEDEN

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| Active Armed Forces ¹ | Helicopters | Defense Budget | Uniformed UN Peacekeepers | UN Contribution Breakdown | Other Significant Deployments |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| 20,363 World Ranking (size): 94 Army: 6,718 Navy: 2,796 Air Force: 3,069 Staff: 7,780 | Multi-role (transport, search/rescue, recon): 33 | 2010: \$5.6bn (1.22% of GDP) 2011: \$6.21bn (1.12% of GDP) 2012: \$6.21bn (% of GDP n.a.) | 69 (20 female) (31 August 2012) Ranking: 71 (12 th largest contributor from EU states) | MINUSTAH 2 police MONUSCO: 11 (6 police, 5 experts) UNAMA 4 experts UNMIL 18 police (12 women) UNMISS: 22 (15 police, 3 experts, 4 troops) UNMOGIP 5 experts UNTSO 7 experts | ISAF: 596 KFOR: 50 NNSC: 5 EUTM (Uganda): 8 EUFOR ALTHEA (Bosnia): 1 |
| Defense Spending / troop: ² US\$276,000 (compared to global average of approx. US\$59,000) | | | | | |

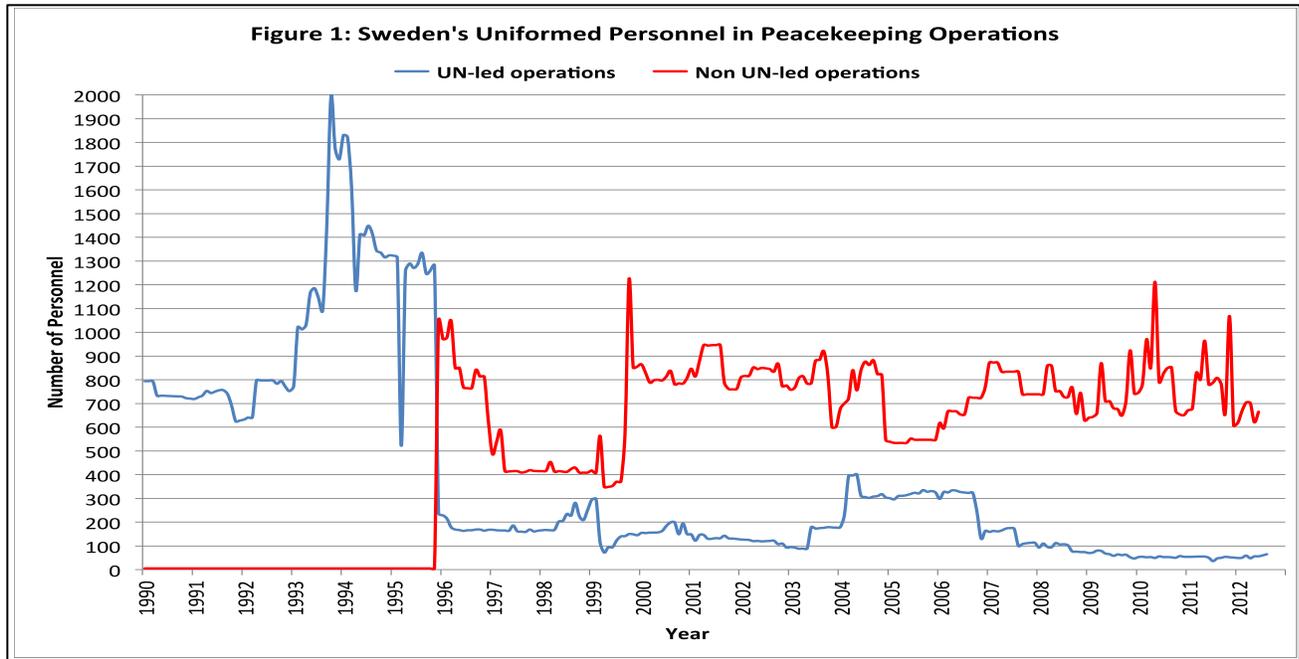
Part 1: Recent Trends

Sweden’s contributions to UN peacekeeping started with the deployment of military observers to UNTSO (1948-) and UNMOGIP (1949-). The first Swedish troops were deployed in 1956 in UNEF I. By the early 1960s Sweden was providing approximately 1,500 personnel, i.e. around 10% of all UN peacekeepers. After the closure of the ONUC operation in 1964 and UNEF I in 1967, Sweden’s next major peacekeeping deployment was to UNEF II from 1973 to 1979. The peak of Sweden’s contributions to UN peacekeeping came in the Balkan wars of the early 1990s when its total contributions momentarily peaked at 2,000 personnel due to a battalion size troop rotation.

Sweden’s post-World War II participation with military observers in non-UN led operations dates back to 1953 with still ongoing contributions to the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC) between North Korea and South Korea. In the early 1990s Sweden’s official troop contributions policy changed from an “only under the UN flag” position to one of “only under UN Security Council mandate or authorization.” Sweden’s [current general policy](#) for troop contributions to Chapter VII peace enforcement operations is to always obtain a UN mandate. For Chapter VI operations, clear support from the Security Council is aimed for. Moreover, in acute situations involving genocide and extensive mass atrocities when the UN Security Council “fails to bear its responsibility”, Sweden “must carefully consider what can nevertheless be done to alleviate human suffering.”

Membership of the European Union (EU) (since 1995) and the UN (since 1946) is officially regarded as a key factor in Sweden’s [foreign, security and defence policy](#), whereas close cooperation with NATO is also described as important. EU cooperation is described as occupying a special position in Swedish foreign and security policy and is mentioned before the UN, which is described as "another key factor." In addition, the importance of cooperation with NATO, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the African Union (AU) is highlighted. International operations are regarded as an integral part of Sweden’s security, foreign

and defence policy. Before 1995 Sweden's troop contributions were almost solely focused on UN operations; after 1995 attention shifted to non-UN operations. In December 1995, for example, Sweden's troops in UNPROFOR were re-hatted to become part of the NATO-led follow-up operations IFOR and SFOR. As figure 1 shows, this led to a drastically changed deployment pattern that has been accentuated ever since, with a temporary surge in contributions to UN operations due to contributions to UNMIL in Liberia (2003-06). Of the 700 Swedish uniformed personnel (military observers, military troops and civilian police) deployed in peace operations by mid-2012, around 600 are deployed in ISAF while 8% are in UN-led operations. The temporary spikes in figure 1 are mainly due to overlapping troop rotations.



The shift in focus from UN to non-UN operations is also mirrored in Sweden's participation in stand-by arrangements. In 1964 Sweden together with its Nordic neighbors established a joint peacekeeping military standby force called [NORDSAMFN](#) (Nordic cooperation group for Military UN matters). In 1997, as the Nordic countries participated not only in UN operations, NORDSAMFN was replaced by [NORDCAPS](#) (Nordic Coordinated Arrangements for Military Peace Support) – a forum for Nordic cooperation in the areas of education, training, and cooperation and coordination at the strategic and operational level, in the area of peace operations. Joint NORDCAPS planning elements were created in 2000, and agreement was reached to establish a NORDCAPS brigade for rapid deployment in UN, NATO, EU and OSCE operations. The underlying force pool was in practice made obsolete in 2004 (and abolished in 2006) following the creation of the [Nordic Battle Group](#), a rapid deployment standby force earmarked for EU operations. In 1996 the Multinational UN Standby Forces High Readiness Brigade ([SHIRBRIG](#)) was created. It was closed down in 2009, the same year in which NORDCAPS was subsumed into [NORDEFKO](#), the Nordic Defense Cooperation.

Sweden also has usually around 100 [civilian experts](#) seconded to UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions. Some of these experts are seconded by the [Folke Bernadotte Academy](#),

which took over this role from the [Swedish International Development Agency](#) in 2008. Civilian experts are also seconded by the [National Police Board](#), [Swedish Customs](#), [Swedish Prison and Probation Service](#), and the [Swedish Courts](#).

Part 2: The Decision-Making Process

The decision-making process starts with a formal request (from the UN or some other actor) for Swedish participation (Bandstein, 2010). It is directed to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which gathers relevant ministries and departments for a joint discussion. Following this, a government decision initiates preliminary planning by the Armed Forces, which, in turn, feeds into a subsequent government proposition on participation. After a favorable decision by the parliament the government issues a formal decision on participation that initiates the planning phase, which is followed by execution. Chapter VII operations must always be [approved by the parliament](#), whereas the government is empowered to decide on Chapter VI operations.

During the analysis phase the relevant government agencies exchange information, partly through personal networks and informal contacts. But there is strictly speaking no joint or formalized analysis and planning process, or the formulation of a single joint plan. Instead, individual agency plans are coordinated. When it comes to the execution/deployment phase, there are no formalized cooperation/coordination structures among agencies. Instead, this phase is characterized by informal cross agency groups that work through a culture of cooperation, individual initiatives and contacts, government regulated division of labor, and ad hoc exchange of information. Whereas the government requires that “jointness” and cross agency cooperation/coordination should take place, there are no concrete government guidelines on how this should be carried out. This means that the process is left to the agencies to manage. All agencies have a general requirement to support other agencies within the confines of their areas of responsibilities, but only the [Folke Bernadotte Academy](#) has an explicit requirement to cooperate with other agencies within the area of international operations. The Academy acts as a cross government agency civil-civil and civil-military coordination tool.

Part 3: Rationales for Contributions

Political Rationales: In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Sweden’s decision to provide UN peacekeepers was allegedly motivated in part by a desire to support the then UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld (Jacobsen, 2006, 2009). Since 1993, public support for participation in Chapter VII operations has decreased: it was [on average around 75%](#) in the mid-1990s compared to an average of 60% during the past five years whereas the proportion of the public that is undecided on this issue has increased from 1% in 1993 to around 20% during the past five years. During the past three years just over 30% of the public supports increased participation in peace operations *in general*, whereas on average around 45% are undecided. In contrast, there is wide agreement among political parties and a government policy that peacekeeping is a priority task, but there are different views on whether UN-led operations should receive a higher priority.

Normative and Security Rationales: Sweden’s [national strategy for participation in international peace-support security-building operations](#) is multifaceted. The first and normative goal is to maintain international peace and security and consequently to facilitate fair and sustainable global development. This relates to the defense of universal norms such as democracy, human rights, gender equality, human dignity, and development. A cornerstone of the official policy is that

security, development, human rights and democracy are interrelated. Swedish participation in peace-support operations is also concerned, in the longer term, with promoting national security and Sweden's interests.

Institutional Rationales: Some voices in the political, security and military establishments publicly suggest that participation in international peacekeeping missions offers valuable and necessary operational experiences for the armed forces. This is also mentioned in the Sweden's national strategy. However, this is not a central rationale but rather a perceived side-benefit.

Economic Rationales: Sweden has no economic rationales for contributing to peacekeeping operations, since its costs by a very wide margin exceed the reimbursements it receives from the UN. It is not reimbursed for contributions to peace operations led by other international organizations such as NATO, the EU, or the OSCE, to which more than 90% of all personnel are currently deployed.

Part 4: Barriers to Contributions

Military and Political: Staffing is often mentioned as a challenge for the initial deployment phase as well as the durability of deployments. It applies foremost to the military and police sector. In addition, transport capacity over long distances has been discussed as an area in need of improvement. The Nordic Battle Group has meanwhile been described as an important force for improvement of Sweden's rapid deployment capacity. It is [Sweden's national policy](#) to increase its ability to contribute to peace operations (rapid deployment, durability, as well as the capacity to strengthen ongoing operations). Sweden's national strategy sets the goal of having the "capability to command and participate in two concurrent battalion size operations, while also committing smaller units to three additional operations."

Exceptionalism: This is not relevant. Sweden is [very supportive](#) of international peace operations and the relevant international/multilateral frameworks.

Discomfort with the expanding UN peacekeeping agenda: This is not relevant. Sweden is a supporter of the current UN peacekeeping agenda.

Domestic politics: This is not an obstacle. There are political differences among political parties with respect to the share of personnel that should be sent to UN-led missions. The issue is also debated in national media. But there is no political divide on whether Sweden should provide peacekeepers per se. In general, voices in current opposition parties prefer a stronger focus on UN missions, and an increase in the overall contributions.

Resistance in the military: Some voices express concerns regarding logistical, financial and personnel strains from participation in peacekeeping operations. This is related to the past decade of domestic reorganizations and defense budget reductions, which some voices perceive as having undermined the ability of the armed forces to contribute to peace missions as well as defend the country. The issue is often debated in national media.

Financial costs: Due to low government debt and a solid national economy, Sweden has no major financial barriers against contributing to peace operations within the ceiling personnel contribution

levels issued by the government.

Absence of pressure to contribute: While public opinion is divided, there is broad consensus among political elites on the importance of providing peacekeepers. Judging from the deployment patterns there appears meanwhile to exist a smaller pressure to contribute to UN operations than to non-UN operations.

Legal obstacles: There are no legal obstacles.

Part 5: Current Challenges and Issues

As mentioned above there are political differences among political parties with respect to the share of personnel that should be sent to UN-led missions, and whether those contributions should be increased. Public debate suggests the current opposition parties prefer a stronger focus on UN missions, and an overall increase in contributions. Yet the government and opposition share the same basic values in terms of rationales for contributing (see Part 3). If past and the present public political debate is a guide to the future, then changes of government may influence the degree to which Sweden contributes troops to UN missions, but it is unlikely to change the policy on contributions in general in a negative direction. The government's policy is to further strengthen Sweden's peacekeeping capabilities, and this position is shared by virtually all political parties. In addition to the issue of contributions to UN-led operations, Sweden's participation in the ISAF force in Afghanistan is a common topic of public and political debate as some voices question the merits of this operation. The [planned withdrawal](#) of Swedish troops from ISAF – starting 2012 and to be completed by late 2014 – may release high-quality troops for other operations, including those led by the UN.

Moving from issues to challenges, and judging by the public debate, these are mostly in the area of staffing. Concerns are sometimes raised that the abolition of conscription (2010) in favor of a professional army may over time increase the staffing challenges in numerical terms, and also mean that Swedish peacekeepers will have fewer civilian skills (language, education, frame of reference, etc.) that are deemed important in a peacekeeping context.

Looking to the future, it is difficult to predict whether or to what extent concerns regarding staffing challenges will constitute a serious obstacle to Sweden's ability to provide more peacekeepers, whether to UN or non-UN operations. Since conscription only recently ended, it will be several years before any of the sometimes feared negative effects on staffing (quantity and quality of troops) can be discerned. At the same time the present alleged staffing challenges are not easily soluble in the short-term and may thus remain a constant feature for years to come. Issues regarding participation in ISAF will disappear by 2014 as Sweden's force have by then withdrawn, which will in theory release a large number of high-quality troops for other missions.

Part 6: Key Champions and Opponents

As evident above there are no significant opponents to Swedish troop contributions in general to international peace operations. There is, however, debate over what proportion should be allocated to UN-led operations, and whether Sweden should contribute to the ISAF force. In particular, the [United Nations Association of Sweden](#) argues for a larger focus on UN operations. In terms of think-tanks and research bodies, outside the defense research establishment ([Swedish National](#)

[Defence College](#) and [Swedish Defence Research Agency](#)), Sweden has a very limited tradition of studying peacekeeping in general, and Sweden's participation in particular. Sweden does not have a community or group of think-tanks and NGOs to complement university and defense establishment research on Swedish contribution to peacekeeping operations.

Part 7: Capabilities and Caveats

Sweden's official goal is to provide more peacekeepers and equip them with greater capabilities. Short of a severe economic downturn, and in addition to the issues raised above, it is difficult to discern any conspicuous caveats that could restrict operational capacity or Sweden's UN peacekeeping contribution in the short-term.

Part 8: Further Reading

Andersson, Andreas (2007), [The Nordic Peace Support Operations Record, 1991–99](#) *International Peacekeeping*, 14(4): 476-492.

Bandstein, Sara (2010), *Civil-militär samverkan i internationella insatser* (Civil-Military Cooperation in International Missions), Swedish National Defence Research Institute, Memo 3309.

Jacobsen, Peter V. (2009), [Nordic Approaches to Peace Operations: A New Model in the Making?](#) (New York: Routledge).

Jacobsen, Peter V. (2006), [The Nordic Peacekeeping Model: Rise, Fall, Resurgence?](#) *International Peacekeeping*, 13(3): 381-395.

Swedish Armed Forces (2006), [Swedish International Forces in the Service of Peace](#) (Malmö: Arena).

Notes

¹ Sources: *The Military Balance 2012* (London: IISS/Routledge, 2012), [Swedish Airforce website](#) (accessed 21 July 2012), and detailed monthly summary of troops contributions obtained from the Armed Forces HQ.

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*.