

Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)

Location:

New York, USA

Contact Information:

Department of Peacekeeping Operations
United Nations Secretariat
One UN Plaza
New York, NY 10017
USA

Focal Points:

Mr. Andrew Carpenter
Chief, Police Division/Strategic Policy & Development Section
Tel: +1 917 367 2205
Fax: +1 212 963 3452
E-mail: carpentera@un.org

Ms. Annika Hansen
Policy Officer, Police Division/Office of the Police Adviser
Tel: +1 212 963 4275
Fax: 1 917 367 2222
E-mail: hansena@un.org

Website: www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/

Year of Establishment: 1948

CTITF Working Group Membership:

- Preventing and Resolving Conflicts
- Strengthening the Protection of Vulnerable Targets

- Border Management Related to Counter-Terrorism
- Countering the Use of the Internet for Terrorist Purposes

The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) is tasked with the planning, management, deployment, and support of UN peacekeeping operations, in partnership with the Department of Field Support (DFS), which aims to bring peace and stability to conflict zones around the world. DPKO's activities also focus on stabilization, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of combatants (DDR), and justice and security sector reform, among others. Peacekeeping operations have ranged from large military deployments to small observer forces, often in the form of complex integrated missions with steadily growing police, rule of law, and other civilian components.

Though counterterrorism is not a core function of DPKO, its peacekeeping operations make an important contribution to international efforts to address terrorism. Peace operations serve vital security functions in areas that are vulnerable to terrorist activity due to the absence of effective state authority, and peace operations can in turn help to build stronger state-counterterrorism capacities. As the Policy Working Group on the United Nations and Terrorism, convened by then Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2001, observed:

Terrorism is often related to armed conflict. While the prevention and resolution of armed conflict should not primarily be conceived of as anti-terrorist activities, they can assist such activities by narrowing the space in which terrorists operate.³³

DPKO's activities and functions make an important contribution to addressing the first pillar of the 2006 UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which urges states to address "conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism," including "prolonged and unresolved conflicts" and "lack of the rule of law and violations of human rights".³⁴ DPKO's indirect contributions to counterterrorism are provided through its missions and fall broadly into four main categories: (1) supporting stabilization and expanding state authority across its territory and along its borders, (2) strengthening the rule of law more generally, (3) building host-state police capacity, and (4) addressing the link between organized crime and terrorism.

Specifically, peacekeeping forces help to create conditions that restrict potential terrorist activity, because their mandates include measures to stop the illegal movement of people, secure borders, and thwart the movement of arms and drugs that may be a source of funding for terrorist organizations. Given the frequent connections between transnational organized crime, drug trafficking, and terrorism, through which groups can develop cooperative relationships to augment their finances, materials, and operational capacities, DPKO's activities in the area of combating organized crime and illegal trafficking can be particularly valuable to international counterterrorism efforts. One example of this work is the West Africa Coast Initiative, which was launched by DPKO in July 2009 and brings together DPKO, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA)/United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) in support of the Economic Community of West African States' (ECOWAS) action plan against transnational organized crime. The initiative seeks to strengthen the participating states' capacity for crime analysis and information sharing in a collaborative regional approach.³⁵

The role of peacekeeping missions in strengthening the rule of law and supporting host-state police and security capacities also plays an important part in deterring and investigating terrorism in conflict-ridden states, which often have limited capacities. UN peacekeeping operations conduct training and mentor host-state police and other law-enforcement agencies in order to enhance their capacity in criminal intelligence and special investigations. In Haiti, for example, the UN mission works on building the capacity of the Haitian National Police to combat transnational organized crime, human trafficking, and drug trafficking, including the development of a maritime police capacity. In the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), peacekeeping mandates have also called for the strengthening of customs- and border-management systems of host states.³⁶ These functions are also of particular relevance to Pillar III of the Global Strategy, which focuses on building state capacity to

counter terrorism.³⁷

DPKO's inclusion in the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) reflects one of the comparative advantages that the UN brings to international counterterrorism efforts: the ability to draw on the expertise and insights of its long experience in field missions working with states, groups, and institutions to address political violence, armed conflict, and underlying grievances. Moreover, DPKO's expertise in the areas of justice and security sector reform, policing and law enforcement, and corrections has allowed DPKO to develop a unique expertise in institutionalizing tools and mechanisms to address these challenges in very fragmented societies with minimal capacities.

In considering how the UN might most effectively leverage its comparative advantages to support international efforts to counter the threat of transnational terrorism, the Policy Working Group's 2002 report had recommended that:

Measures should be taken to ensure that the mandates of peacekeeping operations are sensitive to terrorism-related issues, providing, for instance, that civilian police officers received appropriate training on measures to identify and counter terrorist groups.³⁸

It is unclear whether such considerations have impacted member states' thinking about peacekeeping resolutions over the past decade. However, in several regions, the possibility of "conflict-generated terrorism"³⁹ and the potential for intervening countries to confront retaliatory acts of terrorism⁴⁰ make it likely that peacekeeping missions in some regions are shaped to a greater extent by a convergence in international efforts to prevent and resolve conflict, and prevent and combat terrorism, at least in the short to medium term.