



BEING  
A  
PEACE  
KEEPER  
REGIONAL ROUNDTABLE



## Enhancing the Participation of the Western Balkans Countries in UN Peacekeeping Operations A “Being a Peacekeeper Series” Regional Roundtable

20-21 October 2014  
Belgrade, Serbia

### MEETING REPORT

*The Being a Peacekeeper series is an on-going initiative of the International Peace Institute and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the UN Department of Field Support (DPKO/DFS). Since 2010, the Being a Peacekeeper series of high-level regional roundtables has brought together existing, emerging, and potential troop- and police-contributing countries (TCC/PCCs) and senior UN officials for an exchange of lessons, concerns, and future opportunities. The objective of the Being a Peacekeeper Series is to increase the quantity and improve the quality of contributions to UN peacekeeping. It seeks to facilitate networking at a regional level among experienced contributors and countries wanting to be more actively engaged in peacekeeping. Finally, it provides a forum for interaction among contributors and other key elements in the UN peacekeeping system, such as DPKO/DFS, interested member states, and the policy research community. For new contributors, the series aims to demystify the experience of contributing to UN peace operations, stimulate knowledge-sharing, create learning opportunities, and develop productive partnerships between countries within a region. For new, old and potential contributors alike, the regional roundtables provide an opportunity for focused discussion around peacekeeping issues most relevant to the countries of each region, and a forum for interaction with each other and with senior UN officials.*

*On 20-21 October, 2014, the Government of Serbia hosted a Being a Peacekeeper roundtable in Belgrade for the western Balkans region. The meeting included senior participants from the Governments of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia as well as partner countries from the larger region, key development partners, the EU, NATO and OSCE, the International Peace Institute and the UN. This report provides a record of the presentations made at the meeting as well as a general overview of discussions, which were held under the Chatham House Rule.*

### OPENING REMARKS, KEYNOTE SPEECH AND MEMBER STATE PERSPECTIVES

In welcoming participants to the meeting, Mr. Peter Due, Representative of the Secretary-General (RSG) and Head of the United Nations Office in Belgrade (UNOB), expressed thanks on behalf of the United Nations to the Government of Serbia for hosting the event, to the Governments of France, Norway and Switzerland and UNDP/SEESAC for providing financial and logistical support to the meeting. He highlighted the roundtable as an example of the fact that the western Balkans region, which had once seen conflict, was now contributing actively to international peace and security.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Serbia, Ivica Dacic, welcomed participants to the Palace of Serbia and thanked Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, for traveling to the western Balkans to attend the meeting. He highlighted the important role played by peacekeeping in the work of the United Nations and reiterated Serbia’s commitment to increasing its contribution of uniformed personnel. He suggested that cooperation amongst western Balkan states in support of peacekeeping is an excellent way to build mutual trust.

In his keynote speech, Mr. Ladsous thanked the Government of Serbia for hosting the meeting and congratulated all western Balkans states for the progress achieved from the armed conflicts in the 1990s to the stability of today. He applauded progress the region has already made in providing contributions of uniformed personnel to UN peacekeeping and expressed his hope that the roundtable would help enable greater individual and joint contributions. Mr. Ladsous provided an overview of the state of peacekeeping, noting that the changing nature of conflict and the evolving use of peacekeeping by the Security Council has seen missions deployed into increasingly hostile environments where peace

processes are difficult to negotiate elusive and the protection of civilians challenges are numerous. Today's peacekeepers, the majority of whom are in Africa, are facing myriad new threats, including the Ebola virus disease in West Africa, asymmetric and extremist attacks in Mali, and highly complex political and security environments that can change dramatically in an instant. He detailed the operational and political challenges for mission mandate implementation in such environments, emphasizing that peacekeeping missions must continue to fulfil their primary role of supporting the establishment and implementation of peace processes while working to protect civilians and strengthen national capacity to uphold the rule of law. He noted a variety of circumstances where missions, despite challenging circumstances, have innovated and worked effectively to implement their mandates. These include the recent decision by the mission in South Sudan to protect thousands of vulnerable civilians in its camps and the use of modern technologies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to enhance situational awareness. Looking forward, Mr. Ladsous highlighted six priority areas where the UN and Member States can work together to strengthen peacekeeping: expand the base of major contributors; enhance cooperation with regional actors; improving capacity for rapid deployment; modernize the uniformed capabilities of missions; focus more closely on performance; and, better help restore and extend state authority.

Following Mr. Ladsous's statement, senior representatives of western Balkans states spoke of their perspectives on UN peacekeeping and how their governments intended to interact with peacekeeping in the coming years. A representative of the Government of Serbia explained that Serbia's participation in peacekeeping, as the eighth largest European contributor of personnel, reflects its willingness to contribute to universal value systems, including human rights and the rule of law. He reiterated Serbia's announcement at the UN General Assembly summit on peacekeeping that it intends to increase its contribution to 500 uniformed personnel, including the deployment of field hospitals in Mali and the Central African Republic, and reported that the Government was working to increase the proportion of women among them.

A representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia provided an overview of his country's contribution to international multilateral operations, noting that the evolution of global threats means security and prosperity are increasingly dependent on an effective multilateral system. He advised the meeting that his ministry was looking at how to increase its participation in UN peacekeeping

A representative of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina announced that her country planned to continue its present level of contribution to peacekeeping and endeavour to find new forms contribution, including by pledging expertise from its centre for demining to MINUSMA and by participating in the Balkan medical unit initiative. She stated the Bosnia and Herzegovina national peacekeeping training centre possesses leading expertise in providing training on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820, and offered to increase joint training with other states. She conveyed her government's interest in hosting a follow up meeting to the roundtable in Sarajevo in 2015.

A representative of the Government of Montenegro welcomed the SG's announcement of a review of peace operations, noting changing trends in the operating environments of peacekeeping, including increases in targeted attacks against peacekeepers and international public health crises. To increase Montenegro's participation in peacekeeping, the Secretary of State pledged to work to change national regulations pertaining to the deployment of forces in international operations and improve military and administrative capacity to support these deployments. While noting that the country had a very small army and would thus not be able to contribute large numbers of personnel, he suggested that the contribution to peacekeeping by small countries is important to uphold the universality of Charter values.

A representative of the Government of Croatia expressed his government's support for the comprehensive, integrated civilian-military approach of multidimensional peacekeeping to address complex challenges. He reported that the Government of Croatia was working to improve the national strategic and legal framework and operational capabilities to better contribute personnel to peacekeeping. He identified opportunities to improve cooperation with regional organizations and alliances in support of peacekeeping and suggested that the role of women as active agents in security governance and conflict resolution should be promoted. He reiterated the Government's announcement at the UNGA summit on peace operations to strengthen training capacity for police officers from the region, in particular on sexual and gender based violence and the protection of civilians.

A representative of the Government of Albania, conveyed his government's intention to make its modest contribution to peacekeeping more efficient. He expressed support for the February 2014 Security Council resolution on the strengthening of the partnership between the EU and UN.

### **NEW ISSUES IN UN PEACEKEEPING: OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS, TASKS, AND CAPABILITY NEEDS**

In this session, officials from the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) expanded on the trends, challenges and priorities highlighted by Hervé Ladsous in his keynote speech. A military official identified three critical issues in peacekeeping that have important operational implications for missions. First, the increasing volatility of operating environments means that missions must be prepared to respond effectively to a broader spectrum of contingencies and that commanders need to be capable of and empowered to make decisions down to the small unit level. Secondly, the complexity of achieving political progress under Chapter VII mandates in hostile environments creates innate challenges to balance cooperation with criticism of the host government, with implications for how missions uphold their impartiality. Finally, these environments demand a higher level of responsiveness of peacekeeping, including the ability to rapidly deploy new missions, which requires more flexible support structures and standby capabilities to shorten the Force Generation process.

A police official emphasized the importance of considering UN policing within a larger framework of UN support to the strengthening of the rule of law and security institutions in post-conflict countries and highlighted the increasing level of integration of military and police components in implementing key mandated tasks such as the protection of civilians. He explained how transnational threats affect the capacity of missions to carry out their mandates, identified how UN policing could be strengthened to better address these threats and noted that the normative environment for international policing was changing in response.

A DPKO policy expert emphasized the importance of the civilian components of peacekeeping missions in tying uniformed activities to broader political, human rights and institutional reform objectives, in cooperation with UN Country Teams. He described how the protection of civilians in particular cuts across all components to contribute to a comprehensive approach. While noting that most civilian personnel were recruited through the internal staffing system, he highlighted some ways in which Member States could directly contribute civilian expertise to missions.

In the ensuing discussion, common challenges across regional organizations in filling capability gaps and opportunities for cooperation in this area were discussed. The importance of learning from previous mission deployment experiences was emphasized. The benefits and challenges associated with seconded personnel were discussed, with the UN reporting that new guidelines on government provided personnel were being developed in discussion with Member States.

### **GENDER AND UN PEACEKEEPING: INCREASING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PEACEKEEPING, WOMEN'S PROTECTION AND EMPOWERMENT**

A senior field-based UN peacekeeping military officer briefed the roundtable on the importance of women's participation in UN peacekeeping operations in ensuring the acceptance of the local population; increasing the likelihood of reporting violations against women; gaining access to information uniquely possessed by women; and, ensuring that the mission's activities were conducted in a gender sensitive manner. She identified a number of areas in which peacekeeping has improved the recruitment of women personnel in peacekeeping but stated that significantly more remained to be done.

A meeting participant reflected on her experiences prior to, during and following her service as a UN Police officer and contingent commander in a UN peacekeeping mission. She pointed out that women's participation in peacekeeping depends significantly on women's participation in the security institutions of Troops and Police Contributing Countries (TCCs/PCCs) and provided an overview of efforts to decrease the barriers for service by women in her national police force. She noted that her country's action plan for the implementation of UN Security Council 1325 includes a pillar on increasing women's participation in peacekeeping.

A gender adviser from a Nordic department of defence emphasized the importance of not only recruitment of women into peace operations, but also ensuring that they are serving in operational roles. He described some of the practical barriers that must be overcome to facilitate this such as the adaptation of personal protective equipment. He reflected on how military components can facilitate the inclusion of women in peace processes, such as by facilitating and securing transportation. He argued that better protection of civilians requires more gender sensitive analysis and called for greater clarity on the operationalization of many aspects of resolution 1325.

During the discussion, several participants expressed disappointment with the quality of training they had received on gender-related issues and activities, even among the most well-resourced militaries. Even when training has been conducted, it was noted that UN missions do not have visibility on who in the field had received what training. The importance of mainstreaming gender sensitivity into practical processes like procurement was emphasized. Some argued that a gender mainstreaming approach often resulted in gender issues being ignored in times of limited financial and human resources. Others emphasized the importance of not relegating women peacekeepers to issues exclusively related to women, sexual and gender based violence, etc., but rather deploying them as full members of units.

### **BEING A TROOP/POLICE CONTRIBUTING COUNTRY: FORCE GENERATION, TRAINING ARCHITECTURE, STANDARDS, AND REIMBURSEMENT**

A DPKO military official explained the new DPKO reimbursement framework for personnel and equipment, including the premiums for rapid deployment of enablers and for exceptional performance despite high levels of risk. He emphasized the importance of ensuring full self-sufficiency of units and explained the support UN missions provide to deployed units, as well as the responsibilities of TCCs. He conveyed the willingness of DPKO to advise governments on the Force Generation process.

A DPKO police official explained similar regimes for the deployment of police units and emphasized the importance of ongoing dialogue between DPKO and TCCs/PCCs, ideally through New York based military and police advisers. He also provided an overview of how individual UN police are required and deployed. He discussed the types of specialist police expertise DPKO is increasingly seeking to deploy.

A research analyst that had conducted on the DPKO Force Generation process for EU Member States provided five key recommendations for Member States interested in contributing to peacekeeping: be proactive and communicate interest in contributing widely; be clear on what resources are available for contribution, ideally through the UN Standby Arrangements System (UNSAS); give early, informal indication of willingness to contribute, even while UN and national decision making processes are ongoing; seek to contribute capabilities required and requested by DPKO; and, ensure familiarity with key UN policy documents, such as the Contingent Owned Equipment Manual.

During the discussion, opportunities were highlighted for NATO and affiliated Member States to use capabilities being withdrawn from the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan for peacekeeping missions. Reference was made to list of urgently required capabilities circulated to Permanent Missions in New York in January 2014, which was identified as a useful starting place for identifying possible units for contribution. Efforts to move peacekeeping away from a personnel numbers-based approach towards a capability-driven approach were discussed, as was progress made in increasing standardization across units deployed in peacekeeping operations. The lessons from the establishment and deployment of the Standby High-Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG) in the late 1990s were identified as a good starting point for efforts towards new standby/rapid deployment capacities.

### **REGIONAL COOPERATION AND JOINT DEPLOYMENTS: EXPERIENCES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

A Serbian military official; described Serbia's experience in partnering with other Member States to field units to peacekeeping missions and other multilateral operations, particularly medical support units. He described how these arrangements, whereby logistical and administrative functions are fulfilled by the framework nation, are helpful in enabling smaller countries with more limited resources to deploy peacekeeping personnel.

A Nordic military adviser described his personal experience as the commander of a unit serving as framework nation for a joint deployment in Afghanistan. He noted that while decisions for joint deployments might be made at the political

level, it is important to ensure sufficient inter-military training and communications cooperation is concluded prior to deployment to avoid operational difficulties, especially in dangerous environments. He also provided an overview of regional military cooperation among the Nordic countries, which he stated had been successful based on several factors, including a general common political/military interest; geographical proximity; common and shared values based on a shared cultural point of view; and common languages. The Nordic experience, where the training institutes of each country specialize and divide the training tasks among them, could be a good example for Western Balkans cooperation on training. He encouraged countries working to improve regional cooperation to maximize comparative advantages, avoiding competition, and focus on areas of common interest even where differences exist.

A representative of the US Government noted that peacekeeping missions are often deployed alongside one or more international military operations, as is the case in the Central African Republic, Mali, and Côte d'Ivoire. He expressed hope that the Secretary-General's review of peace operations would explore how peacekeeping missions work with these actors. He provided an overview of US support to TCCs, especially training, and described the new African Peacekeeping Rapid Response (APREP) initiative which would provide comprehensive (training, equipment, logistics, etc.) assistance to several African to enable them to develop rapid deployment capacity.

Meeting participants discussed areas of possible military cooperation for the western Balkans, including natural disaster response and combatting organized crime, and how this could improve capacity to work jointly in peacekeeping missions. It was suggested that the annual meeting of Southeast European Defence Ministers (SEDM) could be a useful forum in which to discuss such cooperation, and the United Nations offered its support to facilitate discussions. Participants with experience in and expertise on joint deployments emphasized the importance of choosing a partner with similar linguistic, cultural background and military culture, as well as the need to participate in extensive joint training exercises. The opportunities to examine joint police employments were discussed, though it was agreed that these pose greater challenges due to the uniqueness of jurisdictions and limited pools of available personnel.

#### **PEACEKEEPING PARTNERSHIPS: EU/NATO/OSCE/UN**

A representative of North Atlantic Treaty Organization, described the process by which NATO seeks to develop Member States generated capabilities, noting that it was a question not only of volume, but also of the willingness to use the capabilities when and where they were required. He predicted that increasing equipment costs and declining-post-Afghanistan defense budgets would hinder capability development for the alliance and this, in turn could affect supply for peacekeeping. He discussed areas where organizations could decrease the transaction costs associated with multilateral deployments, including standardization to enhance interoperability and performance; multinational technical processes for procurement, logistics, etc.; and the use of the framework nation concept.

A representative the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, explained that, while the OSCE had not deployed a military peacekeeping operation, it had on several occasions deployed alongside military operations. Recent examples included observer missions in Moldova, Georgia and, most recently, the monitoring mission in Ukraine which, given the intensity of the security situation, presented many similar challenges to those faced by a peacekeeping mission with a ceasefire monitoring mandate. Accordingly, he suggested that the OSCE had much to learn from DPKO in the deployment of such missions.

A DPKO policy expert expressed gratification at the consistency with which partners have described their vision for working together, where previously there might have been differences of opinion on the appropriate roles for each actor. He suggested that the UN, Member States and regional organizations should leverage this unity to further discussions on issues like rapid deployment and capability development. He provided updates on the status of efforts to strengthen the partnerships between the UN and individual organizations, including NATO, the EU and the African Union, both globally and in terms of in-country coordination.

Much of the ensuing discussion focused on how, in practical terms, capabilities being withdrawn from Afghanistan could be put to use in support of peacekeeping. While NATO would not include participation in peacekeeping as part of its operational planning, per se, it might capture this information in its larger contextual analysis with regard to capability development. Trilateral partnerships among the UN, a TCC and an equipment and training donor country should also be explored further. It was noted that, often, participation in peacekeeping operations and participation in regional alliances are viewed as "either/or," when in fact they enable each other.

## **CLOSING REMARKS AND NEXT STEPS**

Ambassador Roksanda Nincic, Assistant Minister for Multilateral Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia, stated that it was an honour to have welcomed USG Ladsous to the meeting and thanked UNOB for organizing the event, which had provided invaluable information on how the region could enhance its contribution to peacekeeping. The roundtable, she suggested, would serve as a basis for discussion on how to move forward collectively.

One of the meeting organizers broadly summarized the meeting. He cited discussions on the changing conflict environments for UN peacekeeping operations, which demanded greater flexibility and responsiveness on the ground, implying the need for greater capabilities as well as strong political backing. Significant and ongoing developments in standardization, policy and doctrine, financial arrangements and training have significantly improved clarity in the framework for the deployment and a regime for high performance of uniformed components on the ground. Nevertheless, the UN continued to struggle to generate and deploy troops rapidly to the field, especially enabling units, while Member States continued to find the Force Generation process complex and opaque. This indicated a need for greater dialogue, which is facilitated by the appointment of military and police advisers to Permanent Missions to the UN in New York. For countries considering increasing their uniformed contributions to peacekeeping, joint deployments, either within the region or with a larger and well established framework nation, could provide a useful first step. There are a number of opportunities for existing or potential TCCs/PCCs to enhance their capacity through third-party training and support. There is also an exciting opportunity for work within the region to enhance cooperation in support of peacekeeping around principles of complementarity, specialization and non-competition.

In closing the meeting and looking ahead, RSG and Head of UNOB Peter Due expressed his hope that the meeting had increased understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing UN peacekeeping and clarified the types of support the UN needed from western Balkans countries. He promised that the UN would circulate to participants the list of urgent capability needs as well as other key documents referred to during the meeting. Mr. Due cited the generous offer of Bosnia-Herzegovina to hold a follow up meeting to the roundtable in 2015 in Sarajevo and assured participants that the UN would follow up on this offer. He also requested that countries of the region consider inviting the UN to participate in the annual meetings of Southeast European Defence Ministers (SEDM), as discussed during the roundtable. Mr. Due thanked the participants, donors, hosts and organizers of the meeting.

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