



MEETING BRIEF

The Twentieth Annual IPI New York Seminar

The Future Role of Peacekeeping Operations

The nature of conflict today is changing. Intrastate conflicts are evolving into regional conflicts that are more complex and less conducive to political settlement, with higher levels of violence against civilian populations. Extremist groups are seizing territory; purporting to provide public services such as justice, jobs, and security; and using social media to spread their violent ideology and recruit new members. These conflicts have become infused with ethnic and sectarian divisions and generate major humanitarian and protracted political crises. What role will peacekeeping operations play as these complex conflict environments continue to evolve?

This was the question under consideration at the International Peace Institute's twentieth annual New York Seminar on April 17, 2015, supported by the Permanent Missions of Austria and Italy to the United Nations. As experts and diplomats considered the future role of peacekeeping operations, some common themes emerged from the day-long discussions:

- Many of today's conflict environments exhibit a weak state apparatus, widespread poverty, competition over dwindling natural resources, multiple violent nonstate actors, and the involvement of powerful regional states. The current war in Yemen exemplifies this situation.
- Given the challenges and threats posed by the changing conflict landscape, new conflict analysis tools are needed to strengthen peacekeeping's role. In addition, as achieving political solutions to these crises has become more difficult, prevention should be at the forefront of international efforts.
- Participants highlighted the value of peacekeeping guidance and training standards as well as the need to revisit and revise them. Specifically, one speaker noted the need to update the [Capstone Doctrine](#) to reflect the current conflict environment and offer guidance to mission personnel on how to carry out their roles and responsibilities.
- The United Nations' efforts to keep up with the evolving security landscape were recognized in undertakings such as the Intervention Brigade in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the Intelligence and Fusion Cell in Mali; the first-ever UN emergency health mission, UNMEER, in response to Ebola; and the Joint Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the UN in Syria.
- New and enhanced partnerships stand out as the norm in peacekeeping today. The UN is actively building on the comparative advantage of regional partners such as the African Union and the European Union. But there are inherent risks and challenges in these partnerships. For example, when a regional body is leading a mediation process alongside a UN mission, or vice versa, how can the organizations work together and use one process to leverage progress in the other?
- Women's roles as peacebuilders and peacemakers featured as a recurring theme. Fifteen years after the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325, which reaffirmed the importance of women's roles in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, evidence indicates that actively involving women in peace processes broadens the discussion and helps better address the root causes of conflict, but practical steps in this direction remain limited.

– Lamii Moivi Kromah

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