

# Scenario-Based Planning and the Future of Peace Operations

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## Executive Summary

Over the past eighty years, the evolution of UN peace operations has encountered several critical junctures. Now, UN peace operations have arguably reached another turning point with the decline in the number of UN-led multidimensional missions and a growing role for partners, including regional and subregional organizations. This has led to calls to examine how peace operations are conceived, mandated, structured, and led, and several review processes are ongoing. It is important that these processes consider not only the supply side of peace operations but also the demand side—in other words, to take conflict settings as the starting point and work backward to determine the type of intervention needed.

To facilitate this demand-side examination of peace operations, IPI organized a series of scenario-based workshops to brainstorm potential responses to real and hypothetical scenarios. Several key considerations emerged from these workshops:

- The UN Security Council and UN Secretariat should work together to ensure that mandates and mission activities are driven by clear political strategies that address politics at the local, national, regional, and international levels.
- The Secretariat should establish a standing and integrated operational planning team in the shared regional divisions to facilitate a shift from templated approaches to context-specific, demand-driven approaches.
- Field missions should have enhanced capacity to develop operational responses to scenarios based on their current mandate or possible changes to their mandate.
- Member states and the Secretariat should explore how to operationalize modular approaches to mission configurations to foster more flexible and targeted mission mandates.
- Troop- and police-contributing countries (T/PCCs) should provide more specialized and targeted contributions to match missions' capabilities to new mission approaches and current demands.
- Building on their commitments in the Pact for the Future, member states should demonstrate leadership by actively contributing to the ongoing reviews of peace operations and by providing a clear political direction to the work of the Secretariat.

These lessons can feed into several ongoing and upcoming policy processes, including the UN peacekeeping ministerial, the review on the future of peace operations, the ten-year review of the report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO), and the review of the UN peacebuilding architecture.

## Introduction

Recent changes in the international peace and security environment have brought peace operations to a turning point. With a decline in the number of UN-led multidimensional missions, the rise in the leadership of the African Union (AU) and subregional organizations, the increase in demand for peace enforcement operations, and broader shifts in the geopolitical order, there is a need to examine how peace operations will be conceived, mandated, structured, and led in the future. This was articulated by the secretary-general in his policy brief “A New Agenda for Peace,” which calls for a broad-based reflection on the future of peace operations with a view toward more nimble and adaptable models.<sup>1</sup> In the Pact for the Future, member states reiterated this call, requesting the secretary-general to conduct a “review on the future of all forms of United Nations peace operations” to ensure they meet evolving needs and permit “agile, tailored responses to existing, emerging and future challenges.”<sup>2</sup>

This review comes alongside several additional processes to evaluate the future of peace operations. These include the recent independent study on “The Future of Peacekeeping, New Models, and Related Capabilities” commissioned by the UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO), the development of joint guidelines for the implementation of Security Council Resolution 2719 on UN financing for AU-led peace support operations, the 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture Review (PBAR), the AU’s strategic review of the African Standby Force to align it with contemporary security challenges, and a lessons-learned study on special political missions led by the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA).<sup>3</sup> As the tenth anniversary of the report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace (HIPPO), 2025 is also an opportune time to revisit that report’s far-

reaching recommendations.<sup>4</sup>

While several of these processes aim to review current systems and structures for mandating and deploying peace operations, there is also a need to examine the future of peace operations from the demand side. In other words, there is a need to take conflict settings as the starting point and work backward to determine the type of deployment or other intervention needed by the UN or other actors. To facilitate this demand-side examination of peace operations and complement the other ongoing review processes, IPI organized a series of scenario-based workshops to brainstorm potential responses to a mix of real and hypothetical scenarios.

The first workshop was held over two days in Addis Ababa in January 2025 in partnership with the Institute for Security Studies (ISS). A second workshop was held in New York in March 2025. The workshops brought together civilian, military, and police representatives of the UN, AU, subregional organizations, and member states, as well as independent experts. The workshops aimed to:

- Test existing assumptions about planning processes, political frameworks, and current and potential models to encourage “out-of-the-box” thinking;
- Promote a strategic planning culture in which scenario planning is encouraged without awaiting or prejudging UN Security Council decisions or requests; and
- Reflect on the larger political context to consider the conditions under which member states may authorize peace operations and how to strengthen political consensus among member states when deployments are needed.

Based on these workshops, this paper reflects on options for how mission planning can help make peace operations more adaptable and flexible.

1 United Nations, “Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 9: A New Agenda for Peace,” July 2023, p. 24.

2 UN General Assembly Resolution 79/1 (July 17, 2024), UN Doc. A/RES/79/1, para. 42.

3 El-Ghassim Wane, Paul D. Williams, and Ai Kihara-Hunt, “The Future of Peace, New Models, and Related Capabilities,” United Nations, October 2024.

4 UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, *Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on Uniting Our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnership and People*, UN Doc. A/70/95-S/2015/446, June 17, 2015.

## The Current State of UN-Led Peace Operations

Over the past eighty years, the UN's 120 peace operations have used numerous models and approaches to adapt to changes in the settings where they deploy. UN peace operations have also undergone periods of expansion and contraction, usually due to changes in Security Council dynamics and broader geopolitics. Yet amid this constant evolution, several critical junctures stand out. These include, among others, the post-Cold War surge in mission deployments, the peacekeeping crises of the 1990s that later led to expanded mandates and the protection of civilians, and the post-9/11 period that ushered in stabilization approaches.

UN peace operations have arguably approached another turning point. This began with the riots carried out by local communities against the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in 2022 and was further punctuated by the sudden withdrawal of the UN mission in Mali (MINUSMA) one year later. For some, these events have called into question the effectiveness of large, multidimensional missions, some of which have been present for years (or decades) with seemingly little progress on achieving their mandates. These challenges have been compounded by financial constraints, resistance from host-state governments and populations, and geopolitical tensions that make it difficult for Security Council members to agree on broad mandates. Altogether, these developments have signaled member states' shrinking appetite for deploying large missions.

In this period of transformation in the international system, it is difficult to predict the future of peace operations. However, a few trends are becoming apparent. For example, organizations and states other than the UN will likely play a greater role in peace operations in the future,

whether in partnership with or instead of the UN. The most prominent partnership is between the UN and the AU, as reflected by the adoption of Resolution 2719 in 2023.<sup>5</sup> However, subregional organizations and ad hoc security initiatives have also taken on a greater role, especially in Africa. In contexts like Ukraine, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) may play a role, and the EU continues to provide critical support in multiple settings across the globe.

At the same time, member states within the UN system continue to express fairly unified support for the UN's central role in leading and supporting peace operations. In the Pact for the Future, member states described UN peace operations as "critical

tools to maintain international peace and security."<sup>6</sup> The UN possesses significant comparative advantages in its ability to plan, resource, and backstop missions, which cannot be replicated by any other actor. Thus, even in contexts where the UN is not in the lead, it will still likely play an important role in supporting any large-scale operation.

As it increasingly operates alongside or in support of a range of other actors, the UN may have to shift toward a more flexible, targeted approach to peace operations. One option would be a "modular approach" where the UN deploys or supports flexible responses that are more easily scaled up or down as the environment changes. This approach could reduce political barriers to reaching agreement within the Security Council and obtaining consent from host states. It could also require fewer financial resources and help shorten the duration of deployments.

However, shifting toward more adaptable and nimble approaches to peace operations would require a level of political flexibility and trust within the Security Council and with host states that are in short supply. While narrower mandates could lower the threshold for initial agreement within the council, a modular approach would also

<sup>5</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 2719 establishes a framework for UN assessed contributions to help finance AU-led operations on a "case-by-case basis." UN Security Council Resolution 2719 (December 21, 2023), UN Doc. S/RES/2719.

<sup>6</sup> UN Doc. A/RES/79/1, para. 42.

require the council to regularly renegotiate mandates in response to changes on the ground. Yet in recent years, the council has struggled to agree on any significant changes to mission mandates, casting doubt on its ability to support more dynamic approaches to mandating.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, the deployment of agile and flexible missions remains aspirational, at least in the short term.

## Observations from the Scenario Workshops

Taking these trends into account, this section draws out several observations that emerged during IPI's scenario-based workshops.

### Rethinking the UN's Approach to Developing Political Strategies

One recurring message from the scenario-based exercises was the need to rethink how the UN approaches political strategies for peace operations. As indicated in the recent independent study on the future of peacekeeping, “no amount of technical and operational reform will deliver peacekeeping success” in the current climate of heightened geopolitical tensions.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, member states have acknowledged that “politics must drive the design and implementation of peace operations.”<sup>9</sup> A mission's political vision must guide its mandate, not be dictated by it.<sup>10</sup>

A mission's political vision must guide its mandate, not be dictated by it.

While mission leaders play a critical role in developing and implementing political strategies, the UN needs to begin developing a comprehensive political strategy before a peace operation is mandated and deployed and then continually adapt this strategy after deployment. This way, mandates can be driven by political strategies and crafted so as to facilitate their effective implementation. Missions' political strategies should also describe

the theory of change for how they will address the conflict, taking into account international politics and Security Council dynamics. Moreover, they should be connected with other mandated tasks and the wider UN system, going beyond the role of the mission to consider how other actors, including other UN entities and regional organizations, can undertake some of the required tasks in partnership with the UN mission. Political strategies thus need to be based on a stakeholder mapping developed through engagement with a broad range of global, regional, national, and local actors.

This new approach to developing political strategies could help build political support for missions in the Security Council, host states, host populations, and regional organizations. To build support in the Security Council, this strategy should set out an approach for engaging not only with national and local actors but also with international actors. Ensuring that political strategies take into account Security Council dynamics could help the UN Secretariat anticipate and bridge divisions within the council and identify areas of convergence to build support for a mission's deployment. Once a mission is deployed, it could also help the mission engage with the council to sustain support, a task that has traditionally been left to UN headquarters.

At the national level, this approach to developing political strategies could help obtain and manage host-state consent for UN deployments.

Host-state consent is fluid and may vary over the lifespan of a mission due to changing conflict dynamics and shifts in the host state's priorities that may affect its willingness to cooperate. Moreover, even when a government formally consents to a UN presence, it may be unwilling to engage in the fundamental governance reforms or power-sharing agreements that are necessary for sustainable political settlements. When host-state authorities perceive their interest to be at odds with the political objectives of a mission, they may impose operational constraints that undermine the

7 Annika S. Hansen et al., “Five Trends in UN Peace Operations and Five Calls to Action,” Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF), January 2025.

8 Wane, Williams, and Kihara-Hunt, “The Future of Peace, New Models, and Related Capabilities.”

9 UN Doc. A/70/95-S/2015/446, p. 10. This was also reaffirmed in the A4P+ initiative and the New Agenda for Peace.

10 Adam Day et al., “The Political Practice of Peacekeeping: How Strategies for Peace Operations are Developed and Implemented,” United Nations University Centre for Policy Research and Stimson Center, 2020.



mission's ability to operate effectively and gain the trust of the population. To build and sustain political support for their deployment, missions need to pursue continuous dialogue with host governments.<sup>11</sup> This is particularly important during regime changes and complex political transitions in host states.<sup>12</sup>

Missions' political strategies should also reflect an understanding of host-country consent that encompasses not only the host government but also actors at the subnational level, including host communities and non-state armed groups. Missions have recently struggled to build and sustain support among host populations. In the DRC, for example, the inability of MONUSCO to provide security and protection to communities has resulted in popular protests against the mission.<sup>13</sup> It is also often challenging for missions to manage relationships with armed groups outside formal peace processes.<sup>14</sup> Missions' political strategies thus need to be based on and continually adapted to changing conflict dynamics and perspectives at both the national and the subnational levels.<sup>15</sup>

Developing political strategies also requires consultation with regional actors, including member states and regional and subregional organizations. These actors can provide an additional layer of political support for UN missions and help them engage with host states. Moreover, in circumstances where it is not operationally or politically feasible for UN missions to deploy, regional actors may step in.

## Joint Political Strategies for Partnered Operations in Africa

In Africa, regional organizations have played a growing role in peace operations. In recent years, several regional economic communities (RECs) have deployed peace support operations and member states have deployed ad hoc security initiatives to respond to regional security threats. The approach to planning and deploying these

operations differs from UN peace operations. These missions tend to have even more rapid deployment timelines, requiring policymakers to navigate trade-offs between the urgency of intervention and the imperative for robust planning, operational readiness, and in-depth conflict assessment.

As a result, the actors deploying these missions tend not to develop political strategies as part of mission planning. This increases the risk of these operations not leading to a peaceful settlement to the conflict. Moreover, resource mobilization and capability generation usually only begin after the deployment of these missions, leading to logistical and operational challenges that have sometimes led to their untimely exit. This can be observed in several previous missions, including the G5 Sahel Joint Force, the East African Community Regional Force in the DRC, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM), and the SADC Mission in the DRC (SAMIDRC).

Nonetheless, there have been attempts to link some African-led missions to a broader political strategy. For instance, the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in the Lake Chad Basin has linked its military operations to a broader political framework, the Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery, and Resilience of the Boko Haram-Affected Areas of the Lake Chad Basin. This has helped harmonize kinetic operations with humanitarian and development support and provides a framework for the mission to engage with local governments in the region.<sup>16</sup>

Partnerships between African-led missions and the UN could also provide opportunities for better integrating political strategies into mission planning, with each organization drawing on its comparative advantages. For example, regional organizations can draw on their unique understanding of complex conflicts, while the UN can leverage its robust analytical capacity. The operationalization of Resolution 2719 should also be seen an opportunity for the UN and the African

11 Julie Gregory and Lisa Sharland, "Host-Country Consent in UN Peacekeeping," Stimson Center, September 25, 2023.

12 Albert Trithart and Bitania Tadesse, "UN Peace Operations and Unconstitutional Changes of Government," International Peace Institute, March 2025.

13 Anjali Dayal, "A Crisis of Consent in UN Peace Operations," *IPI Global Observatory*, August 2, 2022.

14 Gregory and Sharland, "Host-Country Consent in UN Peacekeeping."

15 Allard Duursma and Jenna Russo, "The Primacy of Politics at the Local Level in the UN Peace Operations," International Peace Institute, February 2025.

16 Amani Africa, "Consideration of the Report of the AUC Chairperson on the Activities of MNJTF and Mandate Renewal of the Force," January 12, 2025.

Union to jointly develop not only technical planning documents but also to prepare joint political strategies.

However, when developing joint political strategies, both organizations need to have a shared conceptual understanding of peace operations. Different peace operations models may have different connotations within and outside the UN. For instance, the African Union’s doctrinal framework categorizes peace support operations according to the degree of authority, command, and control exercised by the AU Peace and Security Council, whereas the UN puts more emphasis on the types of tasks peace operations are designed to undertake.

## A Demand-Driven Approach to Mission Planning

The UN’s ability to utilize a full spectrum of peace operations is hampered by budgetary and bureaucratic constraints that limit operational flexibility.<sup>17</sup> The form of intervention is shaped more by the selection of the lead UN department (DPO or DPPA)

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than the contextual requirements of a given conflict or crisis. Rather than using supply-driven, template-based approaches, interventions should be informed by an in-depth strategic analysis of the context, including stakeholder mapping. However, participants noted that planning processes are often rushed. When a crisis occurs, planners feel pressured to quickly devise a strategy for deployment without taking the time to carefully analyze conflict drivers, stakeholders, the political approach, and the partnerships and capabilities required. This can result in a rush to deploy a mission even if a mission deployment is not the most appropriate response.

The UN thus needs to shift from templated to demand-driven approaches. This necessitates establishing an integrated planning team within UN headquarters and strengthening such capacities at the field level. This need has long been recognized, included in the 2015 HIPPO report and the

recent DPO independent study. However, a combination of bureaucratic, financial, and political barriers has kept such recommendations from being fully implemented. As part of the secretary-general’s 2019 reform of the peace and security pillar, the UN Secretariat established an Office of Shared Services between DPO and DPPA with shared planning capacities. However, resistance within the two departments and their desire to keep control of their own planning processes has undermined this and other aspects of the reform. As a result, mission planning remains divided along department lines and driven by individuals who “have professional incentives to propose a mission configuration that satisfies that department’s interests.”<sup>18</sup>

In addition to planning for current or new missions mandated by the council, an integrated planning capacity could be utilized to undertake scenario

planning for potential future responses, as well as regular contingency and risk planning for ongoing missions. This would create space for innovating new types of responses in line with the

secretary-general’s call to build a culture of foresight to equip the UN with “the capacities to discern emerging trends, anticipate potential shifts, and respond proactively.”<sup>19</sup> While member states may be politically sensitive to scenario-based planning, there is nothing in the UN Charter that precludes the Secretariat from undertaking advanced planning without a directive from the council.

However, Secretariat leadership has exhibited low political risk tolerance to undertake such planning and, as a result, the Secretariat’s planning capacity remains relatively weak.

## Modular Approaches to Mandating

Current discussions around the future of peace operations have included a focus on so-called “modular approaches,” which formed the basis for

17 Daniel Forti and Richard Gowan, “Fresh Thinking About Peace Operations at the UN,” International Crisis Group, January 7, 2025.

18 Marc Jacquand, “UN Reform and Mission Planning: Too Great Expectations?” International Peace Institute, November 2020.

19 United Nations, “Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 11: UN 2.0,” September 2023.

the recent DPO independent study. Under this approach, mandated tasks such as electoral support, security sector reform, and the protection of civilians are treated as building blocks that can be used in a more tailored and targeted fashion than the usual templated approach. The determination of which building blocks or modules to use should be based on an assessment of the current context, including the political environment (both nationally and internationally), the resources available, and the constellation of actors able to implement these tasks. The idea is that building blocks can be added or removed over time, depending on the needs of the situation. This approach could facilitate mandates that are more “clear, focused, prioritized, sequenced, achievable, [and] adaptable to the situation on the ground,” as called for by the General Assembly’s Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C34).<sup>20</sup>

In addition to facilitating more tailored approaches, there are other advantages to a modular approach to peace operations. First, this approach could lower the political threshold for achieving consensus within the Security Council and obtaining the consent of the host state. While it may be politically difficult to gain consent to deploy a large operation with a broad mandate, agreement may be easier for a mission with a narrower, more targeted mandate. For example, a host state may be more amenable to accepting peacekeepers to monitor a ceasefire, support elections, or provide security sector support than to perform more “invasive” tasks like human rights monitoring and reporting, the protection of civilians, or community engagement. Agreement on such mandates may also be easier within the Security Council, particularly at a time of growing contestation over norms like human rights, gender, and civilian protection.

Second, a modular approach could facilitate smoother mission transitions. Because this approach allows for building blocks to be added or removed over time, a mission could scale down more slowly, removing some tasks that are completed or no longer relevant while remaining engaged on other tasks. Further, because a modular

approach would draw on a broader constellation of actors to implement the tasks required, other UN or non-UN actors could continue carrying out longer-term peacebuilding tasks even as a UN peacekeeping operation winds down its security-related tasks.

Third, modular approaches may be more realistic given current financial constraints, including the UN’s liquidity crisis. Given global economic challenges and shifts in states’ spending priorities, there will likely be a need to shift from “doing more with less” to “doing less with less.” Homing in on a smaller set of tasks within a peacekeeping context may thus be more feasible.

At the same time, modular approaches could come with risks. While the growth of “Christmas tree” mandates stems in part from the parochial interests of Security Council members and Secretariat officials, it also reflects a recognition that consolidating peace usually requires undertaking a broad set of peacebuilding-related tasks. Without institution building, community reconciliation, stronger state-society relations, and the effective demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, other efforts to end conflict may not take root. While the intent of a modular approach would not be to neglect these tasks—only to better sequence them and distribute them among a broader constellation of actors—there is a risk that they could remain unimplemented due to lack of funding or because they are no longer seen as priorities.

Another risk is that host states may prefer to focus on “core” peacekeeping tasks to help them regain control over their territory while excluding broader peacebuilding tasks that hold them accountable for the well-being of their populations. Excluding these tasks from the mandate could thus give host states an easy “out” from peacebuilding tasks. Not only would this steer the UN farther away from its commitment to “people-centered approaches,” but it would also undermine the prospects for durable peace.

Finally, modular approaches require a level of flexi-

<sup>20</sup> UN General Assembly, *Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations*, UN Doc. A/78/19, 2024, para. 121.

bility, coordination, and integration that may be difficult for the UN to achieve. While member states have called for more adaptable and nimble approaches to peace operations, the Security Council has not demonstrated an ability to operate in this manner. Mandate negotiations are often cumbersome and politically contentious. Thus, more regular changes to mission mandates may be difficult to achieve. At the field level, the UN has long struggled to integrate its own work both within missions and with the broader UN family in mission contexts. Working in an integrated manner with a broader range of actors would require an unprecedented level of coordination and integration. While partnerships are increasingly important in both modular and non-modular settings, more needs to be done to ensure that all partners work toward common objectives in an integrated manner.

Under a modular approach, mandated tasks are building blocks that can be used in a more tailored and targeted fashion than the usual templated approach.

## Specialized and Targeted Capabilities

For the UN to shift toward new models and approaches to peace operations, it needs to ensure that the people and equipment deployed are appropriately matched to the conflict environment. This is essential both for effective mandate implementation and for the safety and security of peacekeepers.

The potential trend toward lighter and more nimble operations could entail a change in the type and level of deployments by traditional troop- and police-contributing countries (T/PCCs). T/PCCs may need to adapt by moving away from primarily providing large numbers of troops toward offering more targeted and specialized contributions, including troops and police trained and equipped to act in non-permissive environments.<sup>21</sup> For the military, this may include individuals trained and equipped to counter improvised explosive devices, conduct medical and casualty evacuations, and process peacekeeping-intelligence, among other

things. For police, this may involve a shift from traditional law enforcement to a more holistic approach that emphasizes community engagement, capacity building, and the protection of human rights. Specialized police teams, which are highly trained in specific areas such as organized crime, forensics, community policing, and sexual and gender-based violence, could also be increasingly important.<sup>22</sup>

## Conclusion

There are several opportunities to take forward the lessons from the scenario-based workshops and tie them to ongoing policy processes.

**UN peacekeeping ministerial:** In May 2025, Germany will host the UN peacekeeping ministerial, which is a high-level forum that provides member states an opportunity to announce pledges to help enhance UN peacekeeping capabilities. This year's ministerial will focus on new peacekeeping models and priority areas for peacekeeping reform, building on the findings of the DPO independent study.<sup>23</sup> As such, the ministerial presents an opportunity to more clearly link potential new models with the types of capabilities required, including personnel, training, and equipment. The ministerial also provides a forum for high-level delegations to come together and discuss the future of peacekeeping, including the UN's role vis-à-vis other partners.

**Review on the future of peace operations:** In the Pact for the Future, member states requested the secretary-general to "undertake a review on the future of all forms of United Nations peace operations" and provide recommendations on how UN tools "can be adapted to meet evolving needs, to allow for more agile, tailored responses to existing, emerging and future challenges."<sup>24</sup> While the scope and modalities of the review are still being determined by the Secretariat, it presents an opportunity

21 Fiifi Edu-Afful, "Peacekeeping in Nonpermissive Environments: Assessing Troop-Contributing Countries' Perspectives on Capabilities and Mindsets," International Peace Institute, March 2023.

22 Charlie Hunt, "Specialized Police Teams in UN Peace Operations: A Survey of Progress and Challenges," International Peace Institute, March 2024.

23 United Nations, "Concept Note: United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial 2025," 2025.

24 UN Doc. A/RES/79/1, para. 42.



to understand what has worked well in the past and identify lessons for the future. It also presents an opportunity to consider how the UN could shift from the parochial dichotomy between peacekeeping operations and special political mission to a more holistic approach to peace operations.

To that end, the Secretariat should set a foundation for the review by compiling an evidence base of what has worked, what has not worked, and in what circumstances. While there is a robust literature on the effectiveness of peacekeeping, policymakers would benefit from having access to more detailed evidence on the effectiveness of specific aspects of peacekeeping. This could include, for example, which sets of mandated activities have been most effectively implemented by which actors and in what order. This could guide future thinking on how mandates should be structured and the range of actors that may be most effective in leading various peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities.

The Pact for the Future also requests the review to identify lessons from previous and ongoing reform processes. While the secretary-general's reform of both management and the peace and security pillar aimed to improve mission planning and backstopping, implementation has fallen short due to resistance from member states and from within the Secretariat. Drawing lessons from the barriers faced by these reform efforts would help inform future efforts to reform the UN's work on peace operations.

**Ten-year review of the HIPPO report:** In 2015, HIPPO released its report, putting forward a series of “essential shifts” in peace operations, as well as a broad range of recommendations across the peacebuilding and sustaining peace spectrum. Ten years later, many of the recommendations of the HIPPO report remain relevant, including the need to center the primacy of politics and support more flexible deployments across a spectrum of operations. Policymakers should thus look to the recommendations of the HIPPO report to determine how to make progress on those areas that have stalled or been unfulfilled.

**Peacebuilding architecture review:** the UN's peacebuilding architecture is undergoing its fourth review in 2025. The purpose of the review is to assess and improve implementation of the UN's peacebuilding and sustaining peace agenda.<sup>25</sup> The review will focus on several areas that are pertinent to the future of peace operations, including the advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission; a greater focus on prevention, as called for in the New Agenda for Peace; and the role of the Peacebuilding Fund in funding gaps that emerge during peacekeeping transitions. The fact that the review of the peacebuilding architecture is overlapping with the Secretariat's review on the future of peace operations presents an opportunity to explore synergies between peacekeeping and peacebuilding and to assess the full spectrum of the UN's peace and security efforts.

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25 Lauren McGowan and Ilianna Kotini, “Two Decades and Four Reviews Later—What Comes Next for the UN Peacebuilding Architecture?” *IPI Global Observatory*, January 9, 2025.

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