



CHALLENGES FORUM

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADVANCE THE ACTION FOR PEACEKEEPING AGENDA

The Challenges Forum is a global partnership that uses its convening power to generate innovative ideas and promote results for more effective peace operations. As part of that effort the Challenges Forum has over the past two years focused its convening power to provide tangible and concrete recommendations to support the implementation of the UN's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) agenda. Close to the second anniversary of the launch of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' initiative A4P, this document offers a consolidated and prioritized list of key recommendations that have been formulated collectively by the Challenges Forum partnership and its international stakeholders to catalyze and support further action by Member States, the UN Secretariat, and Field Missions in their efforts to advance the A4P agenda and deliver more effective peace operations.

These recommendations align with the two strategic objectives that the Challenges Forum partnership has agreed to implement from 2019 to 2023. The first is focused on the effective implementation of the development and reform of UN peace operations and related regional partnerships. The second objective has a more specific focus on ensuring that the UN and regional partners have more effective mission leadership and strategic and operational management capacity.

These recommendations are intended to support the holistic implementation of A4P through mutually reinforcing recommendations, drawing on the commitments made in the Declaration of Shared Commitments by Member States, regional organizations and the UN Secretariat. Since these recommendations have emerged from discussions among the Challenges Forum over the last two years in parallel with the A4P agenda, some of them may already be partly implemented (for example, measures have been put in place to strengthen performance and training through the Light Coordination Mechanism, as well as the Comprehensive Performance Assessment System). The recommendations in this paper are intended to complement those already being implemented by the Secretariat and Member States as part of the A4P agenda. This list is categorized according to the eight thematic areas guiding the A4P agenda.

Challenges Forum is an international partnership consisting of organizations from: Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Canada, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Russia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America, WFUNA

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POLITICAL SOLUTIONS

Advancing political solutions is central to the work of peace operations. Efforts to enhance the political impact of peace operations focus on the role of mission leadership, the reporting of the Secretary-General, the mandate responsibilities of the Security Council and the consultative mechanisms between different stakeholders. Key recommendations included:

- 1. Strengthen analysis of conflict and peace drivers.** Peace operations need an understanding of the drivers of peace and conflict in order to advance political solutions. The Security Council needs to ensure it is offering strategic direction to the peace operations through its mandates informed by analysis that maps the drivers of peace and conflict. This will require the field mission to have a better understanding of the different local constituencies in a mission and understand their motivations, in order to identify key stakeholders to prioritize engagement with as part of the political strategy. The Secretariat should ensure that early mission planning processes clearly map the different stakeholders in the likely mission environment (e.g. government, armed groups, regional actors etc), with an analysis of how they are perceived by the local community, in order to inform peace and conflict analysis for the peacekeeping mission.
- 2. Focus mission leadership resources on political strategy.** The Security Council should work closely with the mission leadership to support their efforts to advance political strategy in their missions of operation. This requires further examination by the Secretariat and think tanks regarding the additional need for human resources to support the mission leadership team, especially given the increasing delegation to the field and recent efforts to make strategic and operational mission planning and implementation more effective. Furthermore, review the division of responsibilities in this team, as to allow the SRSG to dedicate time for political engagement with key stakeholders.
- 3. Improve Security Council mandating processes.** Security Council mandates should evolve based on conditions on the ground rather than set timetables. As part of mandate development, the Security Council should engage more substantively with entities such as ‘Groups of Friends’ to inform the drafting of peace operation mandates. The Council should explore more innovative approaches to roles and responsibilities in drafting peacekeeping mandates, such as further opening up pen-holder roles to non-permanent members of the Council, and to have more inclusive consultations.
- 4. Strengthen strategic communication.** Field missions should develop strategic communications plans that communicate objectives, achievements and milestones with external stakeholders and internally within the mission as part of the mission’s overall political strategy and as a mechanism to build trust, manage expectations among the community they serve particularly when it comes to protection of civilians, and generate support for resources. These plans should be informed by a media sector analysis. Similarly, mission leadership teams should oversee the development of mission-wide communications strategies that identify, among other things, key actors and audiences for the mission to engage with.



WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

Efforts to advance women, peace and security through the A4P agenda are focused on the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace processes, integrating gender perspectives into all stages of peace operations, and increasing the number of women in uniformed and civilian roles at all levels in peace operations. Key recommendations include:

- 5. Gather, analyse and apply gender disaggregated data.** The UN Secretariat, with the support of think tanks, should gather and analyze gender disaggregated data across UN peace operations at different phases of missions in order to identify women’s roles and contributions to peace operations and ensure this data is included in reporting to the Security Council. Such data would assist in understanding the participation of women in different leadership positions throughout the mission lifecycle. Mission personnel and the leadership team should be accountable for including gender disaggregated data in their reporting and analysis.
- 6. Increase the participation of women in peace operations.** Member states and think tanks should undertake a comprehensive analysis of uniformed women’s participation at different stages in the cycle of a peace operation to identify the barriers to their participation and mechanisms to encourage T/PCCs to increase the deployment of women to the field. The Secretariat should revise and assess the selection criteria for mission leadership positions, in order to address barriers to women’s participation.

7. Integrate gender advice across peace operations. Member States should maintain the support for the inclusion of gender advisor posts within missions and at an appropriate level of seniority throughout mandating and budgetary processes, and mission leadership should be held accountable for their effective utilization of these posts in the field.



PROTECTION

Civilians expect peace operations to protect them. Efforts to strengthen the protection provided by peacekeeping operations are focused on building the capacity of the host country to fulfil their responsibility to protect civilians, promoting proactive efforts by peace operations at the strategic, operational and tactical levels to intervene when civilians are under threat, and ensuring there are effective strategic communications plans in place to support peace operations carry out their protection mandate. Key recommendations include:

8. Apply an atrocity prevention lens. As part of their protection of civilians mandate, field missions should apply an atrocity prevention lens to ensure that early warning indicators for atrocities are considered as part of a conflict analysis at the earliest stages of mission planning, and that such analysis informs mission planning and resourcing.

9. Increase understanding of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law.

Member states deploying troops and police personnel and the UN Secretariat need to ensure that personnel deployed to peace operations thoroughly understand the application of International Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law through pre-deployment and in-mission training. Such training initiatives should include a focus on ensuring troops and police understand the interrelationship between legal considerations and tactical behaviour for field missions.



SAFETY AND SECURITY

Improving the safety and security of peacekeepers is essential to the performance of peacekeepers and to the conduct of peace operations. This includes taking active measures to reduce peacekeeper fatalities, improve medical and logistical support, and ensure justice for perpetrators of criminal acts against peacekeepers. Many of these activities are already underway. Key recommendations include:

10. Support post-deployment care of peacekeepers. While there is concerted focus on support to peacekeepers in the field through the implementation of the Secretary-General's Action Plan to Improve Security of Peacekeepers, there is minimal attention focus on post-deployment care of peacekeepers. The Secretariat and member states should develop and identify programs to support post-deployment care for serving peacekeepers.



PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Efforts to strengthen performance and accountability are focused on uniformed and civilian components in peace operations. As part of A4P, these include commitments by member states to provide well-trained and well-equipped personnel, the effective delivery of peacekeeping training and applications of the human rights screening policy, as well as avoiding caveats which have an impact on mandate implementation. For the Secretariat, that means developing a more comprehensive performance assessment framework. Key recommendations include:

11. Share examples of exceptional performance by peacekeepers. The Secretariat should develop a database of different complex and challenging scenarios that peacekeepers have been confronted with in the field for use in training exercises. As part of this, the Secretariat should also identify and share examples and case studies of instances where peacekeepers have performed exceptionally well in the field, for use as part of those training exercises. This could include direction for missions to more effectively utilize the U7 training function as part of in-mission training for military components.

12. Strengthen performance assessment in the Secretariat. The Secretariat and member states should examine options to strengthen the functions of the Office for Strategic Peacekeeping Partnerships including through more political and financial support. The Secretariat should be effectively resourced to proactively communicate information on the priority of different training gaps and needs so that member states can concentrate their support (including through the Light Coordination Mechanism).

13. Strengthen accountability through ‘theories of change’. Building on efforts to strengthen performance through the Comprehensive Performances Assessment System, the mission leadership team should use ‘theories of change’ or change management strategies to map out a shared vision of the path of the desired change during mission planning and implementation at all levels and to inform efforts to assess the performance of a mission.



PEACEBUILDING AND SUSTAINING PEACE

Peacekeeping has a fundamental role in sustaining peace. Efforts to strengthen the impact of peacekeeping on sustaining peace focus on strengthening national ownership, inclusive engagement with civil society and all segments of the local population, effective mission transitions and coherence across the UN system. Key recommendations include:

14. Plan for mission transitions. The Secretariat should develop baseline standards for the effective transition of a peacekeeping mission, identifying the opportunities and risks at the different stages of the mission life-cycle. This could be based on an assessment of missions that have recently transitioned with a focus on how they have addressed the structural and intermediate causes of peace and conflict. The Secretariat should work with field missions to develop different planning scenarios with contingencies for ‘unplanned’ transitions and other possible and challenging developments.

15. Integrate national and local perspectives. The mission leadership team needs to ensure it has national ownership at the center of its peacebuilding efforts. This requires engagement with all segments of the local population, including men, women and youth from a range of diverse backgrounds. It also requires the mission to work in close collaboration with the UN Country Team.



PARTNERSHIPS

Peace operations require partnerships. Efforts to improve peacekeeping partnerships focus on enhancing cooperation between regional and sub-regional organizations including the African Union, cooperation with host governments, and triangular partnerships to support co-deployments and training. Key recommendations include:

16. Identify comparative advantages of different partners. Think tanks and researchers should undertake a comparative analysis mapping the relative comparative advantages of UN peace operations, and regionally-led peace operations and enforcement missions, in order to clarify mandate strengths and strategic political objectives. This could include a mapping exercise which identifies the skills and resources that partners such as regional organizations can provide.

17. Establish partnerships between different T/PCCs. The Secretariat should facilitate the development of ‘twinning’ partnerships between T/PCCs with different capabilities to provide support on performance issues and contingent owned equipment.



CONDUCT OF PEACEKEEPERS AND PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

Efforts to strengthen the conduct of peacekeepers and peacekeeping operations are focused on conduct and discipline measures, implementation of the UN Human Rights Due Diligence Policy and sound environmental management practices. Key recommendations include:

18. Upholding human rights. The Secretariat and Member States should provide further support so that the Secretariat and field missions are adequately resourced with experts to ensure the Missions are complying. Member States should ensure rigorous application of the UN Human Rights Screening policy in order to ensure member states do not deploy known offenders. Similarly, the Secretariat and field missions should continue to provide further support, through the deployment of experts, to ensure missions are complying with the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy when cooperating with national, regional and other parallel or partner forces.

19. Supporting victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. The Secretariat and member states should ensure that the needs of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN personnel are more effectively prioritized, including through efforts to identify mechanisms to increase accountability and more transparent reporting and engagement with civil society.