

United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Pakistan's Contributions



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Joint Workshop by ISAS, COSATT and KAS

United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Pakistan's Contributions

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Executive Summary

The Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) in the National University of Singapore, Consortium of South Asian Think Tanks (COSATT) and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Singapore (KAS), have been holding a series of workshops surrounding the South Asian countries' contributions to United Nations (UN) peacekeeping over the past few years. As part of this series, a joint workshop on Pakistan's contributions to UN peacekeeping was held in Singapore on 28 November 2022.

The workshop was structured to cover insightful details about Pakistan's contributions to UN peacekeeping operations, with specific focus on the impact of its domestic affairs and its international relations on its contributions.

Her Excellency Ms Rukhsana Afzaal, High Commissioner of Pakistan to Singapore, delivered an address at the workshop. Speakers from diverse backgrounds then offered a wide range of perspectives on Pakistan's contribution to UN peacekeeping and the role it has been playing in promoting global peace and security. Security and strategic affairs experts, including retired army officers, think-tank representatives, academics and researchers, shed light on the topic and spoke about the issues and challenges faced in Pakistan's peacekeeping operations.

While the Western countries have reduced their troop deployments for peacekeeping missions in recent decades, South Asia, on the other hand, has taken the lead in sending more soldiers to these operations. This makes it crucial to study and assess South Asia's involvement in UN peacekeeping.

This Special Report by ISAS, COSATT and KAS examines the brief history of the UN peacekeeping since its inception. It also includes analyses on Pakistan's participation in peacekeeping missions from three broad categories: historical context; contemporary perspectives; and international relations and domestic politics. Finally, it also offers broader insights into how the UN's peacekeeping role may be more effective and sustainable in the future.

Background of UN Peacekeeping

The UN peacekeeping operations (UNPKO) commenced in 1948 when the UN Security Council (UNSC) authorised the deployment of UN military observers to monitor and maintain the ceasefire during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.¹ The operation was named the UN Truce Supervision Organisation. In its earlier stages of conception, the UN mission primarily consisted of unarmed military observers and lightly armed troops with monitoring, reporting and confidence-building roles. Peacekeeping was limited to maintaining ceasefires and stabilising situations and providing crucial support for political efforts to resolve conflict by peaceful means.² The first armed peacekeeping operation was to mitigate the Suez Crisis in 1956. It was from here that the UN started longer-term deployments in Cyprus, the Middle East and Lebanon. Despite these initiatives, peacekeeping was not initially explicitly provided for in the UN Charter, it was not a fully developed idea. Now, it has evolved into one of the main tools used by the UN to achieve “peace”. Specifically, the UN invokes Chapter VII (7) of the Charter, in which there are provisions related to “Action with Respect to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace and Acts of Aggression”.³ With this, the UN can authorise the deployment of peace operations in volatile post-conflict settings where the state cannot maintain security and public order.

At its core, the UNPKO primarily assists nations in navigating the difficult transition from war to peace. It possesses distinct characteristics, such as legitimacy, the capacity to share responsibility and the deployment of peacekeeping forces and troops from all over the world, together with civilian peacekeepers, and aims to address a range of UN mandates. Although each UN peace operation is different, there is a significant degree of consistency in the types of mandated tasks assigned by the UNSC. Some of these mandates include “stabilising conflict situations after a ceasefire to create an environment for the parties to reach a lasting peace agreement” or “assist in implementing comprehensive peace agreements”.⁴ Also dependent on the set of challenges, UN peacekeepers are often mandated to play a catalytic role in peace-building activities such as “disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants”, “electoral assistance” or “protection and promotion of human rights”.⁵

The emphasis and objectives of peacekeeping have changed over time, shifting from having a negative perception to a positive understanding of peace despite successes and setbacks. Similarly, the focus on maintaining peace has also moved from the global to national and to the local levels. The scope of the UNPKO has widened significantly since its first deployment in 1948. In addition to military and police officers, the UNPKO now includes civilian professionals from a variety of sectors, including the rule of law, justice, human rights, gender specialists, and economists, to promote global peace, stability, and development.

In the past 25 years, the number of deployed personnel in UN peacekeeping missions has doubled. Of the more than 70 UN peacekeeping operations thus far, 50 commenced in the

¹ “Our History”, United Nations Peacekeeping, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/our-history>.

² Ibid.

³ “Mandate and the legal basis for peacekeeping”, United Nations Peacekeeping, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mandates-and-legal-basis-peacekeeping>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

last 25 years.⁶ Peacekeeping is no longer only a post-conflict activity. The top 10 financial contributors to UN peacekeeping are the United States (27.89 per cent), China (15.21 per cent), Japan (8.56 per cent), Germany (6.09 per cent), United Kingdom (5.79 per cent), France (5.61 per cent), Italy (3.30 per cent), Russian Federation (3.04 per cent), Canada (2.73 per cent) and South Korea (2.26 per cent).

In the years of peacekeeping operations, it is theorised to have gone through eight distinct phases. The phases reflect a repeated ebb and flow as a period of little to no new peacekeeping activity was followed by a period where new operations were launched, and the number of peacekeepers increased.⁷

Table 1: Phases of Peacekeeping Periods

1	The Nascent Period	1946-1956
2	The Assertive Period	1956-1967
3	The Dormant Period	1967-1973
4	The Resurgent Period	1973-1978
5	The Maintenance Period	1978-1988
6	The Expansion Period	1988-1993
7	The Contraction Period	1993-1999
8	The Unrealistic Expectations Period	1999-Present

Source: Dennis C. Jett, "Introduction", in *Why Peacekeeping Fails*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 14-21.

The current period, marked as the "unrealistic expectations" period (as shown in Table 1), is also accompanied by a significant increase in global conflicts. Though the world witnessed a steady decrease in civil wars and an overall reduction in casualties caused by wars from the early 1990s to the 2000s, the trend reversed between 2005 and 2015, as the number of major civil wars rose from four to eleven, the highest since 1992.⁸ This worrying pattern was not only theorised academically but also acknowledged by the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, who commented in 2018 that "expectations for peacekeeping have so far outstripped its resources".⁹ This sentiment has dominated debates surrounding UN Peacekeeping efforts and their efficiency.

Guterres also mentioned that "peacekeepers must navigate complex conflicts on the ground, stalled peace processes and a rise in transnational terrorism, but one overarching challenge they face is the gap between aspiration and reality." Though the concept of peacekeeping was first denoted in the UN Charter and has fully developed over subsequent decades, the broader systemic and systematic challenges still exist. The UN has recently addressed one of these challenges, particularly financing the UNPKO. The UN General Assembly's Fifth

⁶ "Our History", United Nations Peacekeeping, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/our-history>.

⁷ Dennis C. Jett, "Introduction", in *Why Peacekeeping Fails*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 14-21.

⁸ "The Future of UN Peace Operations in a Changing Conflict Environment", Adam Day, https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/future_of_peacekeeping_operations_in_a_changing_conflict_environment.pdf.

⁹ "Peacekeeping expectations 'far outstrip resources': UN chief", UN News, 25 September 2018, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/09/1020462>.

Committee has approved a US\$6.45 billion (S\$8.48 billion) annual budget for the UNPKO.¹⁰ There has been a slight growth of 1.16 per cent in the budget, indicating progress; this is also the first time the UN peacekeeping budget has increased since 2015.¹¹ Notably, during the 2021 Seoul UN Peacekeeping Ministerial meeting, 62 countries made new pledges, including contributing funds and resources to the UNPKO.

Guterres also launched the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative in 2018 to renew mutual political commitment to peacekeeping operations. This initiative led to a declaration of shared commitments and received 150 endorsements from member states. The declaration commitments focused on a set of key priorities that build on both new commitments and existing workstreams. The goals were split into eight priority commitment areas: politics; women, peace and security; protection; safety and security; performance and accountability; peacebuilding and sustaining peace; partnerships and conduct of peacekeepers and peacekeeping operations.¹²

Acknowledgement from the UN, in terms of continued efforts and reviews to improve their peacekeeping operations, shows much progress. Peacekeeping operations are vital to the UN, as set out in its Charter, as to how it aids states that are unable to operate in times of severe conflicts. Though challenges come with peacekeeping, it is still primarily supported by member states in the UN. South Asia, for example, is one of the most significant contributors to the UN peacekeeping forces today.

¹⁰ “Fifth Committee Approves \$6.45 Billion Budget for 11 Peacekeeping Missions, Breaks Five-Year Deadlock around Cross-Cutting Issues”, United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, 29 June 2022, <https://press.un.org/en/2022/gaa4388.doc.htm>.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² “Action for peacekeeping”, The United Nations, 2018, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/a4p-declaration-en.pdf>.

Pakistan Today

As the Muslim world's second most populous country and the only Islamic nuclear power state, Pakistan is an influential state in the South Asian region and on the global stage. In August 2022, Pakistan celebrated its 75th anniversary as an independent, sovereign state. Pakistanis have much to be proud of as generous, community-spirited, creative, culturally rich, and resilient people. Enriched with diversity and a youthful population – 50 per cent of the people are under 35 years of age – the country offers dynamism, vitality and energy.

Pakistan is also located at the intersection of major trade routes and features as a prominent player and factor in geopolitics and the imperial ambitions of major superpowers. With the involvement in major projects like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, it is critical to understand Pakistan as a state as its influence grows. Pakistan, in other words, matters. Yet, the country also appears to be in a state of profound political and social upheaval. The United States (US)-led war on terror amplified a critical interest in Pakistan's political and economic fortunes.

Recent climatic catastrophic outbreaks in the country have also demonstrated that the environmental crises cannot be ignored. Pakistan's per capita emissions are one of the lowest in the world. Still, the country ranks in the top 10 most affected by climate change in the last 20 years, with recurrent floods, droughts, desertification, glacial melts and seawater intrusion.

Political History

During the twilight of the *Raj* in the mid-1940s, there were descriptions of great anxiety over the ideological nature of the future shape of Pakistan from supporters and opponents of Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League. A great deal has been written about this, from Ayesha Jalal's *The Sole Spokesman* to Anne-Marie Schimmel's *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent*. Mawlana Shabbir Ahmed Uthmani, one of the doyen's of South Asian Islam and the leader of the Jamiat Ulema-i Islam, called upon religious observing Muslims to join the Muslim League to ensure that the party stays faithful to its Islamic commitment.

After independence, when the Objectives Resolution was passed in the Constituent Assembly in 1949, outlining the principles and norms of the country's future constitution and its many references to Islam seemed to have won over even the staunchest of opponents to the Pakistan project. Mawlana Mawdudi, who had opposed the idea of Pakistan, turned around to say that the Resolution had made Pakistan into a "regularised" Islamic state and called for the faithful to turn this from a textual proclamation into a lived reality. These brief examples spell out an anxiety over Islam's theological and ideological meaning as a state ideology. And this has been much explored by scholars far and wide, from historian Howard Brasted to political scientist Stephen P. Cohen. Questions about what Islam means in practical governance, where minorities fit in, and to what extent is Islamic legal norms, principles, and substantive laws democratically negotiable remain recurring in both public and political discourse. The ambiguities around Islam as a state ideology remain a profound political source of contestation. Moreover, the theological footing of the state's ideology and the founding

basis of its sovereignty, as all three of the country's constitutions proclaim in their preambles, also implies that the Islamic commitment and moral uprightness of its political leadership intimately entwine questions of political legitimacy with Islam.

The 2018 Elections

The election of Imran Khan and prime minister in 2018, signalled a new and curious development in some ways. However, it also borrows from this discourse.

For one thing, Khan's election demonstrated a historic move away from the political dominance of the two major dynastical parties in Pakistan, namely, the Bhutto-Zardari Pakistan People's Party and the Sharifs-led Pakistan Muslim League. Despite having the support of the establishment (a euphemism for Pakistan's powerful security forces), Khan ironically had an anti-establishment message – though this focused on targetting rival politicians at the time.

Standing up to inimical Western powers and institutions was a central tenet of Khan's 2018 election campaign, where he promised to battle corrupt elites, create jobs, improve governance, uplift the poor and restore the country's international standing and usher in a *Naya Pakistan* (New Pakistan), a welfare state modelled on 7th century Medina. Through a language of blame and the spectacle of massive rallies, sit-ins, and marches, Khan's show of power altered Pakistani politics.

However, despite all efforts, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) did not acquire a majority in 2018, forcing Khan to form a coalition to rule. His time in power proved to be just as controversial. The autocratic style of his leadership and the so-called hybrid system of civil-military partnership, represented by the PTI-led coalition, was ultimately untenable. Khan could neither hold onto his coalition nor his alliance with the establishment. His inability to reform the economy and maintain good relations abroad implied that Khan's underperformance at home and overseas, all too often, reflected poorly on the military. As the establishment distanced itself from Khan and the PTI, his opponents, in the form of the Pakistan Democratic Movement, mustered a no-confidence motion. But Khan, of course, went down swinging. As his ouster continues to heighten political tensions since April 2022, his time in power polarised Pakistani politics into binaries between good and evil, traitors and patriots.

In the short term, there remain many uncertainties with which political players in Pakistan must contend. Whether the new government led by Shehbaz Sharif would call for early elections has been a point of speculation, with some arguing that Sharif's decision to hold onto power and deal with complex, unpopular choices pertaining to the economy, including the removal of fuel subsidies, revived Khan's appeal. There are questions about the political impact of the appointment of Pakistan's 17th army chief, Lieutenant General Syed Asim Munir and how this will shape the tussle for government between the Pakistan Democratic Movement and the PTI in the coming months.

Adding to these uncertainties, there are also questions about how Pakistan will manage the high inflation, unemployment and national debt and the impact the floods will have on Pakistan's food security.

Moving Forward

For now, Pakistan looks to witness continued instability in 2023, as the next general elections loom on the horizon and political competition heightens.¹³ The state is also in an economic crisis facing rising inflation, a falling rupee and diminishing foreign reserves.¹⁴ These pre-existing vulnerabilities have been further exacerbated by the Russian invasion of Ukraine causing food and energy price shocks in the nation.¹⁵ Pakistan is still reeling from the devastation of the monsoonal floods as millions remain homeless and vulnerable to disease, unemployment and poverty. These challenges are cementing an uncertain future for Pakistan, leaving the country in a fractured state.

¹³ Madiha Afzal, "Pakistan: Five major issues to watch in 2023", Brookings, 13 January 2023, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2023/01/13/pakistan-five-major-issues-to-watch-in-2023/>.

¹⁴ "Pakistan's Foreign Exchange Reserves Fall To Four-Year Low Of \$6.72 Billion", *Press Trust of India*, 9 December 2022, <https://www.outlookindia.com/business/state-bank-of-pakistan-s-forex-reserves-fall-to-four-year-low-of-6-72-billion-news-243698>.

¹⁵ Mahida Afzal, op. cit.

Pakistan's Contributions to UN Peacekeeping

Brief Background

Pakistan has been one of the longest-serving UN peacekeeping nations over the six decades or so. Its commitment to international peace and security is well recognised as it has played a crucial role in maintaining security and stability in many conflict-prone areas worldwide.

In 1960, the first Pakistani peacekeeping mission was deployed to the Congo. From 1960 to the end of the 1970s, Pakistani peacekeepers remained employed in three out of 11 UN missions, including West Irian, Yemen and Congo. In the 1980s, UN peacekeeping forces shrunk, and there were only six peacekeeping missions. Pakistani peacekeepers remained deployed in Namibia as military during this period.

During the post-Cold War era, the UN played an active role and deployed its peacekeepers in 36 missions worldwide, with Pakistani troops serving globally in 21 of them. In the 2000s, Pakistan participated in 12 out of 18 tasks, with the highest-ever strength of 10,500 peacekeepers. Over 220,000 Pakistani troops have remained part of 46 missions in 29 countries around the globe, serving in Infantry Battalions and Artillery and Armour Regiments. The personnel involved in these missions included stationing engineers, military and police information and communication technology specialists (known as signals). These missions also included logistic companies, aviation units, as well as Pakistani doctors and paramedic staff.

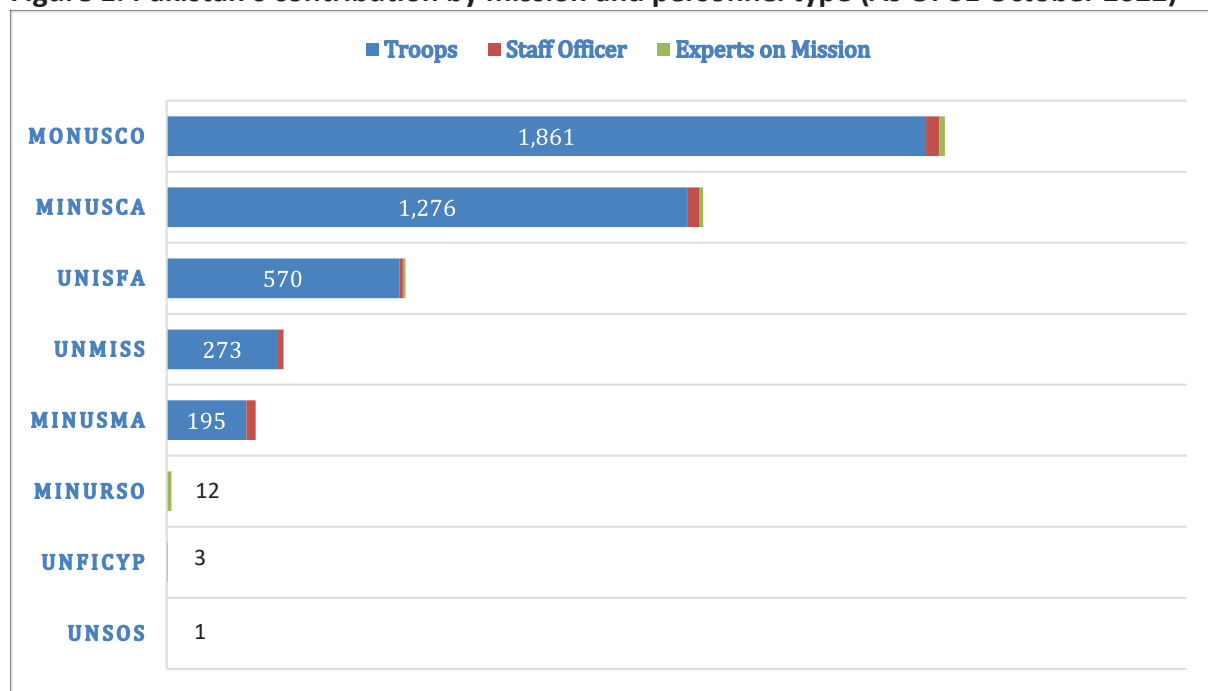
Pakistani peacekeeping forces have served globally and participated in operations designed to establish favourable conditions for a lasting sense of peace. These operations have included tasks such as providing confidence-building measures, enforcing power-sharing agreements, electoral support, strengthening the rule of law, economic and social development, and protecting civilians devastated by war. The Pakistani blue helmets' immense contributions and dedication have been lauded by the government and public of the host countries and in international forums.

Pakistan's Peacekeepers

Regarding ongoing deployment, Pakistan is currently contributing to more than 4,300 troops deployed in 10 missions worldwide. Overall, Pakistan is the fifth largest state contributing troops to UN peacekeeping.¹⁶

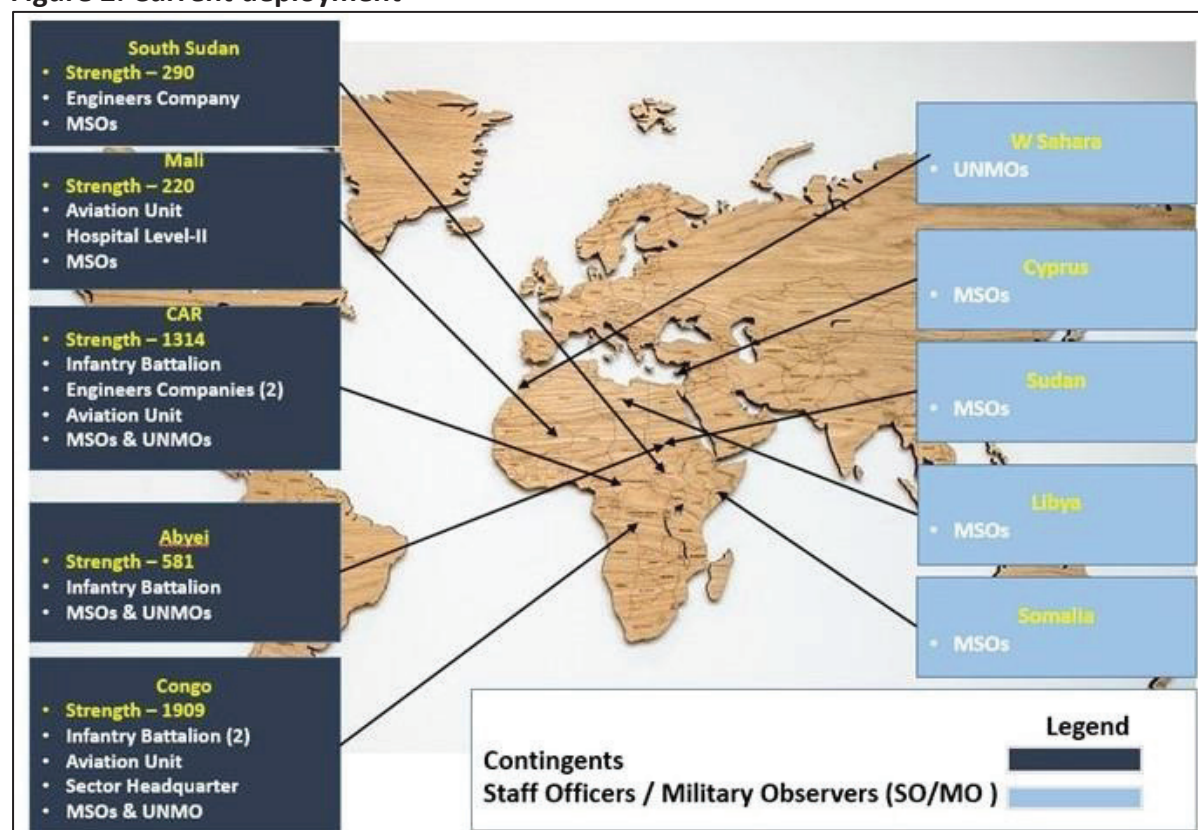
¹⁶ "Troop and Police Contributors", United Nations Peacekeeping, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors>.

Figure 1: Pakistan's contribution by mission and personnel type (As Of 31 October 2022)



Source: "Troop and Police Contributors", United Nations Peacekeeping, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors>.

Figure 2: Current deployment



Source: Infographic: Pakistan's contribution by location

Pakistani peacekeepers are categorised into experts on mission, staff officers and general troops. These also include the deployment of observers and medical staff. Pakistani

peacekeepers are well equipped with infantry and logistic battalion troops ready for rapid deployment. Pakistan also contributes a great deal of resources to its peacekeeping forces and missions that have been deployed. One such example is the Pakistan Aviation Unit (Puma).¹⁷ In the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), Puma has been deployed since 2011.¹⁸ The main task of Puma is to provide air support according to the terms agreed upon between Pakistan and the UN.

Future Pledges

From the 2021 ministerial meeting in Seoul that discussed pledges from member states to UN peacekeeping, Pakistan has committed to building military and police capabilities such as training over 200 policemen during these missions and other peacekeepers from allied countries.¹⁹ Pakistan has also aided in building a Level 2 hospitals (which contain all the elements of Level 1 as well as additional facilities like an intensive care unit for critically ill patients and specialist doctors for gynaecology and paediatric services) in Kazakhstan. It has also pledged training programmes such as the explosive ordnance disposal and UN logistics officer courses, amongst others, for other peacekeepers.²⁰ Pakistan has also pledged an increase in the deployment of women officers and military observers/staff officers for the United Nations headquarters.²¹

Gender Diversity

Pakistan has deployed around 200,000 troops over the past six decades in the UNPKO. These troops include Pakistani female soldiers introduced by the Pakistani army in 2017 and Pakistani civilian women who serve as volunteers.

In 1997, Shehzadi Gulfam, a deputy superintendent of police, was the first Pakistani woman assigned to the UN mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Later, she participated in UN missions in Kosovo in 1999 and Timor-Leste in 2007. As the team leader for the UN police in the Timor-Leste National Police Vulnerable Persons Unit, Gulfam was reassigned to Timor-Leste in 2010. She received the 'International Female Police Peacekeeper Award' in 2011 from the International Association of Women Police, the UN Police Division's Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.²² The UNPKO now routinely include the induction of policewomen and civilian contractors from Pakistan. Pakistani female officers serve in various capacities, such as psychologists, medical experts, gender consultants and information technology specialists. Pakistani female peacekeepers

¹⁷ "Pakistani Puma helicopter under UN's peacekeeping mission in DR Congo crashes", *Military Africa*, Patrick Kenyette, 30 March 2022, <https://www.military.africa/2022/03/pakistani-puma-helicopter-under-uns-peacekeeping-mission-in-dr-congo-crashes/>.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Zaccaria Giuseppe, *The United Nations at 75: An Institutional Appraisal: UN reform: 75 years of challenge and change*, (Edward Elgar Publishing, [2019]).

²⁰ "Member State Pledges", 2021 Seoul UN Peacekeeping Ministerial, https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/2021_peacekeeping_ministerial_pledge_list_revision_posted_1_march_2022.pdf.

²¹ Ibid.

²² "Pakistani woman police officer bags international award", *Dawn*, 23 August 2011, <https://www.dawn.com/news/654044/pakistani-woman-police-officer-bags-international-award>.

are ideally positioned to handle cultural sensitivity and improve the efficacy of PKOs. They act as role models in the countries in which they are deployed, and because of the variety of cultures they are exposed to and the challenges that women and children face in times of conflict, they grow intellectually and emotionally.

The Pakistani armed forces remain committed to the UNSC's call and aim to double the number of women in uniformed UNPKO by 2028. In fact, throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, Pakistani female peacekeepers actively supported governments and local communities as frontline responders, carrying out mission mandates. Furthermore, Pakistani female peacekeepers have received numerous honours, and Pakistan's commitment to female peacekeepers stands at 17 per cent, above the UN deployment goal of 15 per cent.

For a traditional country like Pakistan, pledging the desired 15 per cent requirement for women in various peacekeeping missions is a significant milestone in women empowerment and the country's role as a frontline state committed to global peacekeeping and adherence to UN values. Additionally, by upholding the high standards established by the UN and performing admirably, these young and enthusiastic women peacekeepers have earned great honours for the nation, served as ambassadors, made a significant positive impact on local communities and set an example for future generations.

Future Focus – Areas of Challenges and Growth

As Pakistan continues to contribute to UN peacekeeping in such a large capacity, it is critical to consider other factors regarding its involvement. Experts agree that Pakistan has to build a comprehensive strategy and vision for its contributions. They have pledged for the upcoming UNPKO. However, there is still not a clear picture of the state's future endeavours in this area. Experts also agree that Pakistan has to harness the soft power it gathers from its contributions to world peace to improve its standing and reputation globally.

Taking another step towards harnessing soft power, Pakistan has initiated the institutionalisation of peacekeeping domestically. Peacekeeping has become a part of the curriculum in Pakistani universities. This is an excellent start to what could potentially be opportunities for federal grants for research to devise new and better peacekeeping and peace-building techniques. This can also branch out to peacekeeping conventions that bring regional experts together. South Asia is a significant contributor to UN peacekeeping missions – Bangladesh, India and Nepal are also active supporters. Institutionalising peacekeeping will create synergy between Pakistan and the other regional countries.

Moving to another area of concern, the total estimated foreign exchange earned by the Pakistani government on account of its participation in UN peacekeeping amounts to US\$220 million (S\$290 million) per annum.²³ Though this aids with foreign remittance and positively impacts the state's economy, there are questions about the importance of UN peacekeeping to Pakistan's foreign policy. Despite numerous achievements and the strength of the Pakistan peacekeeping forces, they still face many challenges – a key one being the security of the

²³ "Pakistan", from *Providing Peacekeepers: The Politics, Challenges, and Future of United Nations Peacekeeping Contributions*, (ed.) Alex J Bellamy and Paul D Williams, (OUP Oxford 2018), 200-288.

peacekeepers, with crimes being reported against UN peacekeepers. Since 1948, malicious acts have taken the lives of 1,056 personnel serving in these operations and has led to 3,080 injuries.²⁴ Pakistan has lost 162 peacekeepers since 1960, the recent fatality being a Pakistani peacekeeper killed in Congo during a base attack. This risk could affect Pakistan's willingness to contribute to UN peacekeeping missions in the future. It also further adds to the debate for a revaluation of Islamabad's contributions to UN peacekeeping as part of Pakistan's foreign policy.

The UN and its member states are making the effort to address this security challenge. Under the A4P, the safety and security of UN peacekeepers are stated as a "top priority" for the UN and have been a focus area of action. The core of this concern is the risk stemming from the threat of deliberate acts of violence against peacekeeping personnel. The UN continually improves medical, technical and logistical support in its peacekeeping operations. These efforts are split into actions at the field level and activities at the headquarters level. Some measures include deploying contingents/units only after confirming their readiness through verification exercises, identifying mission-specific additional capabilities (night vision, counter improvised explosive device and protected mobility) and strengthening command and control arrangements at all levels amidst many other efforts.²⁵ In March 2021, Guterres launched the A4P+, marking the third anniversary of the A4P. Under the A4P+, improved security for peacekeepers was brought up again, reviewing measures already taken and continuing efforts to foster a safer environment for peacekeepers.²⁶

While efforts to improve the security of peacekeepers is being enhanced, on the other side of the debate is the lack of accountability regarding peacekeepers' conduct. The UN expects that all peacekeeping personnel adhere to strict standards of conduct. To increase accountability and ensure a "zero-tolerance reality",²⁷ the UN has taken various steps to protect civilians in the host countries. Amongst the steps taken to improve transparency and accountability in handling cases of misconduct, the UN Department of Peace Operations has legal frameworks applicable to the respective member state's contingent and/or officers when deployed to a UN mission.²⁸

Another challenge for the peacekeepers and general criticism aimed at the concept of peacekeeping is sustainability. How can peace be sustained after the deployment of peacekeepers and their possible exit? It is vital for the peacekeepers to leave a positive legacy for the local communities and the host country. Pakistani peacekeepers have shown remarkable growth in this area, making them relevant for continued development. In July 2021, under the UN mission in South Sudan, Pakistani peacekeepers trained community

²⁴ "UN launches 'key' initiative to support accountability for crimes against peacekeepers", *UN News*, 15 December 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/12/1131777>.

²⁵ "Action For Peacekeeping", The United Nations, 2018, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/a4p-declaration-en.pdf>.

²⁶ "Secretary-General's Initiative on Action for Peacekeeping", The United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/A4P/>.

²⁷ "Principles of Peacekeeping", United Nations Peacekeeping, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/principles-of-peacekeeping>.

²⁸ Ibid.

members on construction in Bentiu.²⁹ They conducted a three-week construction and masonry course to equip 10 young people from a displaced community with the necessary skills to support themselves and teach other community members a sustainable trade.

There are broader challenges for UN peacekeeping that will continue to push member states to re-evaluate their contributions to peacekeeping operations. The continued efforts to make peacekeeping more efficient is an encouraging sign. Pakistan remains a crucial contributor to international peace. However, the state will also have to adapt to newer and more complex political challenges in the future. It will also be critical for the UN and its member states like Pakistan to host a transparent and open dialogue with the host countries, both at the government and local community levels, on the contents of their mandates and strategies and their shared responsibilities. Lastly, Pakistan has to focus on curating a comprehensive strategy for its contributions to UNPKO and domestically ensure its upholding amidst changing political tides.

²⁹ “Pakistani peacekeepers train community members on construction in Bentiu”, United Nations Peacekeeping, 26 July 2021, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/pakistani-peacekeepers-train-community-members-construction-bentiu>.

Conclusion: Pakistan and South Asia's Budding Role in UN Peacekeeping

The concept and ideation of UN peacekeeping has come a long way since its inception in 1945 and following the first peace operation in 1948. Today, conflicts worldwide have become increasingly complex with technological advancements and increased access to military warfare. The UN tries to achieve peace through numerous strategies. Peacekeeping today has evolved and significantly improved, with initiatives like the A4P and member states committing to renewed pledges annually. However, peacekeeping is still seen as an extremely risky commitment for UN member states and understandably so. There are still ongoing debates about the efficiency of UN peacekeeping and the arduous challenge of defining "peace" remains. Criticism about breaching sovereignty and peace operations setbacks dominate discourse about whether the UN should still utilise peacekeeping to mitigate conflict.³⁰

Pakistan's contribution to the UNPKO extends beyond troops to include other resources and intelligence. However, putting together a strategy for their contributions to UNPKO and ensuring the safety of their peacekeepers remain a critical challenge for Pakistan. As the nature of conflict continues to evolve, Pakistan will be tasked with re-evaluating its goals and ambitions in its involvement with UN peacekeeping.

Pakistan and South Asia's contributions to UN peacekeeping remain a critical area of study for academics and policymakers alike.

³⁰ Mark Millar, *The Peacekeeping Failure in South Sudan: The UN, Bias and the Peacekeeper's Mind*, (Zed Books: 2022).

Appendix 1
Address by
Her Excellency Ms Rukhsana Afzaal
High Commissioner of Pakistan to Singapore

I would like to begin by thanking the Institute of South Asian Studies in the National University of Singapore, Consortium of South Asian Think Tanks and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung for giving me this opportunity to address this workshop on Pakistan's contribution to United Nations (UN) peacekeeping.

Peacekeeping has proven to be one of the most effective tools available to the UN to assist host countries in navigating the difficult path from conflict to peace. Peacekeeping has unique strengths, including legitimacy, burden sharing, and an ability to deploy and sustain troops and police from around the globe, to advance multidimensional mandates. Currently, 12 UN peacekeeping operations are deployed on three continents, with 74,300 peacekeepers from 121 countries, including 7,597 police personnel.

Pakistan takes immense pride in its abiding association with UN peacekeeping, which has been an integral part of Pakistan's foreign policy, as well as an expression of our pledge to promote international peace and stability. It provides us, among other benefits, an opportunity to project soft power and remain relevant in the UN's security architecture. Our peacekeepers' professionalism and humanitarian spirit are well-established in some of the most difficult peacekeeping missions.

Since joining UN peacekeeping in the 1960s, Pakistan has contributed over 200,000 peacekeepers in 47 missions. One hundred sixty-five of our peacekeepers, including a female peacekeeper, paid the ultimate price for the cause of peace; six of these made the sacrifice this year in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Pakistan also hosts one of the oldest UN peacekeeping missions – the UN Military Observers Group for India and Pakistan.

Pakistan remained the top troop contributing country over many decades. It is currently ranked fifth top Central African Republic troop-contributing country, with 4,128 peacekeepers in seven missions (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, Abyei [Sudan], South Sudan, Mali, Western Sahara and Cyprus). Our contribution continues to be mostly in the form of infantry battalions. At the same time, we also deploy aviation, engineers, and signal units; hospitals, formed police units (FPUs); military observers, staff officers, and individual police officers. The closure of the UN mission in Darfur has resulted in the repatriation of the last remaining FPUs, comprising 138 personnel. Presently, there are no police peacekeepers deployed; however, the work is ongoing to get the next available slot.

However, as a top troops-contributing country, Pakistan has also experienced certain challenges which need to be highlighted.

Political issues play a major role in complicating UN peacekeeping operations. Consent and political will of the host country, political stability of the post-conflict situation and substantial financial and logistical support from the UN offices are some of the important and critical factors that undermine the smooth functioning of peacekeeping.

Secondly, over the years, the nature of UN peacekeeping has changed significantly. The early UN missions were largely limited to the observation of ceasefires in inter-state conflicts, such as in Jammu and Kashmir. Today, peacekeepers are required not only to monitor ceasefires and oversee peace agreements but also to facilitate peace talks, provide support for elections, and aid in rule-of-law initiatives. There is also an increasing focus on peace enforcement rather than Peacekeeping.

Thirdly, the UN has adopted the fundamental principle to deploy missions only with the consent of the host government and the other parties to the conflict. The agreement of the host state to deploy or not to deploy troops from a particular country remains a challenge to navigate.

Fourthly, in response to the nature of the security environment in such intra-state conflicts, which, as in the Sahel, also comprise cross-border threats, the nature of the UN deployments has also changed. Rather than large formations, UN peacekeepers are mostly deployed in small-sized, mobile and technology-intensive units. Peacekeeping has morphed into peace operations and, increasingly, peace enforcement.

Fifthly, the lack of international financial support for peacekeeping is another major political issue that makes UN peacekeeping operations difficult. UN peacekeeping missions face cash-flow problems and financial strains, due to the overdue payment and withholding of assessed contributions. The scarcity of resources also affects the number of peacekeepers deployed and their rotation.

Moreover, the growing role of the African Union (AU) and sub-regional groups such as the Economic Community of West African States in Africa's security and deployment is another limiting factor. The UN is increasingly relying on coordination with the AU for peace operations in Africa. An assertive AU has resulted in shrinking space for outside players.

In addition, greater focus on 'gender' mainstreaming in UN peace operations is another challenge. The UN secretariat continues to seek an increase in the number of women peacekeepers. Top donor countries increasingly demand more women peacekeepers. Out of 4,128 peacekeepers from Pakistan currently serving in the UN missions, 86 are women officers.

Last but not least, changing dynamics of the conflict has shifted the focus to the technological aspect of peacekeeping. Specialised capabilities like quick reaction force, attack helicopters, and FPU's are increasingly demanded. Similarly, specialised training and equipment to counter improvised explosive device incidents are also required. Countries supplying technologically superior equipment are preferred.

However, despite these challenges, Pakistan will continue to make contributions to world peace through its blue berets, both men and women, who have been a great source of pride for our nation.

Appendix 2

List of Participants

Introductory and Welcome Remarks

Associate Professor Iqbal Singh Sevea
Director
Institute of South Asian Studies
National University of Singapore

Dr Nishchal N Pandey
Director, Centre for South Asian Studies,
Kathmandu; and Convenor, Consortium of
South Asian Think Tanks

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Mr Andreas Klein
Director, Regional Programme
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Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Singapore

Address

HE Ms Rukhsana Afzaal
High Commissioner of Pakistan to Singapore

Chairpersons

Dr Imran Ahmed
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Institute of South Asian Studies
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Mr Hernaikh Singh
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Ms Kunthavi Kalachelvam

Research Analyst
Institute of South Asian Studies
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Mr Mahesh Raj Bhatta

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Ms Shavinyaa Vijaykumarr

Research Analyst
Institute of South Asian Studies
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Closing Remarks and the Way Forward**Dr Nishchal N Pandey**

Director, Centre for South Asian Studies,
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South Asian Think Tanks

Appendix 3

About the Authors

Ms Kunthavi Kalachelvam is a Research Analyst at the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) in the National University of Singapore. She graduated with a bachelor's degree (Honours) in International Relations from Singapore Institute of Management – University of London. She holds a diploma in Design for Interactivity, from Republic Polytechnic.

Prior to joining ISAS, Ms Kalachelvam had interned with the Institute for a year, assisting senior scholars in their research. She also helps with designing publicity collaterals for the institute. Before interning at ISAS, Ms Kalachelvam was on an eight-month internship with Daimler, where she tracked political developments within the APAC region. In addition, she helped to expand travel security knowledge for Daimler, contributing to the formulation of travel security policies.

Mr Mahesh Raj Bhatta is a Research Officer at the Center for South Asian Studies, a Kathmandu-based research think-tank. He graduated from Pondicherry University in India with a Master of Arts degree in International Relations. He was awarded a scholarship by the South Asia Foundation and received the 'UNESCO Madanjeet Singh' award while pursuing his Master's degree. In 2018, Mr Bhatta was awarded the 'Professional Fellows Program on Governance and Society' by the United States Department of State.

Mr Bhatta also coordinates the South Asian think-tanks network – the Consortium of South Asian Think Tanks. He has participated in various regional and international conferences and presented papers on pressing regional and global issues.

Dr Imran Ahmed is a Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute of South Asian Studies in the National University of Singapore. He writes about religion, law and politics on late-colonial India and contemporary Pakistan. His current research projects focus on religion and politics, constitution-making and blasphemy laws in South Asia.

Dr Ahmed received his PhD from the University of New England. He has published in leading journals in history, politics and law, including *South Asia*, *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, *Third World Quarterly*, *The Round Table*, *Griffith Law Review* and *Journal of Law, Religion and State*. He is also a co-editor of the volume, *Religion, Extremism and Violence* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2022).

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