



**PERMANENT MISSION OF DJIBOUTI
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**



**PERMANENT MISSION OF EL SALVADOR
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**



**PERMANENT MISSION OF MONGOLIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

CONCEPT NOTE

SMALL STATES AND PEACE OPERATIONS: LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

**3:00 – 4:30 PM
THURSDAY, 23 JANUARY 2020**

ECOSOC CHAMBER – UNITED NATIONS HQ

Introduction

How can the 107 current members of the United Nations' Forum of Small States (FOSS) strengthen their contributions to UN and other peace operations? This concept note briefly summarizes current peacekeeping contributions from FOSS members and highlights some positive national examples. It then identifies the main lessons learned from the experiences of small states participating in peace operations and proposes three pathways for strengthening their contributions.

Small State Contributions to Peace Operations

As of July 2019, 59 members of the FOSS were troop- or police-contributing countries (T/PCCs) to UN peacekeeping operations. They represented 49 percent of the total number of UN T/PCCs and account for 25.7 percent of the UN's uniformed peacekeepers (nearly 22,300 of the total 87,000). Members of the FOSS also currently contribute approximately 7.7 percent of the UN's peacekeeping bill (based on effective peacekeeping assessed rates in 2019). FOSS members are currently represented in all major categories of the UN's T/PCCs, accounting for 17 of the top 50 ranked countries as of July 2019. Thirty-one FOSS members are currently making contributions of less than 40 uniformed personnel to UN peacekeeping operations. In addition, about half of the top 23 FOSS contributors to UN

peacekeeping operations also provide peacekeepers to other operations, including in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Kosovo, Mali and Somalia.

Some members of the FOSS have made particularly noteworthy contributions in recent years. Here are just five brief examples:

El Salvador: Having first deployed military experts to UN missions in the 1990s, El Salvador deployed its first police peacekeepers in 2000, and its first troop contingents in 2008. Today, it provides over 300 uniformed peacekeepers, mostly in MINUSMA. El Salvador initially deployed a platoon of troops in UNIFIL in an operational partnership with Spain. As its peacekeeping experience grew, more recently El Salvador provided standalone contributions to Mali, including vital specialist units such as military helicopters and an airfield support unit operating in the challenging regions around Gao and Timbuktu. Maintained for several years, these units have developed an excellent reputation, despite initially raising some logistical deployment and sustainment challenges. Within eight years, El Salvador progressed from its partnership with Spain in UNIFIL to deploying specialized standalone units in MINUSMA; an exemplary case of how to develop expertise and make vital contributions within the UN peacekeeping system.

Mongolia: Having first deployed military experts in UN peacekeeping in 2002, Mongolia deployed its first troop contingents in 2006 and by late 2012 fielded more than a battalion of troops, including a quick reaction force, in UNMISS. Numerous rotations of Mongolian units have performed admirably in the challenging conditions in Bentiu. They have displayed exemplary mental fortitude, consistently undertaken proactive patrolling, and developed a strong reputation for their effectiveness among the local conflict parties. Within a decade, Mongolia has built its peacekeeping contributions from scratch to providing a highly performing battalion operating in a high-threat environment.

Djibouti: Having deployed uniformed UN peacekeepers since the 1990s, Djibouti's recent UN contributions have focused on police, currently deploying over 170 police officers mainly in UNAMID. Since late 2011, Djibouti has also deployed up to three battalions in the UN-authorized African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The roughly 1,800 troops in AMISOM represent almost 25 percent of Djibouti's armed forces. Djibouti is also, by far, the FOSS member with the highest proportion of its national population deployed as peacekeepers. Djiboutian soldiers in AMISOM have developed a positive reputation for using their local knowledge and linguistic and cultural connections to Somalia to help resolve disputes in their area of operations, centered around Beletweyne.

Lessons Identified from Small State Contributions

The considerable diversity of FOSS members has led to a wide variety of types of contributions to UN and other peace operations, especially over the last decade. This has

also revealed a diversity of lessons about how best small states can participate in peacekeeping:

1. Small states have already made and continue to make significant contributions to peace operations, both in terms of personnel and financing. Most small state contributions have been to UN-led missions but not solely.
2. Small states have played vital roles in UN peacekeeping, including in some of the most high-threat environments. They will continue to perform such roles if they can fill key capability gaps in ongoing and likely future peace operations.
3. Small states that are new or potential UN T/PCCs face significant technical challenges—ranging from logistics to the MOU negotiation process—that must be overcome in order to operate effectively within the UN peacekeeping system.
4. For small states that want to become new T/PCCs, it is sensible to developing an operational partnership with a more established T/PCC, preferably one with close cultural, political and/or geographic ties (see Appendix B for the different types of operational partnerships available). This can help overcome some of the technical challenges of operating within the UN peacekeeping system and offer valuable insights for strengthening the small state’s contributions over time. This is particularly true at the current time when new small state T/PCCs need to prepare for the rigors of the UN’s reformed force generation process, including meeting the revised operational readiness requirements and re-confirming their commitments in the PCRS system each fiscal year (1 July).
5. Small states should expect to take roughly a decade from becoming a new T/PCC to be able to field battalion strength standalone contributions but smaller, specialist standalone contributions could be developed along a faster timeline.
6. Deploying personnel is not the only way small states can contribute to contemporary peace operations. Supporting critical training needs, assisting with the UN’s environment strategy for field missions, and providing relevant technological capabilities are all examples of important contributions.

Future Opportunities for Small State Contributions

Whether members of the FOSS are already UN T/PCCs or think they might want to become T/PCCs, there are three main pathways through which they can strengthen their contributions to peace operations:

1. ***Develop an operational partnership with an established T/PCC:*** Most small states thinking of becoming a new T/PCC should resist any inclination to try and

deploy large, standalone contributions (certainly not infantry battalions since the UN's PCRS already contains nearly 40 such pledges). A better way to learn the UN peacekeeping system is by initially fielding smaller units as part of an operational partnership with an established T/PCC, preferably one with close cultural, political and/or geographic ties. Such operational partnerships have worked best in more benign operational environments. If things go well in an operational partnership, a small state can try to graduate from partnerships to standalone deployments.

2. ***Develop a specialist capability that aligns with the UN's existing and likely future needs:*** The UN's current peacekeeping capability gaps highlight the urgent need for critical enablers, rapidly deployable capabilities to enable larger area domination as authorized troop ceilings decrease, French-speaking units, and women peacekeepers. Critical enablers include multi-role engineers, transport, signals, aviation and medical support as well as improved medical care, especially night-flight-capable aviation assets for CASEVAC/MEDEVAC and AMET and forward surgical modules. Reconnaissance companies and police guard units are also in particularly short supply in the PCRS (as of August 2019). As most UN peacekeepers are now deployed in Francophone environments, French-speaking units are needed to effectively interact with the local population. Finally, experienced and qualified staff officers remain in high demand, especially those with skills in military planning, UAS, C-IED, logistics, GIS and image analysts, defense sector, civil-military liaison reform, and trained and experienced military intelligence officers to work in mission JMACs. In all of these cases, more women peacekeepers are required to meet the UN's stated targets.
3. ***Develop non-personnel contributions to support peace operations:*** Small states that are not in a position to deploy peacekeeping personnel can still make important contributions, including by supporting critical training needs, providing relevant new technologies, and supporting better environmental management in peacekeeping. Among critical training needs, small states could support translation of training materials into the UN's six official languages and offer to host 50/50 male/female training courses (and fully fund female participants). Particular areas requiring support include C-IED awareness, urban operations, mine and UXO awareness, working with interpreters, and firefighting within a camp environment. Technological support packages could include equipment for intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance units, such as night vision surveillance equipment and tactical drones to maintain detection capability, area transparency and situational awareness. Small states could also help reduce and manage the environmental footprints of peacekeeping operations by supporting the UN's Environment Strategy for Field Missions (2017–23) in any of the five areas related to energy, water and wastewater, solid waste, wider impact and leaving behind a positive legacy, and environmental management systems.