

India's role in UN Peacekeeping Missions

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In news– Two BSF personnel who were part of the UN Peacekeeping Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), were killed during a protest in an eastern town near the border with Uganda.

What is Peacekeeping by the United Nations?

- **The U.N. Peacekeeping mission is a joint effort between the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Operational Support, and aims to assist host countries to transition from situations of conflict to peace.**
- **It is distinguished from peacebuilding, peacemaking, and peace enforcement** although the United Nations does acknowledge that all activities are “mutually reinforcing” and that overlap between them is frequent in practice.
- **Peacekeepers monitor and observe peace processes in post-conflict areas** and assist ex-combatants in implementing the peace agreements they may have signed.
- Such assistance comes in many forms, including **confidence-building measures, power-sharing arrangements**, electoral support, strengthening the rule of law, and economic and social development.
- Accordingly, UN peacekeepers (often **referred to as Blue Berets or Blue Helmets because of their light blue berets or helmets**) can include soldiers, police officers, and civilian personnel.
- **The United Nations Charter gives the United Nations Security Council the power** and responsibility to take collective action to

maintain international peace and security.

- For this reason, the international community usually looks to the Security Council to authorize peacekeeping operations through Chapter VII authorizations.

- **The three basic principles that guide U.N.'s Peacekeeping missions are:**

1. Consent of the parties.
2. Impartiality.
3. Non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate.

- Since 1948, UN Peacekeepers have undertaken 71 Field Missions.
- There are approximately 81,820 personnel serving on **13 peace operations led by UNDP0**, in four continents currently.
- **A total of 119 countries have contributed military and police personnel to UN peacekeeping.**

India's contribution to UN Peacekeeping-

- **India has a long history of service in UN Peacekeeping, having contributed more personnel than any other country.**
- To date, more than 2,53,000 Indians have served in 49 of the 71 UN Peacekeeping missions established around the world since 1948.
- **Currently, there are around 5,500 troops and police from India** who have been deployed to UN Peacekeeping missions, the fifth highest amongst troop-contributing countries.
- India has also provided, and continues to provide, eminent Force Commanders for UN Missions.
- **India is the fifth largest troop contributor (TCC) with 5,323 personnel deployed in 8 out of 13 active UN Peacekeeping Missions**, of which 166 are police

personnel.

- **India's contribution to UN Peacekeeping began with its participation in the UN operation in Korea in the 1950s**, where India's mediatory role in resolving the stalemate over prisoners of war in Korea led to the signing of the armistice that ended the Korean War.
- India chaired the five-member Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission, while the Indian Custodian Force supervised the process of interviews and repatriation that followed.
- The UN entrusted the Indian armed forces with **subsequent peace missions in the Middle East, Cyprus, and the Congo (since 1971, Zaire)**.
- **India also served as Chair of the three international commissions** for supervision and control for Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos established by the 1954 Geneva Accords on Indochina.
- **A total 175 Indian peacekeepers have so far died while serving with the United Nations**. India has lost more peacekeepers than any other UN Member State.

Role of women in Indian Peacekeeping-

- **In 2007, India became the first country to deploy an all-women contingent to a UN Peacekeeping Mission.**
- The Formed Police Unit in Liberia provided 24-hour guard duty and conducted night patrols in the capital Monrovia, and helped to build the capacity of the Liberian police.
- These women officers not only played a role in restoring security in the West African nation but also contributed to an increase in the number of women in Liberia's security sector.

Medical care as part of India's Missions-

- In addition to their security role, the members of the Indian Formed Police Unit also **organised medical camps**

for Liberians, many of whom have limited access to health care services.

- Medical care is among the many services Indian Peacekeepers provide to the communities in which they **serve on behalf of the Organization.** They **also perform specialised tasks such as veterinary support and engineering services.**
- **Indian veterinarians serving with the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS),** stepped up to help cattle herders who were losing much of their stock to malnutrition and disease in the war-torn nation.
- **The Indian contingent in South Sudan has provided vocational training and life-saving medical assistance,** as well as carrying out significant road repair work.
- In September 2020, based on an urgent request received from the UN Secretariat, **India deployed two medical teams of 15 medical personnel each at Goma (DRC) and Juba (South Sudan).** The main command-and-control hub of MONUSCO is located in Goma, DRC.
- The Hospital by India in Goma, operational since January 2005, has 90 Indian nationals including 18 specialists.

Current Missions of India are:

(a) Lebanon (UNIFIL) (Since Dec 1998), (b) Congo (MONUSCO) (Since January 2005), (c) Sudan and South Sudan (UNMIS/UNMISS) (Since April 2005), (d) Golan Heights (UNDOF) (Since February 2006), (e) Ivory Coast (UNOCI) (Since April 2004), (f) Haiti (MINUSTAH) (Since December 1997), (g) Liberia (UNMIL) (Since April 2007).

Recognition of Indian efforts-

- **The Indian contingent in the Upper Nile region** (includes the Indian Battalion, the Horizontal Mechanical Engineering Company, the Level II hospital, the Petroleum Platoon and the Force Signal Unit) **have all received UN Medals of Honour.**

- India has provided 17 Force Commanders to various Missions. Besides the Force Commanders, India also had the **honour of providing two Military Advisers, one Female Police Adviser**, and one Deputy Military Adviser to the Secretary General of the United Nations.
- **India was the first country to contribute to the Trust Fund on sexual exploitation** and abuse, which was set up in 2016.