

Information note on High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations

16 June 2015

New York

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations in October 2014 to review the current state of UN peace operations. The Panel consisted of 16 members chaired by former President of Timor-Leste and Nobel Laureate Jose Ramos-Horta and vice-chaired by Ms. Ameerah Haq. The Panel worked primarily through consultations, thematic workshops, review of submissions and relevant literature, capital visits, and targeted interviews. Consultations with Member States, civil society and academia were held in Dhaka, Bangladesh; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Cairo, Egypt; Brussels, Belgium; and Salvador, Brazil. The Panel received more than 80 written submissions from more than 50 Member States, regional and other organizations, UN partner entities, civil society, academia and research outfits. The review included visits to Tokyo, Islamabad, New Delhi, Washington DC, Paris, London, Helsinki, Moscow, Beijing and Kigali as well as UN peace operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali and Senegal. The Panel coordinated closely with other parallel reviews such as the SCR 1325 Expert Study and the Advisory Group on the Review of Peace-building Architecture. A brief summary of the Panel's observations and recommendations is provided below.

Four essential shifts are needed

- **Primacy of politics.** Lasting peace is achieved through political solutions and not through military and technical engagements alone. Political solutions must guide all UN peace operations.
- **Responsive operations.** UN missions should be tailored to context. The UN should embrace the term 'peace operations' to denote the full spectrum of responses.
- **Stronger partnerships.** A more resilient global and regional architecture for international peace and security is needed for the future. The UN must lay out a vision and help enable others.
- **Field-focused and people-centered.** UN Headquarters should focus more on enabling field missions and UN personnel must renew their resolve to serve and protect the people.

Some key recommendations

On conflict prevention

- Existing conflicts are proving harder to resolve and yet new ones are emerging. The Panel calls for a strong push on prevention.
- Establish an international forum on prevention drawing on external resources and knowledge.
- Need earlier engagement by the Security Council to address emerging threats and use UN expert resources earlier to support national and regional prevention and mediation efforts.
- Reinforce UN Secretariat's prevention and mediation capabilities.

On protection of civilians

- To deliver on protection of civilians, the current gap in many missions between resources and mandates need to be addressed.
- Every peacekeeper – civilian, military, police – must do all they can when civilians are under imminent threat. Political leverage and influence can be more powerful than military response.

On the use of force

- In the absence of a peace to keep, peacekeepers are increasingly asked to manage conflict. A rethink of capabilities and concepts is needed, to support these conflict management missions.
- The Panel argues that extreme caution must guide any call for a UN peacekeeping operation to undertake enforcement tasks. The UN should not engage in military counter-terrorism operations.
- The UN peacekeeping principles remain an essential guide for success; they must be interpreted flexibly in light of changed circumstances, and not be used as a shield for inaction.

On rapid deployment, capabilities and performance

- Ad hoc approaches to crisis response will not be sufficient for the future. The UN should lay out a vision and roadmap for a stronger network of national and regional standby capabilities.
- Establish a modest UN rapid deployment capability for reinforcement and new mission start-up.
- The Security Council should provide strong political support to the UN's force generation process, and there should be more involvement of higher capability countries in UN peacekeeping, including the Security Council members.
- Command and control is too often undermined by national restrictions revealed in the field. This must not be tolerated.

On achievable mandates

- Achievable mandates must be based on a clear analysis of the conflict and a political strategy.
- Establish sequenced and prioritized mandates as regular practice, including a two-stage mandating process, to allow for realistic planning on the ground.
- Institutionalize Security Council and Secretariat consultations with troop and police contributing countries to forge a common purpose for missions from the outset.

On sustaining peace

- The Security Council and other international actors should remain politically vigilant and provide sustained support to the country to prevent a relapse of conflict.
- Establish pooled country-level UN funds linked to a political roadmap and integrated strategies, and provide missions with some resources to spend in-country.
- Review the current capacities of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to aid in sustaining peace.

On women, peace and security

- Conduct gender sensitive analysis, planning, implementation, review, evaluation and mission drawdown processes, and integrate gender expertise within all mission components.
- Improve the policy, substantive and technical support including from UN Women together with that received from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Political Affairs at Headquarters.

On integrating human rights

- Include key human rights developments when briefing and reporting to the Security Council or otherwise engaging with Member States, and there should be regular public reporting on the human rights situation.
- Ensure coherence and avoid duplication of efforts among human rights and protection functions. Streamline monitoring and reporting requirements for the specialized protection mandates.
- Provide sufficient resources for timely recruitment and deployment of human rights officers.

On addressing abuse and enhancing accountability

- Immunity must not mean impunity. Immunity was never intended and does not apply to provide immunity from prosecution to UN personnel alleged to have committed sexual exploitation and abuse. The immunity privileges are functional only, i.e., related to the exercise of his/her professional duty as a UN employee, not for private acts.
- Disclose information on disciplinary actions taken by contributing countries, including information on non-reporting.
- Immediate and robust implementation of the Secretary-General's proposed measures, including establishment of immediate response teams and six-month deadlines to complete investigations.
- Bar troops from countries listed in the Secretary-General's annual reports on children and armed conflict and on conflict related sexual violence, until de-listed.
- Create an effective and adequately resourced victim assistance programme.

More field-focused support

- Administrative practices are too headquarters centric and hamper mandate delivery in the field.
- Align authority with responsibility to deliver results in the field – ensure accountability for results and for resources, together.
- Develop field-focused specific human resources and other administrative procedures.
- Establish special administrative measures for mission start-ups and crisis response.

Funding of AU peace support operations

- Security Council-authorized African Union peace support operations should be supported, on a case by case basis, by United Nations-assessed contributions, and accountability and standards frameworks should be established for such operations.
- Strengthen UN liaison with other regional organizations.

On UN mission leadership, capability and performance

- Reinforce senior leadership selection and appointment through defined, merit-based processes.
- Select strong leadership teams based on diversity and complementarity responding to needs on the ground.
- Appoint more women to leadership positions and review obstacles preventing their recruitment and professional advancement.
- Ensure that those leading UN peace operations are held accountable, including through performance management mechanisms such as '360 degree appraisals'.

Funding of special political missions

- Adopt the four recommendations contained in the twenty-second report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, on the review of arrangements for funding and backstopping special political missions.

On need to align Headquarters structures for more focused field operations

- Develop options for restructuring the Secretariat's peace and security entities, including the establishment of a position of an additional Deputy Secretary-General responsible for peace and security as recommended in 2005.
- Propose the immediate establishment of a strategic analysis and planning capacity.
- Develop a proposal for a single 'peace operations account' to finance all peace operations and related back-stopping activities in future.