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Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

Implementation of the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations

Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

The present report, prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution [75/281](#), highlights key developments in United Nations peacekeeping since the issuance of the previous report ([A/75/563](#)) and identifies issues for consideration by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

* The present report was submitted after the deadline in order to reflect the most recent available information.



I. Strategic context

A. Perspectives for peacekeeping in a changing world

1. Since 1948, United Nations peacekeeping has helped to end conflicts in dozens of countries. In 2021, more than 74,200 women and men from 122 Member States serving in 12 United Nations peacekeeping operations around the world contributed to laying the foundation for durable peace. Missions focused on supporting political processes, protecting civilians, advancing local and national reconciliation efforts and making progress on peacebuilding, governance and the rule of law, including accountability, transitional justice, electoral reform and security sector reform.

2. Nevertheless, United Nations peacekeeping faces a challenging conflict environment, one marked by the regionalization of conflict, the proliferation of armed groups, erosion of the rule of law, exclusion and impunity. These challenges are exacerbated by protracted peace efforts, violent extremism and terrorism. Many peacekeeping missions are performing multiple interdependent tasks in non-permissive and high-risk environments, with diminishing resources. In 2021, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic continued to stretch the resilience of countries hosting peacekeeping missions and tested the ability of United Nations operations to support the response to the pandemic while also delivering on mandates. The Action for Peacekeeping initiative was launched by the Secretary-General in 2018 to tackle the challenges facing peacekeeping and remains the core agenda for United Nations peacekeeping. After three years, however, the moment was opportune to assess its achievements and gaps. That analysis led to the development of Action for Peacekeeping Plus, the implementation strategy for the initiative for the period 2021–2023. It is designed to accelerate implementation of Action for Peacekeeping and enhance the effectiveness of missions.

3. While peacekeeping casualties have decreased, too many peacekeepers have made the ultimate sacrifice for peace or bear lifelong disabling conditions because of their service. The Secretary-General pays tribute to them all.

B. Implementation of recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations

4. On 12 March 2021, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations adopted a new report (A/75/19) in line with General Assembly resolution 74/277. In accordance with its mandate, the Special Committee undertook a comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all its aspects and issued over 120 recommendations aimed at enhancing United Nations peacekeeping. The Secretariat has endeavoured to implement these recommendations in the intervening period. The present report and its addendum provide an update on the measures being taken for each recommendation.

5. The figures below provide a bird's-eye view of the state of play in terms of the implementation of each theme of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative. The majority of the recommendations (71) are directed at the Secretariat, while 7 are addressed to key peacekeeping stakeholders such as troop- and police-contributing countries, host authorities and regional organizations and 43 are collective recommendations.

Figure I
Recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, 2021

(Number allocated to each peacekeeping stakeholder)

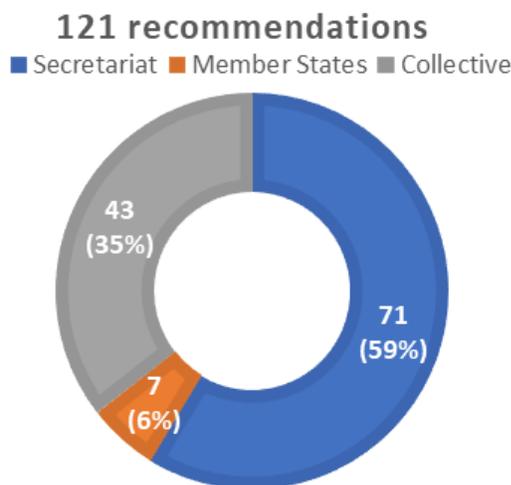
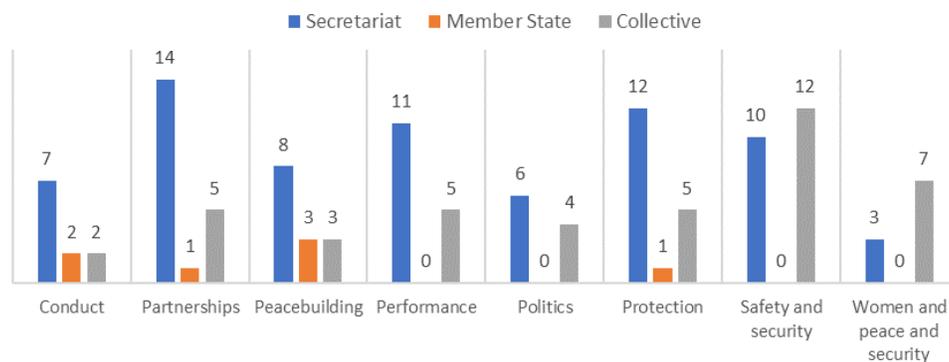


Figure II
Recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations by thematic area, 2021

(Number)



II. Overview of Action for Peacekeeping Plus priorities

6. In line with the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, which was endorsed by 154 Member States and four regional organizations, peacekeeping partners have taken action over the past three years to ensure that United Nations peacekeeping operations are more effective.

7. Gains made in the implementation of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative include improving responsiveness; enhancing flexibility and boosting the equipment of missions; strengthening performance evaluation and responses to underperformance and outstanding performance; significantly increasing the number of women in peacekeeping; expanding the political space and participation of women; building stronger partnerships with host Governments and regional and subregional organizations; preventing and responding to misconduct; and implementing environmentally responsible solutions.

8. To strengthen the momentum, the Secretary-General launched Action for Peacekeeping Plus in March 2021 – the third anniversary of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative – as a new strategy for implementation of the initiative from 2021 to 2023. Action for Peacekeeping Plus consists of a set of systemic and cross-cutting priorities that address remaining gaps and are aimed at strengthening the impact and effectiveness of missions, including by accelerating progress on the implementation of the Declaration of Shared Commitments.

9. Action for Peacekeeping Plus focuses on seven priorities and two cross-cutting themes, which will preserve and sustain the gains made over the past three years. The seven priorities are (a): ensuring collective coherence behind a political strategy; (b) enhancing missions' strategic and operational integration to achieve unity of purpose for greater impact; (c) ensuring that United Nations peacekeeping missions have the right capabilities and mindsets for mandate implementation; (d) delivering accountability to peacekeepers by reinforcing efforts to improve their safety, security and well-being, including by bringing to account perpetrators of attacks against them; (e) upholding the accountability of all peacekeepers, whether civilian, military or police, for conduct and discipline and for the environmental footprint of missions, which also entails continuing to step up efforts to regularly assess performance, recognize good performance and improve accountability for performance; (f) renewing the focus on strategic communications to promote successes, manage expectations and help to address disinformation, misinformation and hate speech; and (g) improving United Nations missions' cooperation and more constructive engagement with host countries. These priorities are central to a broad array of mission objectives, including improving the safety and security of peacekeepers, bolstering performance and supporting successful transitions. The two cross-cutting themes – the women and peace and security agenda and innovative, data-driven and technology-enabled peacekeeping – will be mainstreamed across all seven priorities.

10. The Secretariat has developed a plan to operationalize Action for Peacekeeping Plus, which reflects key actions and deliverables that would enable progress on implementing its priorities.

III. Coronavirus disease pandemic

11. Since the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the Department of Peace Operations has continued to work closely with field missions and other departments of the Secretariat, notably the Department of Operational Support, the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, in pursuit of four interlinked objectives set out by the Secretary-General in April 2020: (a) supporting national authorities; (b) protecting United Nations personnel; (c) mitigating the spread of the virus and assisting in the protection of vulnerable communities; and (d) ensuring operational continuity in the implementation of their mandates.

A. Protecting personnel and their capacity to continue critical operations

12. Helping to prevent and contain the spread of COVID-19 among United Nations peacekeeping personnel and the communities that they serve is a moral, political and operational imperative. With uniformed personnel constituting the majority of personnel deployed in peacekeeping operations, their deployment, rotation and repatriation continue to be undertaken under stringent COVID-19 precautionary measures, following the resumption of rotations in July 2020 and in line with

temporary guidance issued to that effect.¹ A midterm review to capture lessons from the resumption of rotations and identify measures to streamline them was completed in February 2021 in consultation with troop- and police-contributing countries. Temporary guidance on COVID-19 was developed by the troop- and police-rotation support group led by the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Operational Support in close coordination with peacekeeping operations, troop- and police-contributing countries and host country authorities. In the light of concerns about the global spread of new COVID-19 variants, the 14-day quarantine before deployment and upon arrival in missions was, out of an abundance of caution, supplemented by a COVID-19 polymer chain reaction testing requirement for all incoming uniformed personnel. While the number of completed rotations has increased steadily since their resumption in July 2020, the global spread of the Delta variant of COVID-19 and resulting movement restrictions have caused occasional delays. A total of 168,618 uniformed personnel rotated between 1 September 2020 and 31 August 2021.

13. In 2021, the United Nations system-wide medical evacuation mechanism for COVID-19 continued to ensure that uniformed personnel were able to stay and deliver on their mandates, by guaranteeing access to adequate treatment for COVID-19 not available at the duty location. Since the mechanism was established in May 2020, 39 uniformed personnel from 15 troop- and police-contributing countries have been medically evacuated to receive potentially life-saving treatment, including in their home country, from five field missions: United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

14. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance led the flexible adaptation of the policy framework to address critical issues such as flexible work arrangements, staff entitlements, rest and recuperation, mission footprint modifications and home leave. This allowed peacekeeping missions to quickly respond and to adapt policies, along with new operational guidance, at an unprecedented speed to ensure that field personnel were provided with the necessary administrative support.

15. The Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance also facilitated the global coordination of treasury functions and the smooth movement of cash across all field locations to provide greater flexibility while abiding by the regulatory framework. In addition, it provided guidance through a community of practice on business continuity, through which peacekeeping missions shared experiences and best practices during the pandemic.

B. Containing and mitigating the spread of the virus

16. Efforts to prevent and control outbreaks continued during the reporting period, including the establishment and training of specialized outbreak response teams to handle case clusters and carry out contact tracing. A specialized COVID-19 monitoring and verification tool was also deployed in field missions. The COVID-19 vaccine plays an important role in protecting peacekeeping personnel and their capacity to continue critical operations. A United Nations system-wide COVID-19

¹ Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Department of Peace Operations and Department of Operational Support, "Interim guidelines on COVID-19 prevention, monitoring and verification for uniformed personnel", 9 November 2020.

vaccination programme is being rolled out to complement national vaccination programmes and COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility efforts. It aims to provide vaccines to all United Nations staff and eligible dependants, uniformed personnel and key implementing partners. A COVID-19 vaccination support team led by the Department of Operational Support was established at Headquarters, and comprehensive guidance, communication materials and training were made available to support the roll-out across peacekeeping operations and field entities. As of June 2021, more than 75 per cent of the 300,000 procured and donated doses had been delivered to the field. In accordance with the recommendation of the Group of Friends on the vaccination of uniformed personnel, a number of troop- and police-contributing countries have committed to administering vaccines to their uniformed personnel before deployment. The United Nations and Member States will continuously endeavour to support troop- and police-contributing countries that may not have access to sufficient supplies of vaccines. Vaccination status complements testing and quarantine requirements.

C. Supporting national authorities in their response

17. Throughout the pandemic, where mandated, peacekeeping operations have maintained political engagement and community outreach through virtual and other platforms and have undertaken public diplomacy initiatives to urge political unity and respect for human rights. For instance, MINUSCA successfully supported the Government of the Central African Republic in launching a voter registration process that contributed to timely presidential and legislative elections in 2020–2021.

18. To help to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the police, prisons and justice sectors, the Department of Peace Operations supported the implementation of its guidance issued in April 2020 on police planning and operations, decongestion of prisons and access to justice, including by encouraging the conditional release of non-dangerous detainees and providing seed funding to peacekeeping missions through the Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law. In the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Department worked with a non-governmental organization to advise partners on the management of communicable diseases, health and hygiene in prisons.

19. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and community violence reduction components also repurposed and retooled community violence reduction projects to support national Governments in their response to the pandemic. In the Central African Republic and Mali, this included awareness-raising and risk communication with conflict-affected communities, as well as the production of personal protective equipment. The repurposing of community violence reduction components also allowed for the implementation of quick-impact projects to assist the health response, leveraging the capacities of ex-combatants and community members in building critical health and sanitation infrastructure such as water wells.

D. Protecting vulnerable communities while delivering on mandate implementation

20. Despite the call for a global ceasefire issued by the Secretary-General in March 2020, fighting has continued in many places, leaving vulnerable communities exposed to acts of violence. In spite of the challenges posed by the pandemic, peacekeeping operations have adapted their activities to continue to prevent and respond to threats to civilians, in line with their mandates. Missions diverted projects

to support the response to the pandemic, used radio communication for advocacy and switched to virtual meetings.

21. In the Central African Republic, the Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law provided early support to the United Nations Development Programme and MINUSCA, enabling them to quickly adapt to COVID-19 challenges in prisons and the security sector. This included the provision of personal protective equipment for all prisons, detainees and prison personnel, the setting up of clear standard operating procedures within prisons for the separation of detainees, quarantine and visits in a safe and secure manner. For their part, United Nations police adapted to the pandemic. For example, in MINUSCA, United Nations police supported the joint rapid response unit to prevent sexual violence against women and children to respond to sexual and gender-based violence. In MINUSMA, United Nations police continued to collaborate with Malian police and locally elected officials to increase their presence and community-oriented service delivery in the centre and north of the country.

IV. Political impact of peacekeeping

A. Advancing political solutions and complementary political objectives at the national and local levels

22. Where mandated, peacekeeping missions sought to advance political solutions as a primary objective in 2021. Underpinned by robust political and conflict analysis, they continued to create space and ensure support for political processes, often in the face of fragile political agreements, weak institutions and stalled peace processes. The COVID-19 pandemic and related containment measures compounded these challenges.

23. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO deployed its good offices to defuse tension amid the reconfiguration of the governing coalition from late 2020 until the inauguration of a new Government in April 2021. It also supported the implementation of the national justice sector reform policy, which will strengthen civilian rule of law institutions. In South Sudan, while overall progress in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan has been slow and uneven, local intercommunal violence has been on the rise, prompting efforts by UNMISS to bolster local reconciliation and protect civilians. In the Central African Republic, MINUSCA supported the organization of presidential and legislative elections in an environment marked by the resurgence of violence by armed groups. It coupled its good offices with a robust posture to safeguard democratic order, ensure the holding of general elections, protect the civilian population and prevent mass atrocities. It also provided support for the investigation and prosecution of armed group members who perpetrated serious crimes in the context of electoral violence.

24. In Kosovo,² the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) adapted its inter-community trust-building work, focusing on empowering women and young people, access to justice and countering misinformation and hate speech. In Cyprus, regular engagement by the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) helped in fostering the agreement in June 2021 to reopen the three remaining crossing points and to harmonize pandemic-related procedures for all crossings. Peacekeeping mandates in the Middle East and Western Sahara continued to contribute to stability and prevent escalation. The United Nations Truce

² References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

Supervision Organization (UNTSO), the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara carried out observation and liaison functions, defusing tensions and building trust between the sides, pending lasting resolutions.

B. Fostering regional approaches to conflict prevention, management and resolution

25. MONUSCO supported efforts to implement the action plan for the United Nations regional strategy for the Great Lakes, including by assisting the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in organizing regional consultations in Kinshasa in June 2021. In the Central African Republic, the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States and the European Union conducted a joint high-level visit, with a view to ensuring a coordinated approach to support the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, of 2019, in the context of a deteriorating security and humanitarian situation. MINUSCA and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa continued to work closely to sustain regional support for the revitalization of the peace process.

26. In Mali, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali, the High Representative of the African Union for Mali and the Sahel and the representative of the Economic Community of West African States continued to work closely to help to ensure the return to constitutional rule. MINUSMA further stepped up its support to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, which provides the framework for a regional response to common security challenges in the Sahel.

27. Regional security developments and the COVID-19 pandemic continued to have an impact on the mandated activities of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), UNDOF and UNTSO. Several violations of the Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces, of 1974, heightened tension. In southern Lebanon, UNIFIL monitored the cessation of hostilities and carried out liaison, coordination and confidence-building activities to prevent conflict. It continued to prioritize its patrols to maintain deterrence and prevent incidents, and it continued to work with parties to facilitate the demarcation of the Blue Line. In a context of continued tension in the eastern Mediterranean, UNFICYP engaged both sides to address tension in and around the buffer zone and to promote and facilitate intercommunal contacts.

C. Strengthening analysis and planning

28. Integrated assessment and planning, both within missions and with United Nations partners, are critical to ensuring coherence around a common strategy and maximizing collective impact. As part of Action for Peacekeeping Plus, the Department of Peace Operations and field missions have committed to specific deliverables aimed at strengthening analysis and planning, as well as strategic and operational integration. These include greater sophistication and consistency in the use of data as part of analysis and reporting, including through the continued roll-out of the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System. Regular assessments of mission operating environments and performance make it possible for missions to conduct joint planning between civilians and uniformed personnel. Data and analysis are used to track mission impact over time and inform decision-making. The Secretariat will explore innovative approaches to strengthening integration with United Nations partners on the ground, by reframing joint assessment, planning and programming at the field level. To strengthen planning structures and capacities in

field missions, the Department of Peace Operations is working on establishing a dedicated mission planning capability, appropriately structured to mission contexts and empowered by leadership to engage in integrated planning with civilian and uniformed counterparts. That initiative will be formalized in a policy, clarifying the structures, roles and responsibilities of Mission Planning Units.

D. The way forward

29. Where mandated, peacekeeping missions continue to promote political solutions and peace processes in spite of the challenges posed by the pandemic. While there has been some progress in the implementation of certain peace agreements, localized intercommunal violence remains a concern. Missions will continue to support inclusive peace processes and agreements that address the root causes of conflicts at the local and national levels, including through community-level conflict prevention and management. They will do so in partnership with regional actors and drawing on an ever more robust and integrated assessment and planning architecture.

V. Women and peace and security

A. Ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace processes

30. Ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace and political processes is an imperative for the Secretariat, and vital to achieving sustainable political solutions to conflict. Despite incremental progress in the participation of women across peacekeeping contexts,³ barriers remain, such as political instability, structural gender norms and the impacts of the pandemic. Peacekeeping missions partnered with local women leaders and organizations to strengthen their participation in political transitions, early warning and local conflict resolution mechanisms and the implementation of peace agreements. The Department of Peace Operations created opportunities for women leaders to influence peacekeeping and used strategic communications to elevate women's leadership. This culminated in the Secretary-General's call to action entitled "Women transforming peace and security", which was aimed at peacekeeping partners. The Department also supported the compilation of operational guidance, best practices and stories from the field, aimed at promoting gender-responsive disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes. In Mali, building on the increase in the number of women represented in the Agreement Monitoring Committee, from 3 to 31 per cent, MINUSMA supported the launch of a Women's Observatory in June 2021, engaging a diverse group of women leaders in the peace process. In the Central African Republic, MINUSCA supported the mobilization and protection of women during the electoral period, 46.3 per cent of registered voters being women. With the support of MINUSCA, the participation of women in local peace and reconciliation committees reached 30 per cent in June 2021 (from 21.4 per cent in 2020). In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO intensified political advocacy for the participation of women in politics. In Kosovo, UNMIK partnered with the European Union to engage women leaders from all Kosovo communities in leadership training.

³ In its policy brief entitled "Women transforming peace in peacekeeping contexts" (October 2020), the United Nations took stock of progress by the Department of Peace Operations in the area of women and peace and security, in connection with the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

B. Integration of a gender perspective into analysis, planning, implementation and reporting

31. Missions continued to integrate gender and women and peace and security priorities across functions and in strategic planning. In Kosovo, UNMIK integrated gender perspectives and objectives into all mission planning, reporting documents and substantive workplans. To strengthen the representation of women in the security sector, MINUSCA supported the armed defence forces, correction services and internal security forces of the Central African Republic to meet their gender targets in 2020. Gender advisers and officers from police, civilian and military components have been critical in ensuring the integration of gender perspectives across peacekeeping operations.

32. Gender analysis has been improved through data-driven approaches and has informed strategic planning and helped to identify and mitigate threats of violence affecting women and girls. In South Sudan, gender analysis and sex-disaggregated data informed UNMISS engagement with military and political leaders as well as the deployment of gender-responsive patrols. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, gender-responsive conflict analysis has informed transition planning and helped to identify women and peace and security priorities. To enhance performance, accountability and the operationalization of the United Nations data strategy, eight missions are systematically monitoring progress, trends and challenges in the implementation of women and peace and security mandates using indicators.

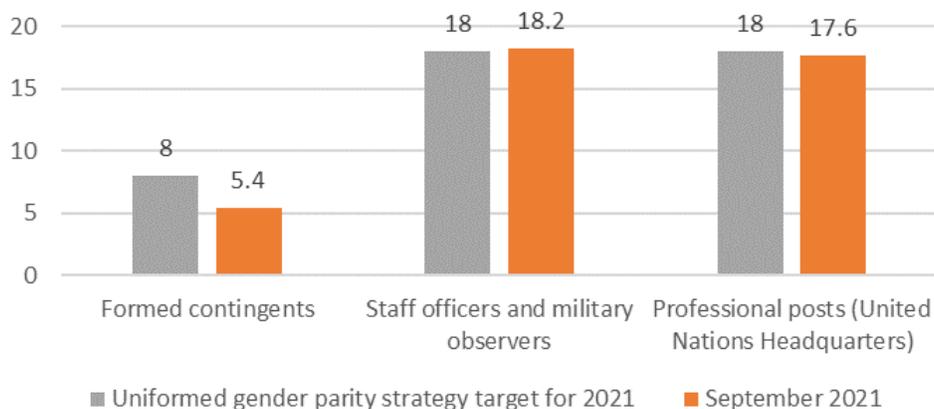
C. Gender parity

33. Coordination with troop- and police-contributing countries as well as countries providing justice and corrections personnel continues to increase the number of uniformed women deployed. As of September 2021, most targets for 2021 set in the uniformed gender parity strategy 2018–2028 for the number of women deployed as military, police and justice and corrections personnel had been met or even exceeded (see figures III–VI). The exception was the number of women in formed military contingents, which traditionally have had few women members. To make progress in this category and others, Member State initiatives to recruit and retain women at the national level are critical. In 2021, the Department of Peace Operations launched new gender parity reports aimed at increasing transparency and allowing troop- and police-contributing countries to better assess their progress against the targets of the uniformed gender parity strategy.⁴

⁴ The public report is available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/gender>.

Figure III
Representation of women deployed as United Nations military personnel against uniformed gender parity strategy targets for 2021

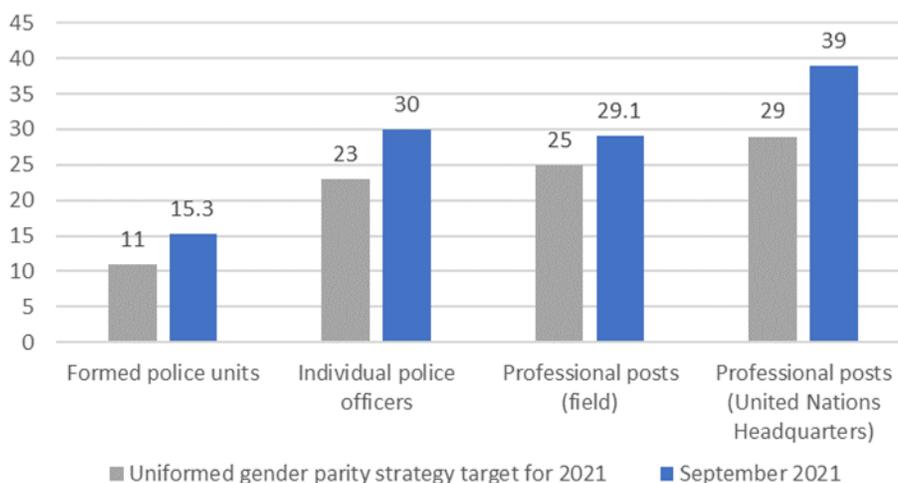
(Percentage)



34. As of September 2021, the aggregate average of women police officers deployed in peacekeeping operations in 2021 comprised 39 per cent of police professional posts at Headquarters, 29.1 per cent of professional posts in the field and 30 per cent of individual police officers, thus surpassing the targets for 2021 and 2025. Of the members deployed across formed police units, 15.3 per cent were women. As of September 2021, women accounted for 18.2 per cent of military observers and staff officers and 17.6 per cent of military professional posts at Headquarters, on track to meet the targets for 2021. Some 38 per cent of government-provided justice and corrections personnel were women, which was above the target of 29 per cent for 2021.

Figure IV
Representation of women deployed as United Nations police against uniformed gender parity strategy targets for 2021

(Percentage)



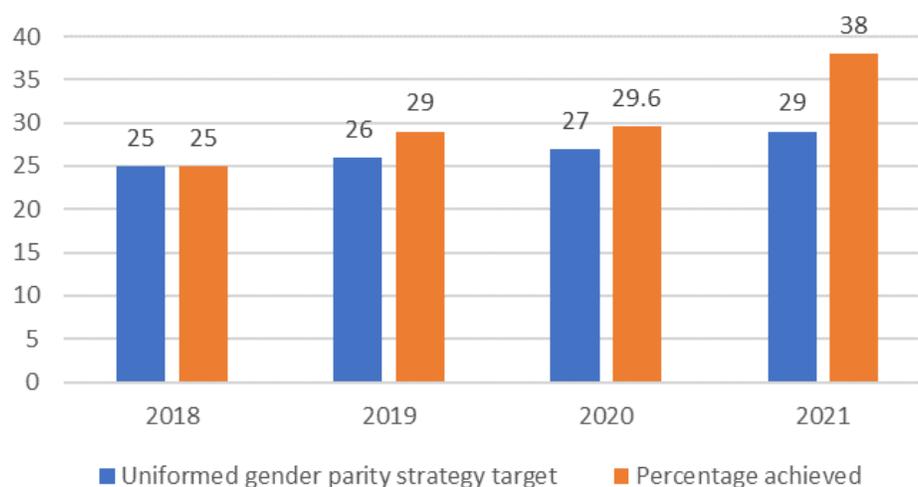
35. Efforts have been made to foster an enabling and safe environment for uniformed women personnel in peace operations. These include working to incorporate a gender perspective into designing a camp for police and military units;

launching a project to gain a better understanding of barriers faced by uniformed women; holding a peer-to-peer exchange of uniformed gender advisers and focal points in missions; launching the United Nations Women Corrections Officers Network; supporting the United Nations police gender advisers and focal points; and developing awareness-raising workshops on gender bias and sexual harassment for deployed corrections officers.

Figure V

Representation of women deployed as government-provided justice and corrections personnel against uniformed gender parity strategy targets

(Percentage)



36. Although gender parity among civilian staff has been reached in overall figures for the Department of Peace Operations and the shared structure at Headquarters, further progress is necessary to achieve gender parity from the P-5 to D-2 levels in the Department and at the D-2 and P-3 levels in the shared structure. Significant challenges remain to reaching parity in the field. As at 31 August 2021, women made up 35 per cent of civilian staff serving in peacekeeping operations.⁵ Additional measures have been taken in the past year, such as launching the Senior Leadership Talent Pool outreach tool, leveraging retirements, cleaning up and revitalizing job rosters and preparing specific action plans to support entities.

⁵ Namely international staff in the Professional and higher and Field Service categories, excluding those holding a temporary appointment or a one-dollar-per-year contract.

Figure VI
Gender distribution in the Department of Peace Operations and the shared structure at Headquarters (civilian staff) as of September 2021
 (Percentage)



37. Outreach efforts to advance the representation and geographical balance of women in senior mission leadership positions have also continued. As of October 2021, two women were serving as heads and four as deputy heads of peacekeeping missions (equivalent to 30 per cent).⁶ Induction briefings have also continued to be provided to newly appointed senior leaders and they have been offered the opportunity to participate in the leadership partnering initiative mentoring programme. In addition, the senior women talent pipeline initiative led by the Department of Operational Support has helped with the recruitment of more women among civilian staff at senior levels, including by providing tailored training and development opportunities to candidates. Since 2014, 51 candidates in the pipeline initiative have been appointed to positions at the P-5 to Under-Secretary-General levels, about 80 per cent to peace operations. The pipeline initiative also works to promote geographical balance in order to ensure that the parallel goals of gender equality and geographical diversity are seen as complementary rather than competing.

38. For United Nations police, five out of nine police components in peacekeeping operations are headed by women and one is deputized by a woman. To further increase the participation of women in leadership positions, a virtual professional development workshop with members of the United Nations police command cadre was convened in March 2021. For the military, currently one Force Commander and two Deputy Force Commander posts are filled by women.

D. The way forward

39. As emphasized by the Secretary-General in his call to action for human rights and in “Women transforming peace and security”, the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace processes must remain a non-negotiable priority for the United Nations. Looking ahead, the United Nations will continue to advance this vision, including by pursuing gender parity and ensuring the meaningful participation of women peacekeepers. It intends to strengthen and systemize data-driven gender analysis to inform strategic planning, resource allocation and decision-making

⁶ These data refer only to missions led by the Department of Peace Operations.

processes. It will work to enhance strategic communications, advocacy and knowledge management to showcase implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. It will also accelerate its strategic partnerships with women leaders and networks. In partnership with Member States, the United Nations should support these efforts and advocate the full participation of women in peace processes, governance and the rule of law and security sectors, as well as support efforts to increase the number of civilian and uniformed women in peacekeeping at all levels.

VI. Protection

A. Overview

40. The effective implementation of mandates to safeguard human rights, protect civilians from physical violence, prevent and respond to incidents and patterns of conflict-related sexual violence and ensure the protection of children affected by armed conflict remains a key priority for peacekeeping operations.

41. While the pandemic amplified existing protection challenges in peacekeeping settings, missions adapted their operations and strengthened whole-of-mission and integrated approaches to protection in support of host State responsibilities. They also performed important coordination roles among relevant stakeholders.

42. During the reporting period, mission components and the Department of Peace Operations took significant steps to reinforce protection capacities and efforts in peacekeeping operations, including by monitoring, investigating and reporting violations of human rights and international humanitarian law; engaging parties to conflict; developing, rolling out and disseminating context-specific training and guidance materials; taking part in awareness-raising, outreach and advocacy; and creating synergies between protection mandates and other priority objectives of missions. In responding to pandemic-related restrictions, the Department developed new means and products to support peacekeepers, including strategic communications videos, an interactive online version of the protection of civilians handbook and virtual training workshops on child protection.

B. Protection through dialogue and engagement

43. Sustained dialogue and engagement with parties to conflict on protection issues served as an entry point for peacekeeping missions to advance their objectives and peace processes. Joint advocacy by MINUSMA with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict resulted in the signing of action plans with the Platform to end and prevent the recruitment of children. MINUSCA continued to engage in dialogue with security institutions, government and bilateral forces and armed groups to minimize the impact of military operations on civilians and end grave violations against children. MONUSCO engaged in similar efforts with Congolese authorities and facilitated consultations between local communities, resulting in a non-aggression agreement in Ituri. It also engaged with armed groups to separate 86 children in 2021. The Mission's female engagement teams continued to engage women from local communities during patrols and community outreach activities. In South Sudan, regular engagement by UNMISS of parties to the conflict and its technical and logistical support led to the adoption of an action plan for the unified armed forces on addressing conflict-related sexual violence and a unilateral communiqué on addressing conflict-related sexual violence, issued by a non-signatory party to the Revitalized Peace Agreement, the National Salvation Front/Army. UNMISS also engaged in constructive dialogue with the parties to the

Revitalized Peace Agreement, which resulted in the extension until August 2022 of the comprehensive action plan on children associated with armed conflict. Furthermore, missions pursued a people-centred approach to security, including through integrated community violence reduction programming in UNMISS and, in MINUSMA, to reduce tension within communities and prevent the enrolment of young people in armed groups.

C. Provision of physical protection

44. Peacekeeping operations continued to improve data collection and analysis of threats to civilians. Missions contributed to the protection of civilians through effective monitoring and reporting and by developing early warning mechanisms. They also shared comprehensive information on human rights violations and abuses, threats against civilians, violations against children and conflict-related sexual violence. MINUSCA developed a mechanism to share election-related incidents, alert mission leadership and trigger rapid responses from the force to uphold the electoral process and protect the population. The mine action components of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei and UNMISS collected data about explosive hazards and surveyed schools, clinics, agricultural sites and other public infrastructure to prevent casualties from landmine and explosive remnant of war contamination. In Mali, the strong relationship that MINUSMA developed with local networks of human rights focal points enabled the Mission to expand its remote monitoring capabilities.

45. The provision of physical protection was also reinforced through the establishment of proactive and robust protection postures and the implementation of coordinated operations with national security actors. MONUSCO, MINUSMA and MINUSCA secured the movement of civilians by increasing the number of joint patrols and escorts of civilian convoys. Civilian movement was also facilitated by conducting operations with national police and military. UNMISS shifted to a more mobile posture by establishing temporary operating bases to deter subnational violence after all but one of its protection of civilians sites were redesignated as conventional camps for internally displaced persons. UNMISS police expanded their outward protection posture and footprint beyond protection of civilians sites, focusing on deterring and mitigating violence against civilians, as well as engaging in confidence- and trust-building.

D. Establishment of a protective environment

46. Peacekeeping operations supported the establishment of a protective environment in several ways, including throughout efforts to strengthen the rule of law. Missions supported transitional justice processes and the fight against impunity by issuing public and internal reports on human rights conditions in host States. They also provided technical, financial and logistical support to national authorities in support of host State efforts to combat impunity and prosecute those accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious human rights violations. Efforts by MINUSCA contributed to national authorities opening investigations to address election-related violence, including violence perpetrated by State security forces.

47. Missions strengthened the capacity of host State counterparts and civil society. MONUSCO trained thousands of police officers, including 22,139 in forensics alone. It also provided logistical and technical support to judicial authorities, including in 227 mobile court hearings, on serious criminal matters. MONUSCO, MINUSCA, MINUSMA and UNMISS trained more than 12,000 peacekeepers and national

security actors to protect children's rights and to prevent and respond to grave violations of those rights.

48. In Mali, MINUSMA is supporting the country's security forces in mainstreaming a community-oriented policing approach into their work. It continued to assist the country's Specialized Judicial Unit on Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime, resulting in the prosecution of 176 individuals since 2017. UNMISS supported the establishment, preparation and deployment of mobile civilian, military and special statutory-customary courts to address serious human rights violations.

49. Support for survivors remains a priority. MONUSCO provided technical support for the creation of a reparations fund for survivors of sexual violence, while MINUSCA trained magistrates on the legal treatment of children associated with armed forces and groups. Through local organizations, UNMISS supported survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in accessing livelihood opportunities, leadership programmes and psychosocial support tailored to their needs.

E. The way forward

50. The effective and successful implementation of protection mandates is a whole-of-mission responsibility. There is an urgent need for Member States and the Secretariat to strengthen advocacy to ensure that host States realize their commitments and responsibility to protect their populations and hold perpetrators accountable. Missions stand ready to support this process by ensuring whole-of-mission mainstreaming of protection mandates, in line with peacekeeping guidance, and by strengthening efforts to apply gender analysis and approaches to protection threats, with monitoring, investigation and reporting of protection concerns continuing to inform political strategies. Adequately resourced protection functions are needed to support these efforts.

VII. Safety and security

A. Security trends and safety of peacekeepers

51. Peacekeeping missions continue to adapt, build resilience and remain resolute in efforts to implement their mandates in complex, dynamic and often high-threat environments. In some mission settings, armed groups persistently target peacekeepers, aiming to impede peace and security, undermine political and economic stability and disrupt recovery efforts. In addition to acts of violence, missions must contend with a wide range of other safety and security threats, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters like the Mount Nyiragongo volcanic eruption. The eruption necessitated the massive relocation of MONUSCO personnel in Goma, reinforcing the need to build and maintain essential field mission crisis management capabilities.

52. Attacks against peacekeepers, including direct and improvised explosive device attacks, remain high and are on track to exceed the number of attacks in 2020. MINUSMA remains the most dangerous peacekeeping mission: asymmetric attacks have increased in frequency and sophistication, while indirect attacks on United Nations facilities using mortar, artillery and rockets have also increased. As at 27 October, the United Nations had recorded 164 improvised explosive device incidents in Mali, 67 of which involved MINUSMA, killing 7 and injuring 107 peacekeepers. Improvised explosive devices are increasingly used with devastating effects, causing more casualties and damage. Direct attacks on United Nations patrols

and convoys have increased in MINUSMA, MONUSCO and MINUSCA and there has been an increase in civilian unrest and violent demonstrations aimed at MONUSCO and UNIFIL. A comprehensive approach to enhancing the capacity of MINUSMA to mitigate the threat continues to be implemented, yielding positive results. Two MINUSMA explosive ordnance disposal companies have reached the capacity to conduct highly specialized predeployment training for their own explosive ordnance disposal and improvised explosive device disposal teams with minimal support, demonstrating increased national ownership and the effectiveness and increased self-sufficiency of the Mission's safety and security efforts.

53. Missions also remain determined, focused and adaptable in managing security risks in increasingly high-threat environments. Their efforts have demonstrated success in minimizing casualties while delivering on mission mandates. There have been 17 peacekeeper fatalities in 2021 (up to 27 October) compared with 12 fatalities for all of 2020 due to malicious acts. Most fatalities occurred in MINUSMA (12), of which 8 resulted from two large complex attacks (one at the MINUSMA camp in Aguelhok and the other involving an improvised explosive device attack on an advance security escort of a MINUSMA convoy in the Timbuktu Region). Most attacks involved improvised explosive devices and ambushes on patrols and convoys.

54. To improve operational medical planning in the face of safety and security threats, the Department of Operational Support has started a pilot exercise in three missions to map existing medical facilities, personnel skills and equipment. As part of the lessons learned from the pandemic, the Department developed a methodology to remotely perform health risk assessments, which are used to prepare health support plans for field missions.

55. The Department of Operational Support is also actively developing and updating public health emergency and infectious disease risk mitigation plans and other preparedness plans to deal with emerging infectious diseases as they arise. It has also developed a virtual infectious disease outbreak investigation model that can be used to provide remote support and training to missions during public health emergencies. The Department also invested time and effort in developing online learning and training materials that support continuous medical and public health education for the United Nations medical workforce. The Secretariat is prioritizing women's health training through a women's health e-learning programme, aiming to upgrade women's health knowledge and skill sets and address concerns and barriers pertaining to women's health in field missions. In the longer term, the pandemic has exposed the need for a disease surveillance infrastructure for peacekeepers to enable robust collation, systematic collection and analysis of information to monitor, control and prevent diseases and conditions for the peacekeeping community, and continuous investments will be made in this area.

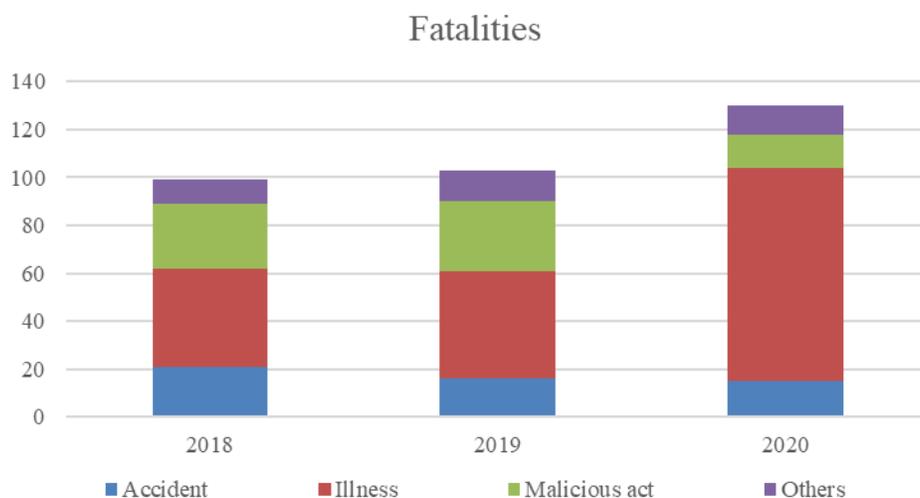
56. Casualty evacuations are a priority operational activity and a complex undertaking involving various mission components working under pressure to save lives. The Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Operational Support work collaboratively with missions to strengthen their casualty evacuation procedures and improve casualty evacuation performance through a "thinking together" approach with the co-management of a community of practice on casualty management. This facilitates knowledge- and experience-sharing, weekly multi-domain learning content, quarterly webinars, workshops, best practices and guidance and contributes to all casualty evacuation-related initiatives.

B. Occupational safety and health of peacekeepers

57. Occupational safety and health incidents remain the leading cause of fatalities, illness and injuries among peacekeeping personnel. In 2020, the illness-related fatality rate more than doubled owing to the impact of the pandemic alone. As can be seen in figure VII, safety-related accident fatalities remained consistently at the same level as security-related malicious act fatalities, and the impact of the combination of accident and illness is consistently and significantly greater than that of security threats. In general, non-fatalities from safety related accidents and illness are often 3–10 times as high as fatalities. Besides the effect on the morbidity of personnel, this indicates a significant operational and financial impact that is currently not measured or analysed.

Figure VII
Causes of incidents

(Percentage)



Source: United Nations Operations and Crisis Centre notification of casualties (NOTICAS) database.

58. To improve the safety of peacekeepers, the Department of Operational Support has developed a Secretariat-wide occupational safety and health risk management system model that includes a comprehensive safety and hazard and incident reporting system. The model systematically collects information about the cause of safety-related incidents, such as injuries, illnesses and exposure to a wide range of common workplace hazards, including internal traffic, fire, explosion, hazardous material management, infectious diseases, tools and equipment, work practices and work environmental conditions. Both the cause and the outcome will be analysed to obtain an accurate understanding of the impact of safety-related accidents and illnesses. This will enable strategies that are tailored and targeted to where appropriate safety resources can be more effectively directed. While initially covering only peacekeeping civilian and police personnel, the occupational safety and health system will be developed with the capacity to be extended to military personnel and troop activity (covering all United Nations occupational groups) as and when feasible. The Department remains fully committed to ensuring timely compensation for all death and disability claims for uniformed personnel. In 2020, it initiated a comprehensive study to develop a post-traumatic stress disorder framework for uniformed personnel, with a view to promoting a sustainable and appropriate approach to compensation for post-traumatic stress disorder claims, including prevention and mitigation measures

to reduce incidences of post-traumatic stress disorder in the future. The General Assembly is expected to consider the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed framework in the second resumed part of its seventy-sixth session.

C. Action plan to improve the security of peacekeepers

59. The action plan for improving the security of United Nations peacekeepers has been operative for over three years, with notable progress. In view of the increase in casualties from December 2020 to April 2021, the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Operational Support updated the action plan to adapt to the change in the operating environment, with specific reference to MINUSCA and MINUSMA. These efforts are focused in part on strengthening leadership accountability, bolstering predeployment operational readiness, strengthening force protection, enhancing crisis management skills, improving coordination and carrying out scenario-specific rehearsals. Work is also under way to enhance capabilities at the tactical and operational levels by acquiring surveillance, night vision, counter-improvised explosive device, counter-unmanned aircraft systems and mine protection equipment.

60. The Office of Military Affairs continued to implement its internal action plan, with 101 of the 138 identified actions and subactions implemented and 37 still in progress as of October 2021. The Office's focus areas include improved military peacekeeping-intelligence and analysis; generation of flexible, agile and mobile military capabilities, including strengthened counter-improvised explosive device capacity and enhanced explosive ordnance disposal capability; progress in military evaluation, including through the formalization of the Military Performance Evaluation Team; support for troop-contributing countries prior to deployment in the development of training standards and preparatory material; and a continued emphasis on leadership initiative, integration and mindsets. In close coordination and cooperation with missions and troop-contributing countries, the Office continues to support MINUSCA in the implementation of the integrated reinforcement adaptation plan for the generation of new capabilities and personnel in line with Security Council resolution [2566 \(2021\)](#). It is also supporting MINUSMA in taking forward the force adaptation plan to enable the Mission to adapt to the evolving and highly complex threat environments with more tailored and enhanced capacities.

61. United Nations police continue to contribute to the implementation of the fourth action plan on improving the security of peacekeepers. To this end, emerging good practices and lessons were discussed during the sixth training-of-trainers course for formed police units that was convened in Turkey between July and September 2021. The course was aimed at creating mobile training teams comprising instructors trained and certified by the United Nations for limited deployments to peacekeeping operations.

62. As part of the action plan and given the risk posed by improvised explosive devices to peace operations, efforts continue to ensure that contingents deploy and operate with the requisite skills to mitigate the improvised explosive device threat. The Mine Action Service mentored and partnered with troop- and police-contributing countries to develop self-sustaining capacity in this area. The mobile training team within the Mine Action Service threat mitigation advisory team began to assess Member States' explosive ordnance disposal capabilities to identify capacity development needs. The United Nations also contributed to updates of training materials and courses on explosive ordnance disposal and improvised explosive device disposal.

D. Accountability for criminal acts against United Nations peacekeepers

63. On 18 August 2021, the Security Council adopted resolution [2589 \(2021\)](#) on crimes against peacekeepers. It called upon Member States hosting or having hosted United Nations peacekeeping operations to promote accountability for the killing of – and all acts of violence against – United Nations peacekeeping personnel, while also recognizing the need to enhance support to help those countries to address impunity. In this context, the United Nations has continued to provide support in accordance with national and international criminal justice and human rights norms and standards.

64. In the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali, where 90 per cent of peacekeeping fatalities from malicious acts have been recorded since 1 January 2013, there has been an increase in the number of alleged perpetrators identified (from 170 in October 2019 to 223 in June 2021); an increase in the number of alleged perpetrators detained (from 119 in October 2019 to 162 in June 2021); and an increase in the number of cases with confirmed national investigations (from 83 in October 2019 to 107 in June 2021). In a notable development, a court in Mali convicted nine individuals in March 2021 for two attacks committed against MINUSMA personnel in 2015, the first direct convictions for attacks against the Mission. The working group on accountability for serious crimes against peacekeepers, led by the Department of Peace Operations, also continued to provide assistance on the matter, focusing on developments in the three countries.

E. Situational awareness

65. In spite of the pandemic, efforts have been made to continue to strengthen peacekeeping missions' capacity for situational awareness. The United Nations Operations and Crisis Centre has offered virtual training courses on situational awareness and crisis management to Joint Operations Centre and Joint Mission Analysis Centre staff. It also supported and expanded missions' use of the Sage database system of the United Nations Operations and Crisis Centre for incidents, events and activities and related data analytics, visualization and analysis. In addition, the United Nations Operations and Crisis Centre implemented an early warning coordinated response mobile application in MINUSMA to support a structured and unified response by the Mission to early warnings. Efforts are under way to deploy a similar application in MONUSCO.

F. Peacekeeping-intelligence

66. Efforts are under way to strengthen operational and tactical peacekeeping-intelligence and to enhance the safety and security of United Nations personnel, as well as the protection of civilians. Significant progress has been made in providing missions with critical operational guidance and training on peacekeeping-intelligence. Field peacekeeping-intelligence coordination mechanisms are also being tested, with a pilot in MONUSCO. The Department of Peace Operations is exploring ways to increase synergy between peacekeeping-intelligence and early warning. United Nations police are finalizing guidance on intelligence-led policing, crime intelligence and border policing.

G. The way forward

67. Mitigation measures developed over the past three years of the action plan continue to demonstrate success in reducing fatalities from ever more frequent and sophisticated attacks against peacekeepers. The Secretariat remains determined to continuously improve the safety and security of peacekeepers. These efforts to strengthen safety and security are closely interlinked and often mutually supportive of the work of the United Nations to strengthen peacekeeping performance. Building field mission crisis management capabilities, improving planning, integration, and tackling occupational safety and health issues remain priorities.

VIII. Performance and accountability

A. Integrated peacekeeping performance and accountability framework

68. The integrated peacekeeping performance and accountability framework was finalized in September 2020 and revised in February and July 2021. The Department of Peace Operations, the Department of Operational Support and the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance continued to implement this jointly developed living document and recorded progress, including in each of the priority projects. Overall, implementation of the framework continues to be on track.

69. Highlights include progress on improving the evaluation methodology for military units, with a new methodology piloted and tested in several missions and incrementally rolled out in 2021. The Police Division is similarly continuing to train and engage formed police unit coordinators on formed unit evaluations through in-mission inspections and workshops.

70. Three additional priority projects have been completed. These include efforts to strengthen remedial and accountability mechanisms for formed units. The project on reporting to the Security Council on peacekeeping performance and accountability issues was closed as its objective of introducing stand-alone paragraphs on these issues in mission-specific reports of the Secretary-General was achieved. Areas requiring further work are the recognition of outstanding performance of military units and formed police units. In this regard, the Department of Peace Operations is strengthening guidance and further engaging mission civilian and uniformed leadership.

71. In the future, implementing the integrated peacekeeping performance and accountability framework will continue to be one of the priorities under Action for Peacekeeping Plus. Further information on its implementation is provided below.

B. Strengthening accountability for performance

72. The roll-out of the Enhanced Training for High-level Operational Support programme, which will replace the Senior Mission Administration and Resource Training programme, will take place at the end of 2021. The new programme has been developed in collaboration between the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Operational Support, with technical support from the United Nations System Staff College. It is a blended learning programme for staff working mostly on administrative, programme management or operational support matters in field missions, offices and other Secretariat entities.

1. Performance assessment of civilian personnel and leadership

73. The Department of Peace Operations further strengthened mission feedback on Secretariat performance by establishing and holding the first meeting of the peacekeeping operations client board in late April 2021. This led to several concrete steps in response to points raised by missions, and the Board will continue to meet regularly.

74. The Secretariat continues to provide policy guidance and technical support for the adoption of a robust risk management approach with a focus on the impact on mandate delivery in peacekeeping missions and Secretariat entities. The Secretariat-wide risk register, approved by the Management Committee, identified 16 critical risks that required immediate action to develop detailed and time-bound risk treatment and response plans.

75. The Secretariat-wide risk register facilitated and guided the development of risk assessments at the mission and entity levels. As of August 2021, all 12 peacekeeping missions have an enterprise risk management process in place and have created risk registers. Support from the central enterprise resource management function includes one-to-one advice on next steps with regard to each mission's risk management process, as well as organizing virtual workshops, webinars and interactive communities of practice and providing online training.

76. The Secretariat continues to facilitate senior manager's compacts between the Secretary-General and the heads of peacekeeping missions. The 2020/21 and 2021/22 compacts of heads of peacekeeping missions incorporate strengthened language in the area of leadership accountability on conduct and discipline, including sexual exploitation and abuse. The compacts included new performance measures relating to reliable evacuation and medical care, human rights, staff engagement, compliance with cybersecurity policies, implementation of the statement on internal controls, and accountability for United Nations property and stewardship thereof. Looking ahead, the Secretariat is undertaking a comprehensive review of the compact template to further strengthen and streamline elements common to all senior manager's compacts, including those of heads of peacekeeping missions. It is anticipated that the new template would be used starting with the 2022/23 compacts.

77. The new Secretariat evaluation policy was promulgated in August 2021. The Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and the Office of Internal Oversight Services have held workshops with peacekeeping missions about the policy and their joint role in supporting Secretariat entities to implement it. Support includes one-to-one advice on next steps with regard to each mission's context, such as: developing an evaluation policy and workplan, joining the evaluation community of practice, using the evaluation consultant roster, enrolling in the new evaluation training course and utilizing a new online portal of guidance, tools and good practice.

2. Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System

78. The Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System is now actively used in 10 peacekeeping missions: MINUSCA, UNMISS, UNIFIL, UNFICYP, MONUSCO, MINUSMA, UNMIK, UNDOF, the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara and the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei. Efforts are also under way in UNTSO and the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP). Results show that the System is enabling integrated mission planning and data-based assessments of performance. Lessons learned are used each year to refine the System's methodology and ensure that it is effective and efficient.

79. All missions with the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System have developed or are developing military-police-civilian plans for mandate delivery. Some 22 performance assessments have been conducted, using data and analysis to assess progress towards mandated tasks and identify areas in which operations can be strengthened, resulting in over 625 recommendations for improving mandate delivery and mission impact. These recommendations are being used to inform leadership decision-making and strengthen performance.

80. The System's plans and assessments are also supporting broader efforts to take a more impact-oriented and integrated approach to results-based budgets, in line with existing processes, to support greater accountability to Member States.

81. The Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System will be launched in UNTSO and the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan by the end of 2021, completing its roll-out to all peacekeeping operations. Its methodology will be refined and policy or guidance for its ongoing management will be developed, but limited strategic planning capacity at Headquarters and in missions remains a challenge for its sustainable implementation.

3. Integrated performance assessment of uniformed personnel

82. Assessing and improving the performance of personnel from troop- and police-contributing countries remains a priority, and the leadership of the Department of Peace Operations, the Department of Operational Support and the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance receive briefings on a quarterly basis on performance trends and issues. The Department of Operational Support also coordinates integrated feedback meetings for troop- and police-contributing countries to share performance data and findings with individual countries, involving all relevant Secretariat stakeholders. These meetings draw on the Department of Peace Operations knowledge management system for troop- and police-contributing countries, which aggregates and visualizes data for each country and is made available to senior leadership.

83. Military units are assessed by force and sector commanders in a structured, systemic manner. During the reporting period, the Office of Military Affairs continued to develop and review military performance evaluation standards for units before and during deployment. A new evaluation methodology and tool for infantry units was rolled out to missions in 2021. Work is under way to develop and revise standards for aviation and signal units, with those for engineering, explosive ordnance disposal and logistics units currently under consultation with missions. A revision of the standard operating procedures on the evaluation of military headquarters in peacekeeping operations is also under way.

84. The Police Division's performance task force continued to further refine its performance evaluation system.

C. Working with Member States to strengthen the performance of uniformed personnel

1. Strategic force generation

85. Close collaboration between the Secretariat and Member States was essential to maintaining a range of units at different levels of readiness for deployment, despite the pandemic, reaching a total of 262 pledges registered in the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System as at 15 September 2021. Amid the pandemic, new requirements from field missions as part of mission reconfiguration or an increase in authorized strength were fully met in a timely manner through units already registered

and assessed in the System. During the reporting period, 12 military and police units were verified as ready for rapid deployment. Depending on ongoing pandemic-related travel restrictions, assessment and advisory visits and rapid deployment-level verification visits continued to be conducted, as appropriate, either remotely or in-person.

86. Ahead of the Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference, to be held in Seoul in December 2021, the Secretariat has, in collaboration with the Republic of Korea, worked to set pledging priorities in line with Action for Peacekeeping Plus, craft pledging guidelines and facilitate planning for the four preparatory conferences.

2. Predeployment preparations

87. In spite of the pandemic, the Secretariat continued to facilitate predeployment preparations for troop-contributing countries, including by carrying out five in-person assessment and advisory visits. Another 10 were organized remotely. In addition, eight in-person predeployment visits and five pre-rotational visits were organized to assess and validate predeployment preparedness in terms of training, conduct and discipline, equipment readiness, gender inclusivity and military skills.

88. The operational readiness of military units for initial deployment and rotating units with previously identified performance shortfalls is validated in cooperation with troop-contributing countries and deployed military headquarters during military skills validations. Owing to the pandemic, the Department of Peace Operations conducted remote military skills validations to keep track of unit performance in 2020. In total, five remote visits were conducted for infantry battalions and, from January to July 2021, seven were conducted in-person.

89. Generating qualified and geographically balanced numbers of policewomen and men with the required capabilities and operational readiness remains a continuous priority for the Police Division. To this end, it developed guidance to enhance systematic predeployment assessments and validations in a COVID-19 environment.⁷ It also carried out hybrid in-person and virtual predeployment readiness assistance missions to support police-contributing countries.

90. The Department of Operational Support has developed United Nations standards on buddy first aid and field medic assistance. Training has been conducted for senior trainers from troop- and police-contributing countries, who can then pass the training on to the peacekeepers in their own countries. The Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions partnered with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the Prison and Probation Service of Sweden to develop United Nations training standards for government-provided corrections personnel. In addition to core deployment training resources, these standards include specialized training materials for government-provided corrections personnel deploying to peace operations, with special attention to gender responsiveness and updated international human rights standards for prisons.

3. Capacity-building and training

91. The Department of Peace Operations is developing six new predeployment training materials covering infantry battalions, logistics officers, individual police officers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance units and engineering units,

⁷ Department of Peace Operations, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Department of Operational Support, “Temporary arrangements for the assessment of individual police officers and formed police units for deployment to peacekeeping operations and special political missions”, 26 October 2020, and “Transitional measures for uniformed personnel rotations in a COVID-19 environment”, 1 July 2020.

with support from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on the human rights and protection content. They will be rolled out by the end of 2021, subject to pandemic restrictions. Work is also under way on the United Nations police training architecture programme, with all modules to be finished by the end of 2021. Thanks to in-kind support from Member States, the French version of the core predeployment training materials was recently made available to troop- and police-contributing countries through the Peacekeeping Resource Hub. Member States have also made in-kind contributions to translate other subject-specific training materials.

92. For deployed personnel, the Department of Peace Operations, with Member State support, has conducted training in developing and delivering command post exercises. It has followed up with missions to ensure that exercises are conducted to execute plans and prepare contingencies. The Department continues to integrate online delivery elements into training materials and has invested in the development of an online learning management system, procuring instructional design software and developing internal guidance for its use. While increased use of online learning is not cost-free, nor a replacement for face-to-face training, it allows for flexibility.

93. The light coordination mechanism continues its engagement of capacity providers and troop- and police-contributing countries. In late 2021, it will organize the first police-specific meeting with police-contributing countries and training and capacity-building providers. In conjunction with the forthcoming Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference, the mechanism plans to launch a mobile application of its deployment review digital toolkit. The application, developed in cooperation with the Department of Operational Support and 16 Member States, will support the establishment or expansion of a national lessons learned process for troop- and police-contributing countries, allowing them to collect and implement lessons and innovations identified during the preparation and deployment of their contingents.

94. Following the request of the Special Committee to develop streamlined guidance on mobile training teams led by Member States, the Secretariat organized a series of workshops with interested Member States in early 2021 to discuss the way forward. It was agreed that the Secretariat would draft guidance on the matter during the next substantive session. The development of standard operating procedures is under way and will be shared with the Committee.

95. Continuing cuts to the budget of the Integrated Training Service, including a 17 per cent cut for the 2021–2022 period, means that the Department of Peace Operations will reduce the level of training support to troop- and police-contributing countries, as well as to deployed personnel. Over the past 10 years, the average number of countries has been 122. Yet, at the same time, Member States have consistently reduced the level of funding available to peacekeeping training. While some of the funding shortfall has been made up by in-kind contributions and extrabudgetary funding, including the development and management of the light coordination mechanism, it is not possible to provide the same level of support with the yearly reductions in financial resources.

D. Providing effective support to peacekeeping operations

96. Following the launch of management reforms, the Department of Operational Support has provided fast and responsive advice to peacekeeping heads of missions, supporting them with their newly delegated authorities. In 2020, the Department provided operational support and guidance in response to more than 3,900 requests for advice on human resources management from peacekeeping missions. In order to respond to the urgent need for guidance on COVID-19-related human resources

issues, the Department established special service response targets for urgent COVID-19-related queries, successfully reaching a response time of less than one business day.

1. Supporting peacekeeping missions

97. Authority, command and control arrangements are essential to define the roles and responsibilities of leaders at Headquarters and in peacekeeping missions. As part of Action for Peacekeeping Plus, the Department of Peace Operations and field missions have committed to specific deliverables over the next two years to strengthen strategic and operational integration, including through the implementation of authority, command and control practices as codified in the 2019 policy thereon. To strengthen authority, command and control arrangements in field missions, the Department is working to clarify and enhance key management and control functions performed by mission chiefs of staff. This includes ensuring that their crisis management roles, responsibilities and performance are institutionalized. It also entails strengthening mission integration and control structures, including through the integration of civilian and uniformed personnel in field mission planning units.

98. A clear and comprehensive procedure on caveats has not yet been formalized, but will be after approval of the United Nations military manual. To avoid a detrimental impact on mandate implementation, the Office of Military Affairs continuously aims to select contingents without caveats. A mechanism has been established to obtain undeclared caveats from force headquarters on a quarterly basis. A decrease in undeclared caveats has been observed, with 14 reported in 2018, 12 in 2019, 3 in 2020 and 2 in 2021. As at 31 August 2021, 31 undeclared caveats had been identified and addressed with 19 troop-contributing countries, of which 30 were resolved and 1 is still pending.

2. Medical standards and capabilities

99. The Department of Operational Support has introduced health-care quality and patient safety standards for all health-care facilities in missions above level I plus medical facilities. Hospital commanders were trained on the implementation thereof, and virtual assessments of hospitals were carried out. A hospital assessment tool has been developed through which compliance with United Nations medical standards and capabilities is monitored. Hospitals are required to undergo the evaluation in the fifth and tenth month of operations. United Nations standards have been also developed to assess level IV referral hospitals to ensure that they provide the best care to all personnel. Similar standards have been developed for level I facilities and will be released in the coming year. The Division of Health-Care Management and Occupational Safety and Health has established a technical skills framework and credentialing system with the aim of ensuring that health-care providers have the necessary skills, experience and qualifications before their deployment to field duty stations.

3. Aviation

100. All aviation assets in peacekeeping missions are mission-wide assets. The current commercial air fleet is capable of conducting a variety of operational tasks, such as dangerous goods transport, night operations and operations in high-risk scenarios.

101. Joint integrated aviation planning, including the allocation of resources, is essential to minimize caveats and limitations on military aviation units. The current authority, command and control policy integrates military logistical enabling support and commercial assets, clarifying tasking modalities in routine and in extremis

circumstances such as casualty evacuation or quick reaction force. Missions ensure compliance by means of standing approval procedures for tasking on short notice in the case of an operational urgency.

102. The recently established contract performance reporting tool for commercial and military aviation assists Headquarters in reviewing commercial and military aviation performance evaluation reports as part of the audit programme, establishing the performance level of the operator or military unit and its compliance with terms and requirements.

103. Aviation safety performance, including accident prevention efforts, is managed and monitored through the innovative and interactive iAviationSafety platform in field missions.

4. Supporting innovative approaches to equipment serviceability and sustainability

104. The Department of Operational Support continues to encourage the deployment and sustainable maintenance of contingent-owned equipment required to meet mandated tasks in field missions. The Department notes six possible arrangements for the provision of major equipment and maintenance as agreed by the General Assembly (see [A/75/121](#)). Quarterly outreach to troop- and police-contributing countries occurs on the basis of verification reports received from field missions, with a view to mitigating identified gaps in deployed capabilities. Performance metrics derived from the reimbursement standards for formed units are incorporated into the integrated peacekeeping performance and accountability framework and are also integral to the performance meetings led by the Department of Peace Operations and supported by the Department of Operational Support. The Secretariat has begun to prepare for the 2023 Working Group on Contingent-Owned Equipment, under the leadership of the Department of Operational Support. The triennial meetings of the Working Group are intended for the General Assembly to agree upon any required revisions to the reimbursement framework for contingent-owned equipment deployed in formed units. The Department also manages the triangular partnership programme and supports the light coordination mechanism.

5. Technology and innovation in peacekeeping

105. The strategy for the digital transformation of United Nations peacekeeping underscores the commitment of the United Nations to pursue digitization, with the aim of enhancing the safety and security of peacekeepers and strengthening mandate implementation. The strategy is aimed at delivering timely, well-managed, integrated analysis for decision-making; empowering technology-aware, data-literate and innovation-minded staff to monitor evolving technology-related threats and opportunities; and providing access to tools, processes, know-how, resources and support to innovate and respond effectively to threats and opportunities.

106. The strategy, which will be implemented over a three-year period, sets an ambitious agenda centred on four goals:

- (a) Drive innovation to evolve and capitalize on technological innovation;
- (b) Maximize the potential of current and new technology, through technological solutions and by building capacity and culture necessary to carry a digital transformation forward;
- (c) Strengthen the detection, analysis and response to potential threats in a timely and integrated manner;

(d) Ensure the responsible use of technologies, in alignment with the values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and norms and standards of international law.

107. The Secretariat is developing a phased implementation plan to move towards more agile, data-driven and technology-enabled peacekeeping. Among the priorities in the future is the phased introduction of modern data and digital architecture and platforms in alignment with the Secretary-General's data strategy, leading to advanced analysis capabilities that use frontier technologies to provide actionable information. Platforms that enable the more effective use of data will be implemented along with relevant training and capacity-building for uniformed and civilian peacekeepers, including on ensuring that units from troop- and police-contributing countries are equipped with the digital capacities, tools and data necessary to support their tasking. These undertakings will leverage and build upon the achievements of the United Nations C4ISR Academy for Peace Operations.

108. The strategy recognizes the importance of dedicated capacities for effective technology innovation and the integration of digital technology. In support of the strategy, the Partnership for Technology in Peacekeeping will continue to provide a platform for high-level technology engagement between the United Nations and its Member States, ensuring that strategic challenges are appropriately matched with investments.

109. Building on existing investments and successful pilots in the areas of camp security and early warning systems, further technology investments will focus on base, convoy and movement protection, medical care and disease surveillance. The Secretariat will prioritize the equitable distribution of services across missions, including in remote sites and mobile deployments, as well as additional investments in mission cybersecurity.

E. The way forward

110. The past year was marked by a consolidation of the gains made in the peacekeeping performance agenda, as well as setting out the path forward through the development of the integrated peacekeeping performance and accountability framework. The framework will be reviewed regularly by the Secretariat to ensure that peacekeeping performance and accountability are continually enhanced.

IX. Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

A. Strengthening national capacity and ownership

111. Despite pandemic-related constraints, peacekeeping missions continued to make important contributions to strengthening national capacities to prevent conflict and consolidate inclusive peace. They provided strategic and operational support at many levels and in many mandated areas, in particular those affecting governance, human rights, the rule of law and the security sector, with a focus on building trust in institutions, delivering services and meeting the needs of populations.

112. In Mali, MINUSMA supported the return of judicial authorities and the reopening of courts in Mopti, Gao and Timbuktu Regions to ensure that people have access to the State justice system, and supported the creation of an early warning system to prevent radicalization and mass escapes from prisons. To bolster national security sector governance, MINUSMA assisted the internal oversight bodies of the Malian armed forces, police and gendarmerie.

113. In the Central African Republic, with MINUSCA support, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Security vetted candidates for enrolment in the defence and internal security forces. The Mission provided weapons and ammunition training for national defence and internal security forces while supporting efforts to counter small arms and light weapons proliferation. It continued to support the redeployment of justice and corrections institutions, the implementation of the national justice reform strategy and the demilitarization of the prison service policy.

114. In South Sudan, UNMISS supported the progressive establishment of the rule of law, including in places of return for internally displaced persons, while supporting the establishment, preparation and deployment of mobile civilian, military and special statutory customary courts across the country. The Mission continued to support the development of security sector transformation models, including with advice on the unification of forces and community-centred approaches to security.

115. Missions continued to support national police reform and capacity-building. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO continued to support the Congolese national police by facilitating training on community-oriented policing, public order management, human rights promotion and protection, preventing and addressing serious organized crime, police intelligence, evidence-based policing and forensics, reaching over 22,000 personnel, including over 2,000 women. United Nations police provided similar assistance to the Malian security forces and the internal security forces of the Central African Republic.

116. In collaboration with United Nations entities, peace operations' support for the rule of law is aimed at reducing the risk of escalation into violent conflict, helping to build more resilient, inclusive institutions, addressing the legacy of human rights abuses and contributing to structural transformations to achieve long-term stability and sustainable development.

B. Transition planning and analysis

117. In its annual open debate on peacekeeping, held on 8 September 2021, and with the unanimous adoption of resolution [2594 \(2021\)](#), the Security Council highlighted the strategic nature of United Nations transitions in support of peacebuilding objectives and the development of sustainable peace, based on national ownership and in line with national plans. Early and integrated planning of United Nations transitions and dedicated cross-pillar support from Headquarters are essential and must systematically integrate gender analysis and expertise.

118. In the Sudan, the drawdown of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur involved transferring knowledge on mandated programmes, including the State liaison functions, to the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan and the United Nations country team to ensure adequate support for national priority areas. Building on lessons learned from recent transition processes in Haiti and the Sudan, the Department of Peace Operations issued a publication on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and transition planning processes, providing a series of recommendations to assist practitioners in preparing for and contributing to transition processes.

119. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO and the United Nations country team developed a detailed transition plan with benchmarks, in close collaboration with the national Government. Programmatic support and funding for both the Mission and the country team were stepped up to address transition priorities such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, security sector reform, the rule of law, policing, justice and corrections, as well as the nationalization of all

explosive ordnance disposal operations. A growing partnership with the World Bank complements these efforts.

C. Strengthening coherence among United Nations system actors

120. Coherence across the United Nations system in support of national stakeholders is essential for building and sustaining peace, especially through integrated assessments and planning. For example, in the Central African Republic, MINUSCA worked with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to address tension generated by cross-border transhumance. In South Sudan, the Mine Action Service supported the World Food Programme in the survey and clearance of food drop zones, facilitating food delivery to over 38,000 people, while its support to the United Nations Children's Fund enabled a pipeline project to supply water to approximately 110,000 people. In South Sudan, the Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law facilitated the establishment of the first joint rule of law project to provide technical support in addressing conflict-related sexual violence.

121. The Peacebuilding Commission plays an increasingly vital role in enhancing coherence and the overall performance of the United Nations system in delivering on peacebuilding. Its advice to the Security Council on MINUSCA mandate renewals provided peacebuilding perspectives by facilitating inclusive and nationally owned discussions with a broad range of actors from within and outside the United Nations. In the past year, the Commission broadened its engagement with a regional focus, for example in the Sahel, as well as in thematic areas such as: the women and peace and security and youth and peace and security agendas, institution-building, the COVID-19 pandemic and the contribution of peacekeeping to peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

122. Assessed programmatic funding can facilitate whole-of-system approaches as seen in the United Nations transition in Darfur. The Peacebuilding Fund is a valuable tool for collaboration across pillars and has allowed the United Nations country team to address critical peacebuilding gaps in peacekeeping settings by providing fast and catalytic financial support. In 2020, over 25 per cent of investment in the Fund was in peacekeeping settings.

123. Close collaboration with international financial institutions is critical to building national capacities to sustain peace. Following the adoption of its strategy for fragility, conflict and violence (2020–2025), the World Bank is consulting with the United Nations in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and South Sudan on the allocation of new financing in support of Governments' prevention and transition strategies and to build capacities to address conflict and fragility risks. Collaboration is ongoing in areas such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, governance, social protection and responding to the pandemic.

D. Supporting inclusive and participatory approaches

124. To foster sustainable solutions, peacekeeping operations promote the participation and inclusion of different segments of the population, working closely with women leaders and youth groups to expand political spaces. In South Sudan, UNMISS facilitated a grass-roots peace forum to identify priority areas for promoting the participation of young people in peace processes. In Mali, MINUSMA supported a series of workshops involving a broad group of civil society actors and women leaders to engage the Government on its action plan and transition road map.

125. United Nations peacekeeping also plays an important role in facilitating dialogue between State institutions and local actors. In South Sudan, UNMISS facilitated four governor's forums to increase trust between government officials and communities by jointly identifying key priorities and associated remedial actions.

126. Missions also promoted inclusive community dialogue to prevent, mitigate and resolve intercommunal conflict, including by supporting community-based early warning mechanisms that include women (for example, 46.5 per cent in MINUSCA) and continuing to implement community violence reduction projects with and for ex-combatants and their communities. Moreover, in the Central African Republic, MINUSCA facilitated dozens of community dialogues and capacity-building workshops for peace actors to establish local peace and reconciliation committees that successfully managed the resolution of 39 intercommunal conflicts. In South Sudan, UNMISS supported the deployment of special mobile courts led by statutory judges and supported by traditional leaders to better address intercommunal fighting.

E. The way forward

127. Peacekeeping contributes directly to peacebuilding, supporting processes and reforms in areas in which it has developed considerable expertise, including security sector reform, the rule of law, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and community violence reduction. As the pandemic exacerbates fragility risks, political and security efforts need to go hand in hand with investments in peacebuilding and inclusive development.

X. Partnerships

A. Partnerships with regional organizations

1. Strategic context of partnerships

128. Partnerships with international, regional and subregional organizations and arrangements remain vital to meeting peace and security objectives, as set out in the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and the Declaration of Shared Commitments. In the past year, the complexity of challenges emanating from the pandemic has emphasized the importance of mutually beneficial partnerships to deliver results.

129. The United Nations has continued and – when required – adapted to virtual formats and established mechanisms to support coordination on evolving situations. With the African Union, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, among others, the United Nations exchanged lessons learned on the response to the pandemic, including strategies to safeguard mission personnel and operations as well as host populations.

2. United Nations-African Union cooperation and capacity-building

130. During the reporting period, joint United Nations-African Union high-level field visits were conducted to the Central African Republic, Ethiopia and South Sudan. The United Nations Secretariat and the African Union Commission continue to conduct regular high-level discussions and virtual horizon-scanning meetings.

131. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO worked with African Union representatives to support the Government's peace and security agenda. In the Central African Republic, regular consultations were held between the two organizations to coordinate efforts to revitalize the peace process in a context of heightened political tension, ongoing military operations and a deepening

humanitarian crisis. The two organizations also continued to coordinate and work closely to operationalize the African Union military observer mission in the Central African Republic.

132. In Somalia, the United Nations remained engaged with the African Union to support the ongoing operations of AMISOM through the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) and the United Nations Office to the African Union. In addition, the Department of Operational Support and UNSOS worked closely with the African Union Commission and AMISOM to harmonize practices and implement COVID-19 prevention and containment measures, including the inoculation of AMISOM troops and the provision of training through the Mine Action Service to mitigate the threat posed by improvised explosive devices.⁸

133. The United Nations continued to build upon its close partnership with the African Union Commission in the areas of joint planning, deployment, management and transition of African Union peace support operations, while deepening and optimizing technical advice to ongoing operations mandated by the African Union and the African Standby Force. The United Nations Office to the African Union provided support in the review of African Union training policies and directives and in the design, development and implementation of certain training and capacity development initiatives. The United Nations also continued to provide policing advisory services to the African Union and its member States, representatives of which participated virtually in curriculum development groups of the United Nations police training architecture, as well as working groups on the review and revision of United Nations police guidance documents.

134. The Department of Operational Support and the United Nations Office to the African Union continued to explore means of enabling the African Union to have access to United Nations services and equipment, including strategic deployment stocks, on a user-pays basis. The arrangement will build on the support model concept, whereby the United Nations and the African Union collaborate as strategic and operational partners and service providers on the basis of complementarity and comparative advantages, enabled through the joint planning, deployment, management and transition of African Union peace support operations. Engagement also continued to reinforce African Union operational support expertise through the knowledge and expertise exchange programme, including by deepening collaboration in the areas of supply chain and knowledge management and by enhancing mutual understanding through the remote sharing of expertise and joint learning opportunities. The Department continued to bolster the capacity of the African Union Commission to undertake security sector reform assessments and coordination.

135. OHCHR, in coordination with the United Nations Office to the African Union and the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, continued to collaborate on a joint project proposal to support the establishment and operationalization of a compliance framework for African Union peace operations on human rights, international humanitarian law and conduct and discipline.

3. Partnership with other regional and subregional organizations

136. The United Nations and the European Union continued to advance their partnership under the priorities set out for crisis management and peacekeeping (2019–2021), in particular on women and peace and security, cooperation between

⁸ For more information, see the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on issues of peace and security in Africa, including on the work of the United Nations Office to the African Union (S/2021/763).

missions and operations in the field, the rule of law, policing, security sector reform and transitions. The Department of Peace Operations worked with the European Union to advance the women and peace and security agenda in the Central African Republic and Mali in the context of the United Nations/European Union Steering Committee on Crisis Management. Joint work with the African Union was strengthened through a joint conflict and peace analysis in the Central African Republic. The Department of Operational Support continued to work with the European Union to facilitate cooperation and promote the benefits of leveraging operational support services in the context of their respective missions and operations in the field.

137. The Department of Peace Operations, the Department of Operational Support and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization began to implement a package of capacity-building support for United Nations peacekeeping training in military performance evaluation, medical care, countering improvised explosive devices and signals and communications. The two departments also shared best practices and experiences with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization on data collection for women and peace and security, the protection of civilians and child protection.

138. The Department of Peace Operations, the Department of Operational Support and the Collective Security Treaty Organization established a joint working group to facilitate more regular dialogue in support of potential contributions to United Nations peacekeeping. The Department of Operational Support continues to explore with the Collective Security Treaty Organization opportunities for collaboration in the areas of short-duration logistics support and the provision of equipment and training.

139. The Department of Operational Support, through the Global Service Centre in Brindisi, Italy, continued to strengthen its cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on collaborative arrangements. In this context, the Department shared information and extended support in the areas of procurement, training and geospatial information systems.

140. Through the triangular partnership programme, the Department of Operational Support remained committed to strengthening the peacekeeping engineering capabilities of troop-contributing countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and surrounding regions by offering both remote and on-site courses.

141. The Department of Peace Operations, with support from the United Nations liaison office to the League of Arab States following its establishment in June 2019, continues to support effective dialogue between United Nations peacekeeping operations and the League.

B. Partnerships with host Governments

142. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Government, MONUSCO and the United Nations country team developed a transition plan to operationalize the joint strategy on the progressive and phased drawdown of the Mission. In August 2021, the MONUSCO Intervention Brigade resumed joint offensive operations with the Congolese armed forces to reduce the threat of armed groups in the east, in compliance with the United Nations human rights due diligence policy.

143. In the Central African Republic, a new Government was appointed in June 2021 that included a minister to monitor and follow up on the Political Agreement. Building on the renewed commitment to the implementation of the Agreement, MINUSCA continued to strengthen constructive partnership with the Government to implement its mandate.

144. Host Governments do not consistently adhere to their legal obligation to cooperate with peace operations, and sometimes actively obstruct missions' efforts. This can imperil the missions' ability to implement their mandates, endanger the safety and security of personnel and lengthen the duration of operations. Furthermore, the cooperation of host Governments – as articulated in the terms of a status-of-forces agreement – can be understood as a proxy for consent. The number of violations of such agreements has almost doubled in 2021 (225) compared with 2019 (113). It is worth noting that the number of violations of the status-of-forces agreement in UNMISS has dropped significantly over the past four months.

145. The Secretariat continues to work with field missions to establish a tracking system for violations of status-of-forces agreements so that peacekeeping operations can systematically document them, with the aim of enabling trend analysis and allowing the data to inform operational planning, situational awareness and reporting, including the monitoring and resolution of risks.

C. Triangular partnerships

146. Strengthening triangular cooperation between the Security Council, troop- and police-contributing countries and the Secretariat has been at the heart of efforts by the Secretariat to strengthen unity of purpose and the performance and accountability of peacekeeping operations. Beyond the informal and formal briefings to the Council and troop- and police-contributing countries and individual consultations, the Secretariat engaged with Council members and/or troop- and police-contributing countries through the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations. The Secretariat also supported the participation of troop- and police-contributing countries at all high-level events on countries hosting peacekeeping operations that were held under the auspices of the United Nations.

D. Triangular partnerships for the provision of training and equipment to troop- and police-contributing countries

147. The Department of Operational Support continued to strengthen the engineering, medical and technological capacities of uniformed peacekeepers through the triangular partnership project. Launched in 2015, the project brings together the United Nations, Member States with expertise and resources and troop- and police-contributing countries to strengthen the capabilities of uniformed peacekeepers by providing training and equipment.

148. Following the successful completion of engineering courses under the triangular partnership project in Morocco and Viet Nam in early 2020, all other on-site courses were cancelled up to mid-2021 owing to the pandemic. After putting in place comprehensive COVID-19 preventive measures, on-site engineering training courses resumed in Kenya in September 2021, with the participation of trainees from countries in Africa.

149. During the pandemic, the Department of Operational Support and the Office of Information and Communications Technology developed new remote and mixed-delivery training courses, including on physical security infrastructure; environmental management in engineering; construction process management; and command, control, communications, computers intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance and camp security technologies.

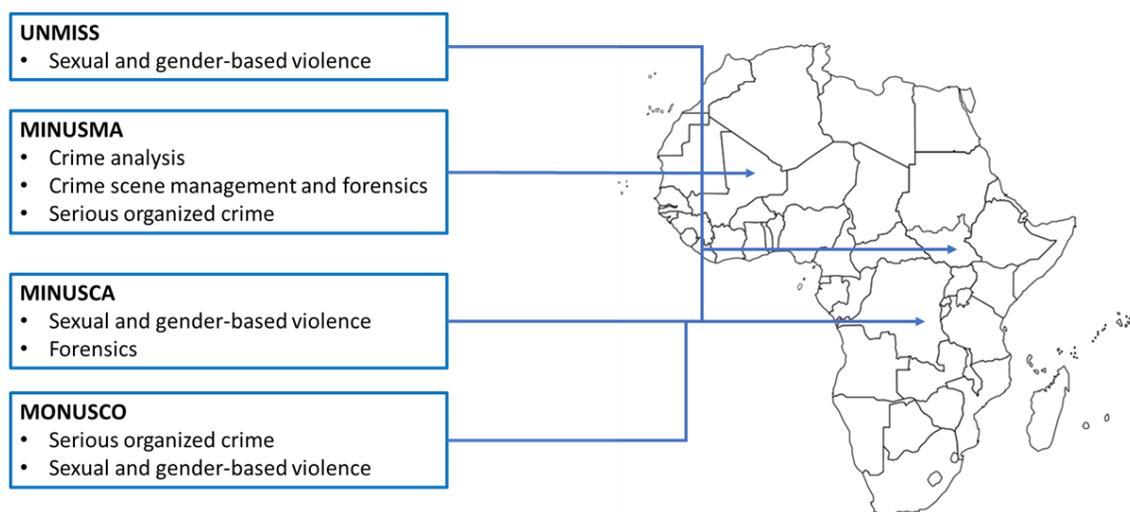
150. Through the triangular partnership project, the Department of Operational Support and the Office of Information and Communications Technology launched a telemedicine pilot project in March 2021 to improve overall access to health care in MINUSMA, MINUSCA, MONUSCO and UNMISS. The first workshop to determine

the priority medical needs and challenges to be addressed with the support of telemedicine was held in August 2021.

151. The Police Division continued to engage with Member States on strategic and operational policing matters, including ahead of the third United Nations Chiefs of Police Summit in 2022 and by supporting the deployment of specialized police teams. Missions have communicated new demands in the areas of community-oriented policing, preventing and responding to serious organized crime, gender-responsive policing, environmental protection and preservation, as well as intelligence-led policing.

Figure VIII

Specialized police teams in peacekeeping operations



E. The way forward

152. Partnerships remain vital to leveraging the comparative advantages of diverse actors working with and alongside United Nations peacekeeping operations. Good cooperation and complementary efforts at the strategic and operational levels can enhance the collective impact and effectiveness. Operational support partnerships at the field level will enhance crisis response, including by relying on partners to provide specialized and surge capacities. In this regard, the Department of Operational Support will integrate partners into its support architecture to shape future engagement. The United Nations remains committed to strengthening existing cooperation and exploring opportunities to collaborate with partners to mobilize collective capacities that are vital in responding to ongoing and emergent peace and security challenges.

XI. Conduct of peacekeepers and peacekeeping operations

A. Conduct of peacekeepers

1. Conduct and discipline

153. A high-level meeting held within the scope of Action for Peacekeeping Plus highlighted Member State and Secretariat good practices to strengthen the conduct of peacekeeping personnel. During the meeting, participants reinforced their

commitment to addressing partnership challenges, including by taking robust prevention measures, launching effective and timely investigations, ensuring that sanctions are commensurate with the gravity of misconduct and supporting victims and children born as a consequence of sexual exploitation and abuse. The Secretariat will continue to engage with Member States to share good practices in conduct and discipline more broadly while strengthening efforts to facilitate paternity and child support claims related to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, which will be the subject of a technical-level meeting being planned.

154. Predeployment and induction training, as well as awareness-raising activities, for all peacekeeping personnel continue to be conducted on the United Nations standards of conduct and the obligation and means to report all forms of misconduct. The Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, in collaboration with the Department of Peace Operations, is reviewing measures in place to further prevent and address sexual harassment, including through training and awareness-raising.

155. Vetting of personnel continues, with the names of all individuals who are recruited or deployed to United Nations peacekeeping missions checked against records of prior misconduct in the case management tracking system. In addition, information on substantiated sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment matters are entered into the Clear Check database for verification by United Nations system entities, as part of their own recruitment processes.

156. The victim assistance tracking system enables more effective follow-up of assistance and support provided to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. A secure database to support the work of the standing review committee with regard to the implementation of Security Council resolution [2272 \(2016\)](#) was also launched. Once it is in full use, the database will serve as a repository of information and allow for more efficient analysis of matters under review by the committee.

157. There were 74 allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse reported in peacekeeping missions during the period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, and 441 allegations of other misconduct during the same period. Current data on allegations, as well as other forms of misconduct, may be found on the conduct and discipline website (<https://conduct.unmissions.org>).

158. Preventing sexual exploitation and abuse remains one of the highest priorities and may require swift and determined action, such as that implemented after the receipt of reports of extremely serious allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse and failures of command and control by members of one of the troop-contributing countries in MINUSCA. Investigations will seek to establish the facts regarding such allegations, but the fight against sexual exploitation and abuse must remain at the forefront of United Nations mandates and be integrated into all aspects of the programming and planning of peace operations. In partnership with Member States, the United Nations should continue to strengthen the integration of efforts between Headquarters, missions and troop-contributing countries directed towards effective misconduct risk management at all levels and stages of operational planning, in particular in planning for the deployment of troops. Risk management must be factored into mandate discussions on the capabilities needed by missions. Together, Member States and the United Nations should deploy personnel who are certified to uphold the highest standards of integrity and have received predeployment training. This should be reinforced upon deployment, and commanders, leaders and managers at all levels must be held accountable for the conduct of personnel under their responsibility and for modelling appropriate behaviour. Perpetrators must be held accountable through sanctions proportionate to the seriousness of substantiated allegations, including through criminal law. The United Nations must take

responsibility for the adverse impact and other consequences of these wrongs on those that it is charged to protect. Victims' rights to robust assistance and support must be recognized and realized. The rights of children born as a consequence of sexual exploitation and abuse must be fulfilled through the recognition of paternity and the provision of associated benefits equal to those of children born to other nationals of the country of origin of the perpetrator. Member States are responsible for removing obstacles to criminal accountability and the realization of the rights of mothers and children affected by acts of sexual exploitation and abuse that may exist in their national laws.

2. Certification of prospective personnel

159. The Department of Peace Operations is committed to selecting qualified candidates for deployment as senior officials and United Nations military and police experts on mission. All troop- and police-contributing countries are required to certify that their prospective personnel have not been involved in criminal offences, have not been convicted, are not currently under investigation and are not being prosecuted for any criminal offence, fraud or corruption, or any violation of international human rights law or international humanitarian law. Troop- and police-contributing countries should also certify that they are not aware of any allegations against nominated candidates of their involvement, by act or omission, in the commission of any act that amounts to a violation of international human rights law or international humanitarian law. Candidates for police and military positions are required to submit a declaration self-certifying the above in their applications. For senior posts, the Secretariat submits the personal documents to OHCHR for human rights screening.

B. Conduct of peacekeeping operations

1. Environmental management

160. The Secretariat is in the process of implementing the second phase of its six-year strategy to improve environmental performance and risk management in peace operations. Strategic gains in phase one included improved accountability through the institution of site-level data gathering and analysis, as well improvements in risk management, including the elimination of significant wastewater risk in missions. Strategic opportunities for phase two include renewable energy and the potential for leaving a more positive legacy for host communities through the physical footprint of missions.

161. In support of the environment strategy, a key focus for the past year has been on supporting missions in the development and implementation of energy infrastructure management plans and waste management plans. These are multi-year improvement plans that allow for more detailed analysis and provide Member States with a longer-term picture of needs and plans in these sectors in each mission. The plans have now been developed in 14 missions. Technical support has been provided to missions by Headquarters across all five pillars of the environment strategy. Around 200 requests for (mainly, at this stage, remote) support were made by missions in 2020 and 2021, including in relation to risk assessment and management, capacity-building, planning support and other areas. In-person technical assistance is now resuming.

162. In addition to seeking pledges from troop- and police-contributing countries to provide contingents with the capacity to generate renewable energy, the Department of Operational Support has signed a partnership with the International Renewable Energy Agency to support host Governments with their regulatory frameworks, with a view to increasing opportunities for missions to outsource their renewable energy supply.

163. Ongoing work to develop technical assistance continues, including the recent promulgation of an environmental handbook for military commanders. Additional awareness-raising and training materials are being developed to support the launch of these reference documents, including the development of a new environmental awareness programme for military and police formed units, through the triangular partnership programme.

2. Human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces

164. The United Nations continues the system-wide implementation of the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces. MINUSCA, for example, continued to employ the policy in efforts to reduce human rights violations by the national defence and security forces. MINUSMA also continued to apply the policy to its support for the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, not only to mitigate risks of human rights violations but also to build the human rights capacity of the Joint Force. In Somalia, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, in coordination with UNSOS, prepared a risk assessment for the policy to ensure compliance with the policy for support to an additional 3,000 Somali security forces personnel in accordance with Security Council resolution [2520 \(2020\)](#) and continued to strengthen implementation of measures under the policy for the support provided to AMISOM. The United Nations is also strengthening relevant mechanisms of the policy at the mission and Headquarters levels, including the role of mission leadership in implementing the policy across relevant mission activities. To further progress, the United Nations and Member States must work together to: (a) maintain dedicated resources and capacity to implement the policy; (b) support non-United Nations security forces receiving United Nations support to implement the risk mitigation measures of the policy; and (c) engage with bilateral and multilateral partners to coordinate their support to non-United Nations security forces to maximize the impact of the policy.

C. The way forward

165. In spite of the challenges posed by the pandemic, the Secretariat has continued to engage Member States to bolster collective efforts to enhance conduct and discipline and bolster standards of conduct. The Secretariat looks forward to collaborating with Member States in implementing the environmental policy promulgated in 2019. In continuing their collaboration to implement the human rights due diligence policy, the Secretariat and Member States can build on progress to date.

XII. Observations

166. During the reporting period, United Nations peacekeeping operations continued to fulfil their mandates in difficult conditions made even more challenging by the COVID-19 pandemic. The changing environment presents not only challenges but also opportunities to use this transformative moment to bolster peacekeeping.

167. Action for Peacekeeping Plus, the implementation strategy for the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, is aimed at capitalizing on this transformative moment for peacekeeping. Addressing the areas within Action for Peacekeeping Plus will be essential to enhancing the effectiveness and impact of peacekeeping. As such, the United Nations has developed a plan to take it forward both at Headquarters and within field missions. It is also establishing a monitoring framework designed to measure the results of its implementation to the greatest extent feasible. The new

strategy for the digital transformation of United Nations peacekeeping will be a key stepping stone in this regard. More than three years after its launch, Action for Peacekeeping has enabled the United Nations to strengthen the effectiveness of operations, and Action for Peacekeeping Plus will deepen and further the progress made.

168. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that the Action for Peacekeeping initiative is a shared agenda, one that requires an impact-oriented collective commitment to strengthen United Nations peacekeeping. This objective can best be achieved if all peacekeeping partners, in their various capacities, fully play their roles. In this context, I would like to highlight the centrality of cross-pillar integration of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in establishing a common vision, including predicting and adapting to emerging crises from the outset of a United Nations presence in a country setting, and in ensuring the complementarity and safeguarding of investments. I look to the forthcoming Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference in Seoul as an opportunity for all parties to peacekeeping to come together to commit to improving peacekeeping operations in line with Action for Peacekeeping Plus, including by providing concrete pledges.

169. I would like to call on Member States and all peacekeeping stakeholders to fulfil their commitments, including by providing missions with much needed political support and the capacities and capabilities to effectively execute their mandates in what are often some of the most challenging environments.

170. I would also like to take this opportunity to offer my sincerest gratitude for the fortitude and commitment shown by contributors of troops and police, who continued to implement mission mandates amid increasingly volatile contexts and the pandemic.

171. I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to staff within peacekeeping operations, whose resilience and dedication enabled the United Nations to continue its efforts to pursue peace and security amid a challenging context.

172. I also thank the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations for continuing to structure its report along the themes of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, which represent impetus for positive change. I am heartened by the high level of support enjoyed by peacekeeping and the initiative, and hope that this will extend to Action for Peacekeeping Plus.

173. Acting on their respective obligations as peacekeeping stakeholders and bringing to bear their respective strengths, Member States, the Secretariat and other partners can fulfil their shared responsibility and ensure that peacekeeping – a unique tool of multilateralism – can continue to meet the challenges of international peace and security.