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*Imtiaz Pervez*

## **THE POTENTIAL FOR GLOBAL SOUTH-LED UNPKO GOVERNANCE IN A CHANGING WORLD ORDER: BANGLADESH PERSPECTIVE**

### **Abstract**

The UNPKO has expanded its outlook, scope and mandate over time to concur with different shifts in global politics since its inception. After the Cold War, the UNPKO is standing on the verge of another transitional shift, particularly in a changing world order characterised by regional tensions, global security crises and non-traditional security threats. Moreover, the North-South divide in the UNPKO governance mechanism is once again relevant, especially for pushing towards a meaningful role of the South in a changing world order. The paper lays out a picture of the domination of the global north in terms of policymaking in the peacekeeping mission. It argues that the global South is performing a significant role in the UNPKO security governance, particularly in the context of changing world order. Using qualitative research methods, the paper contends that the global South, through its leadership, interest-based regional coordination and common security imperatives, can facilitate an inclusive model of UNPKO governance while also reducing the North-South gap in terms of the decision-making process. The paper also analyses Bangladesh as a representative of the global South to explain the implications of such South-led security governance for the country. It argues that Bangladesh, among many other countries of the global South, posits a significant potential for such governance paradigm with regional and global leadership implications.

**Keywords:** UNPKO, Global South, Changing World Order.

### **1. Introduction**

UN peacekeeping has been one of the key instruments in the post-World War II (WWII) era with an aim to end global armed conflict, facilitating peacebuilding and

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**Imtiaz Pervez** is Major at Army War Game Centre, Momenshahi Cantonment, Mymensingh, Bangladesh. His email address is: [imtiazpervez1984@gmail.com](mailto:imtiazpervez1984@gmail.com)

peacemaking in a post-conflict environment. For over 74 years, UN peacekeeping operations (UNPKO) has served more than 70 missions and has deployed over a million personnel in different conflict-ridden regions of Africa, Europe and Asia.<sup>1</sup> The importance of peacekeeping has only increased over time by expanding not only to post-conflict peacemaking and peacebuilding but also to multidimensional engagements such as laying out comprehensive peace agreements, sustainable peace practices, institutionalising rule of law, and disarming and reintegration of former belligerents.<sup>2</sup> The UN peacekeeping has been playing the principal role in the world's peacekeeping enterprises accumulating over US\$6.45 billion yearly budget while operating 12 missions in different regions with the deployment of 70,000 troops and personnel.<sup>3</sup>

Several factors such as the rapid development of a technology-driven world economy, climate change impact, the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic as well as highly volatile regional instability steamed by the Russia-Ukraine conflict are making peacekeeping mandate a very complicated issue. The UN has been playing the role of authoritative guiding body in security governance, which enjoys certain power derived from its universal membership, capacity and legitimate role in defining global norms, directing the rules of guidelines and formulating decision-making principles.<sup>4</sup> The global character of the UN's legitimacy has enabled it to sustain its pragmatic relevance from the twentieth century to the twenty-first century. The Department of Peace Operations (DPO) has been functioning as an integral institution for maintaining stability, managing conflicts and assisting ceasefires and armistice as a form of global security governance since the Cold War era.<sup>5</sup> However, the twenty-first-century's security governance is based on the ideological precepts of the twentieth century, and the results would not be without disastrous consequences. This can be seen in the growing challenges that UNPKO is facing in the United Nations Assistance Mission

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<sup>1</sup> "Our Peacekeepers," United Nations Peacekeeping, Last accessed October 20, 2022, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/our-peacekeepers>

<sup>2</sup> Spencer Feingold, "Who Are the Blue Helmets? UN Peacekeeping, explained," World Economic Forum, Last accessed September 21, 2021, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/09/who-are-the-blue-helmets-un-peacekeeping-explained/>

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Forti, "The 2022 UN Peacekeeping Budget: Signs of Progress or a Fleeting Moment of Consensus?" *IPI Global Observatory*, Last accessed July 20, 2022, <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2022/07/2022-un-peacekeeping-budget/>; "Our History," United Nations Peacekeeping, Last accessed October 26, 2022, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/our-history>

<sup>4</sup> Heikki Patomäki, *The Political Economy of Global Security: War, Future Crises and Changes in Global Governance* (London: Routledge, 2008).

<sup>5</sup> S. Krishnan, "UN Peacekeeping, Responsibility to Protect and Humanitarian Intervention," *India Quarterly* 76, no. 1 (2020): 120–35, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0974928419901198>.

for Rwanda (UNAMR), the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM I), the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH).<sup>6</sup>

These developments surged the concern that the UN peacekeeping missions in a changing world order, for example in the drag-on missions in Darfur, Syria and Sudan have shown very little progress in reaching a convincing reconciliation.<sup>7</sup> Aside from the external impediments, internal inconsistency stemming from the power gap in the UNPKO governance structure has been one of the major concerns in UN peacekeeping operations. Even in a shrinking budget contribution trend, dominant powerful countries such as P5 members along with Canada and Japan hold a significant stake in the financial contribution in the UN peacekeeping. In contrast, countries from the global South including Asia, Africa, and Latin America are providing 92 per cent of troops for all the UN missions.<sup>8</sup> This disparity in finance and troops' contribution has a spillover effect on the peacekeeping decision-making process and policy-making executive roles usually dominated by the top financial contributors.

Since 1988, Bangladesh has been extensively engaged in various UN Peace Support Operations. From its first engagement in the United Nations Iran-Iraq military observer group mission (UNIIMOG), Bangladesh has participated in over 54 peacekeeping operations in 40 countries with a contribution of around 146,000 troops from the Armed Forces division.<sup>9</sup> The number is even quite higher, combining all of the uniform personnel standing around 175,000 troops. The country has secured first position in troops' contribution to the UKPKO for the consecutive years 2021 and 2022. Currently, Bangladesh has 5896 peacekeepers deployed in 9 countries in different capacities.<sup>10</sup> This paper delineates future implications of the South-led UNPKO governance for small countries by analysing the case of Bangladesh.

The paper has taken cues from Emmanuel Wallerstein's distinction of North and South in terms of developed vs developing countries. In broader terms, the

<sup>6</sup> Alex J. Bellamy and Charles T. Hunt, "Twenty-First Century UN Peace Operations: Protection, Force and the Changing Security Environment," *International Affairs* 91, no. 6 (2015): 1277–1298, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24539055>.

<sup>7</sup> Kai Michael Kenkel and Conor Foley, "Responding to the Crisis in United Nations Peace Operations," *Contemporary Security Policy* 42, no. 2 (2021): 189-196.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas G. Weiss and Giovanna Kuele, "The Global South and UN Peace Operations," E-International Relations, Last accessed December 26, 2022, <https://www.e-ir.info/2019/02/03/the-global-south-and-un-peace-operations/>.

<sup>9</sup> "Bangladesh in UN Peace Operation," *Armed Forces Division*, Last accessed October 26, 2022, <https://afd.gov.bd/un-peacekeeping/bangladesh-in-un-peace-operation>.

<sup>10</sup> Rashed Uz Zaman and Niloy Ranjan Biswas, "Contributor Profile: Bangladesh," *International Peace Institute*, 2013, [https://www.ipinst.org/images/pdfs/bangladesh\\_biswas-rashed\\_130524.pdf](https://www.ipinst.org/images/pdfs/bangladesh_biswas-rashed_130524.pdf).

North refers to North America, most of Europe, Japan and Australia, while the South refers to the rest, mainly covering much of Asia, Africa and South America.<sup>11</sup> Global North possesses greater influence and dominance over the knowledge management, policy research and decision-making process of the peacekeeping upper echelon.<sup>12</sup> Scholars also think that the division between global North and South is strategic and epistemological in which the South is socially, economically, financially, politically, culturally, and academically marginalised through the history of colonialism and neocolonialism.<sup>13</sup> In terms of peacekeeping and peacekeeping governance, the idea also represents a dominance of the P5 countries of UN Security Council (UNSC): the United States (US), China, France, Russia and the United Kingdom (UK).<sup>14</sup> To reduce this gap, emerging powers from the global South including China, Brazil, Indonesia are trying to assert their ambitions to play a more active role in the UNPKO decision-making process.

Against the backdrop of a changing world order and contested power relations in the UNPKO governance nexus, the paper asks the followings questions: what role does the global South play in UNPKO governance? And, how can the global South lead the UNPKO governance in a changing world order? In line with this, the paper also investigates two further contending questions- What challenges do the top contributing countries face in the UN peacekeeping? What will be the possible implication of global South-led UNPKO governance for Bangladesh? The primary reason to take Bangladesh as a case study in this paper is that-in the existing literature, there has been a wide debate and discussion on India and Brazil's peacekeeping cooperation in North-South dynamics but very few of them have addressed Bangladesh's position in this regard.

This paper relies on qualitative research method. It uses both primary and secondary data. Primary data has been collected by employing KII. Secondary data has been collected from books, journals, newspapers, magazines, working papers, and documents of various government institutions.

<sup>11</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, *Modern World-System in the Longue Durée* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

<sup>12</sup> Cedric de Coning, "UN Peace Operations and Changes in the Global Order: Evolution, Adaptation, and Resilience," in *United Nations Peace Operations in a Changing Global Order*, ed. Cedric de Coning and Mateja Peter (London : Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 297-317.

<sup>13</sup> Damtew Teferra, "The irrelevance of the re-configured definition of internationalisation to the Global South," *International Journal of African Higher Education* 7, no. 2 (2020).

<sup>14</sup> Philip Cunliffe, *Legions of peace: UN peacekeepers from the Global South* (London: CH Hurst & Co., 2013).

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 *The UNPKO Governance in a Changing Global Order*

The political landscape of the post-Cold War era in which the UNPKO operates, has gone through tremendous changes. Especially in the twenty-first century, the world has been observing a fast paradigm change in global security governance structure, shifting power balance among major superpowers, a contested multipolar world, and a resurgence of intra-state conflicts along with the emergence of other non-traditional conflict sources.<sup>15</sup> The dichotomy between high politics and low politics is being called into question by this dynamic shift, as high politics was historically defined by the powerful ones' prescriptive policies that established the fundamentals of high politics.<sup>16</sup> In contrast, this paper acknowledges the experience of witnessing both a concentrated form of power—driven primarily by financial globalization—and a more diffused form of power—driven primarily by technological globalization—in a world where the United States, a former hegemon, no longer plays the same historical role.<sup>17</sup>

Several initiatives have been taken to address the issue of adaptiveness of UNPKO in a changing global context. Such attempts include the United Nations High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (HPTCC) of 2003, the Report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) of 2015, and also two reports from the Secretary-General.<sup>18</sup> Both reports effectively address complex security challenges and the political dimension of peace sustainability. However, none of the mentioned reports as well as the recent two reports by the Secretary-General provides the updated means to deal with the persistent North-South security gaps, complex traditional and non-traditional security threats and their relevance with the UNPKO.<sup>19</sup> Thus, a complex theoretical approach shows that the centrality of the UN peacekeeping agenda should be rethought in a principled adaptation mode

<sup>15</sup> J. Emil and James Kirchner, *Global Security Governance: Competing Perceptions of Security in the Twenty-first century* (London: Routledge, 2007); Emilian Kavalski, "The Complexity of Global Security Governance: An Analytical Overview," *Global Society* 22, no. 4 (2008): 23–443.

<sup>16</sup> Shahar Hameiri and Lee Jones, "Probing the Links between Political Economy and Non-Traditional Security: Themes, Approaches and Instruments," *International Politics* 52, no. 4 (2015): 371–388.

<sup>17</sup> Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *Introduction. Global Security Governance: A World of Change and Challenge* (Stockholm: 2005), <https://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2005/introduction>.

<sup>18</sup> Alex J. Bellamy and Charles T. Hunt, "Twenty-First Century UN Peace Operations: Protection, Force and the Changing Security Environment," *International Affairs* 91, no. 6 (2015): 1277–1298.

<sup>19</sup> Justin Morris and Nicholas J. Wheeler, "The Security Council's Crisis of Legitimacy and the Use of Force," *International Politics* 44, no. 2 (2007): 214–231, <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.ip.8800185>.

towards the novel security challenges.<sup>20</sup> In this mode, the UNPKO is likely to adapt its traditional means of external intervention, legislative framework, and integrative approaches to the twenty-first century complex security needs.

The nature of the UNPKO missions, troops deployment and contribution pattern, as well as mission scope and agendas, have changed since the early 1990s. During the Cold War, troops deployment in UN peacekeeping was limited in number. Only 13 peacekeeping operations were deployed between 1948 and 1988 concentrating on conflict monitoring and ceasefire observation using light armed operations. After the Cold War, the approximate number of UN operations has increased to over 57 indicating a dynamic phase shift.<sup>21</sup> These operations are now focusing on a range of issues including intra-state conflicts, assisting in comprehensive peace agreements, monitoring ceasefires, sustaining peace initiatives, socio-economic developments, supporting peacebuilding and peacemaking process, supporting justice process etc. In the 1990s, the global political power balance was dominated by the US which gave the UN the primary impetus in intervening conflict regions as well as assisting post-conflict peacebuilding and peacekeeping.<sup>22</sup> The trend has not changed but opened numerous opportunities in the new century in a new environment where numerous new actors are trying to influence the UNPKO structure and decision making processes.

In the UNPKO governing body, financial contribution and decision-making power are reciprocally interlinked. Countries from the global North hold the largest shares of the peacekeeping budget contribution (Figure 1). The greater financial leverage enables them to become the primary stakeholder in peacekeeping policy formulation, country selection and decision making.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, countries from the global South such as Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Pakistan, Egypt, Ghana and Rwanda contribute highly in troops contribution. This global North-South divide in the UNPKO troops and funding disparity is strongly evident in the UNPKO governance and decision making nexus.

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<sup>20</sup> Cedric de Coning, "The Future of UN Peace Operations: Principled Adaptation through Phases of Contraction, Moderation, and Renewal," *Contemporary Security Policy* 42, no. 2 (2021): 211–224.

<sup>21</sup> Ryan Rappa, "Reversing the Trend: UN Peacekeeping in 2017," *Global Peace Operations Review* 27, (March 2018), <https://peaceoperationsreview.org/thematic-essays/trends-un-peacekeeping/>

<sup>22</sup> Oliver P Richmond, "UN Peace Operations and the Dilemmas of the Peacebuilding Consensus," *International Peacekeeping* 11, no. 1 (2004): 83–101.

<sup>23</sup> Cedric de Coning, "UN Peace Operations and Changes in the Global Order: Evolution, Adaptation, and Resilience," *United Nations Peace Operations in a Changing Global Order*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019): 297-317.

**Figure 1: Top Financial Contributors of the UN Peacekeeping Operations (2020-21)<sup>24</sup>**

	<b>Country</b>	<b>Budgetary Contribution</b>
1	United States	27.89%
2	China	15.21%
3	Japan	8.56%
4	Germany	6.09%
5	United Kingdom	5.79%
6	France	5.61%
7	Italy	3.30%
8	Russian Federation	3.04%
9	Canada	2.73%
10	Republic of Korea	2.26%

The list provides the assessed financial contribution of the countries to peacekeeping fund. Most of the listed countries are from global North.

The decision-making power is deeply ingrained within the UNPKO governance structure and any type of rebalancing of the mechanism would involve a less normative and more inclusive peacekeeping mandate formation. Until now, the UN peacekeeping has been operated within a normative top-down framework; any sort of changes would encourage bottom-up approach towards peacebuilding in conflict regions using more localised and adaptive self-determining models in peacekeeping approaches.<sup>25</sup> Active rebalancing ambition of the global South will also pose a systemic transition of the existing neo-liberal peacekeeping agenda and will prompt moving toward a more robust approach-oriented peacekeeping mission while engaging multiple actors in policy formulation.<sup>26</sup>

There has also been a noticeable trend of responsibility and burden sharing shifting from the more powerful countries to the less powerful ones. This trend is largely observed in the case of the US as well as in various middle powers such as

<sup>24</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping, “How We Are Funded,” *United Nations Peacekeeping*, 2022, Last accessed October 26, 2022, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/how-we-are-funded>.

<sup>25</sup> Cedric de Coning and Eli Stammers, *UN Peacebuilding Architecture: The First 10 Years* (Routledge, 2016).

<sup>26</sup> Alex J. Bellamy and Charles T. Hunt, “Twenty-First Century UN Peace Operations: Protection, Force and the Changing Security Environment,” *International Affairs* 91, no. 6 (2015): 1277–1298, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24539055>.

India, Brazil and South Korea.<sup>27</sup> Though the definition of ‘powerful’ countries is itself contested in the International Relations discourse, ‘power’ in international relations, is determined by the national interests. It is also a means of capability and capacity by which one nation-state tries to influence other nation-states in world politics.<sup>28</sup> After the Second World War, the US has taken larger shares of responsibility in the UN security ventures to protect global security. In this century, the Trump administration’s budgetary cut in the peacekeeping fund denotes a phase shift of responsibility sharing in the UNPKO. At the same time, middle powers such as South Korea are increasing their involvement in missions and operations as a means to gain greater diplomatic leverage in international politics.<sup>29</sup>

The question of the relevance and efficacy of the UNPKO is still debated among scholars, academicians, and policy-makers given the acceptance, resource and executive challenges faced in the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR). Moreover, newer complex challenges of global security require a profound reassessment of the current capacity and capability of the UN peacekeeping operations.<sup>30</sup> The HIPPO report of 2015 aside from providing recommendations also provides a ten year review of the UN peacebuilding architecture for adaptation processes. The report also reviews the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.<sup>31</sup> These reviews altogether provided a first-hand reassessment of the UN peacekeeping agendas and operations for a changing decade which proves that the UNPKO has entered a complex phase of peacekeeping. They also prove that peacekeeping approaches, post-conflict peacebuilding and human security agendas are intertwined and cannot be discussed separately.

<sup>27</sup> Terence Roehrig, “South Korea, Foreign Aid, and UN Peacekeeping: Contributing to International Peace and Security as a Middle Power,” *Korea Observer* 44, no. 4 (2013): 623–645, <https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/files/publication/roehrig-korea-observer-winter-2013.pdf>.

<sup>28</sup> Tuomas Forsberg, “Power in International Relations: An Interdisciplinary Perspective,” *International Studies: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011): 207-227, [https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230342934\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230342934_8).

<sup>29</sup> Brendan M Howe, “Korea’s Role for Peacebuilding and Development in Asia,” *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* 5, no.2 (2017): 243-266, <https://s-space.snu.ac.kr/handle/10371/138433>.

<sup>30</sup> Jaïr van der Lijn et al, *Progress on UN Peacekeeping Reform: HIPPO and beyond* (Clingendael: Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 2017), [https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Progress\\_on\\_UN\\_peacekeeping\\_reform.pdf](https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Progress_on_UN_peacekeeping_reform.pdf).

<sup>31</sup> Cedric de Coning, “UN Peace Operations and Changes in the Global Order,” 297-317.



## 2.2 *The role of the Global South in the UN Peacekeeping*

Despite an ingrained security gap and policy divide between the global North and South in peacekeeping architecture, global South continues to be an integral part of the UNPKO by providing their ‘boots on the ground’ active participation and troops contribution. Countries from the global South especially Bangladesh, India, Brazil, and Ethiopia are extending their contribution by providing large shares of troops, military and technical efforts. In their efforts, they have also accepted the existing division of labour existing in the UNPKO. Why does the global South contribute even more to the UNPKO despite this division?

Primarily contributing troops, the South cooperation has increased in different phases and it has gained its momentum in the twenty-first century. The increased troop contribution from African countries, especially Ethiopia and Rwanda’s generous involvement suggests that African regional interests played a key role in this enhanced UNPKO cooperation.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, South American cooperation on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) suggests that providing troops can foster bilateral cooperation and engage countries to improve regional defense infrastructure.<sup>33</sup>

Global South’s motivation for joining the UNPKO comes from a variety of interests including solidifying their national images, garnering international prestige, mitigating regional tension, and pursuing strategic ambition.<sup>34</sup> South Asian countries like Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan along with China currently constitute half of the top ten troops and police-contributing countries (T/PCC).<sup>35</sup> This high level of Asian engagement in the UNPKO stems partly from the regional conflict in Kashmir through the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) and also from the desire of solidifying their respective national image

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<sup>32</sup> Weiss and Kuele, “The Global South and UN Peace Operations,” 2019.

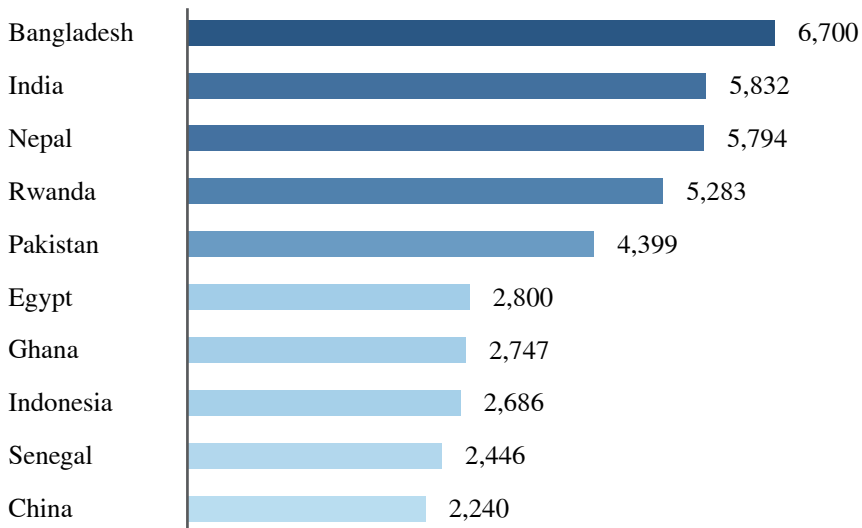
<sup>33</sup> Carlos Chagas Vianna Braga, “MINUSTAH and the Security Environment in Haiti: Brazil and South American Cooperation in the Field,” *International Peacekeeping* 17, no. 5 (November 2010): 711–722, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2010.516979>.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas G. Weiss and Giovanna Kuele, “The Global South and UN Peace Operations,” *E-International Relations*, 2019, Last accessed October 28, 2022, <https://www.e-ir.info/2019/02/03/the-global-south-and-un-peace-operations/>.

<sup>35</sup> United Nations, “Troop and Police Contributors,” *United Nations Peacekeeping*, 2022, Last accessed October 26, 2022, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors>.

in the international arena.<sup>36</sup> Also in Africa, Brazil strives to engage more of its troops in an attempt to strengthen its case for a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) permanent seat.<sup>37</sup> Greater engagement through troops contribution to peace operations provides the global South countries a strong platform to advance their national and foreign policy ambitions. Figure 2 shows the ranking of the top ten T/PCC contributors as of 2022.

**Figure 2: Troops and Police Contribution Countries (T/PCC) ranking as of mid-2022<sup>38</sup>**



Previously, financial benefits and gains in troops training were thought to be the primary motivations behind global South’s joining in the UNPKO. The weaker economies could capture potential financial opportunities through involvement in peace operations. However, high-level engagement also strengthens the country’s international image and creates a potential base for further foreign investment in their economies. The contributor countries may also treat peace operations as beneficial

<sup>36</sup> Kabilan Krishnasamy, “‘Recognition’ for Third World peacekeepers: India and Pakistan,” *International Peacekeeping* 8, no. 4 (November 2007): 56-76, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13533310108413920>.

<sup>37</sup> Kai Michael Kenkel, “South America’s Emerging Power: Brazil as Peacekeeper,” *International Peacekeeping* 17, no. 5 (November 2010): 644–61, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2010.516958>.

<sup>38</sup> United Nations, “Troop and Police Contributors,” *United Nations Peacekeeping*, 2022, Last accessed October 26, 2022, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors>.

for their military infrastructure as they often offer high-level troops training and standardisation of military equipment.<sup>39</sup>

However, contemporary scholarship, despite giving a comprehensive critical overview of the global South engagement in the UNPKO does not explain how or in what ways the global South could be a powerful catalyst in the UNPKO governance if given the right platform. UNPKO governance, here, refers to a type of security governance through collective approach<sup>40</sup> under the UN umbrella which includes coherent supervision and guidance.<sup>41</sup> As mentioned before, in the present paper, the global South refers to a meta-category consisting of countries of a more political nature belonging primarily to Africa, Latin America and Asia. In the existing literature, very few discussions have been made on these countries, with the exception of Brazil and India, to consider how such South-led intervention in the UNPKO architecture would benefit the future security governance dealing with complex challenge. It is worth investigating how the leaders of the global South countries, their experts or force commanders can exert significant influence in the peacekeeping policy equation.<sup>42</sup>

When it comes to coordinating with the UN peacekeeping, the global South countries face a complex situation resulted from differentiated mission priorities. Finding a middle ground in security cooperation becomes difficult for the global South countries given their distinct national interests and regional conflicts. In contrast, the European Union, because of their interdependence, has been successful in formulating an effective regional security cooperation framework. Nonetheless, it is important to investigate the role of interest-based regional cooperation based on the global South. In the 1980s and 1990s, the UN peacekeeping has gone through a series of debates on creating a more robust global agenda for an effective UNPKO.<sup>43</sup> The need for a global security imperative has gained momentum in the event of the recent COVID-19 pandemic and growing backlashes of climate change. Hereby, a South-led discussion on security governance also needs to reconsider the global

<sup>39</sup> Kabilan Krishnasamy, "Recognition' for Third World peacekeepers: India and Pakistan," *International Peacekeeping* 8, no. 4 (November 2007): 56-76, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13533310108413920>.

<sup>40</sup> Emil J. Kirchner, "Regional and global security: Changing threats and institutional responses," in *Global Security Governance* (London: Routledge, 2007), 21-40.

<sup>41</sup> Elke Krahnmann, "Conceptualizing security governance," *Cooperation and conflict* 38, no. 1 (2003): 5-26.

<sup>42</sup> Christoph Harig and Nicole Jenne, "Whose Rules? Whose Power? The Global South and the Possibility to Shape International Peacekeeping Norms through Leadership Appointments," *Review of International Studies* 48, no.4 (2022): 646-667, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210522000262>

<sup>43</sup> Roger A. Coate and Donald J. Puchala, "Global Policies and the United Nations System: A Current Assessment," *Journal of Peace Research* 27, no.2 (1990): 127-140.

security imperatives in its framework for a practical global approach towards a more cooperative, engaged and inclusive peacekeeping agenda.

### 3. The UNPKO Adaptation in a Changing Global Order

After the Cold War, the UNPKO has followed cautious steps in its mission involvement, with particular emphasis on stepping out from the overlapping between peacekeeping operations and peace enforcement. Previously, peacekeeping engagement was more norm-based, the one idea that the North countries took frequent advantage of. However, as the complexities of the post-Cold War security area are emerging, the UNPKO cannot be beholden to its traditional principles based action approaches such as non-use of force, impartiality and consensus mechanism. Now the operation regions are becoming the geopolitical hotspot for international actors. Examples of Somalia, Rwanda and Yugoslavia operations can be mentioned in this regard.<sup>44</sup> Geopolitical context led to the creation of two or more blocs, mainly, Western and Russian. For example, in Somalia, Russian and the US forces' involvement to counter al-Shabaab militants has been following competitive means. Previously, Russia's increased interest made the US reluctant towards lifting embargo on Somalia. Again, when the US engagement increased in Somalia, the probability of Russia-Somalia cooperation reduced.<sup>45</sup> Scholars have also noted that, the increase or decrease in troop contribution is sometimes dedicated to outnumbering the contributions of the adversaries. In Somalia's case, the US was looking at both Russia and China.<sup>46</sup> Russia has also recently used the 1999 "Yugoslavia scenario" to defend their actions in Ukraine, referring to the bombing by the NATO and its humanitarian interventions.<sup>47</sup> The UN mission in Congo also saw how UN peacekeepers had to deal with electoral conflicts, local politics and regional political actors to fulfill their mission. This applies not only to the UN missions but also to joint operations. For example, the NATO-United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Serbia and Bosnia shows how impartial

<sup>44</sup> Emily Paddon Rhoads, *Taking Sides in Peacekeeping: Impartiality and the Future of the United Nations*, Swarthmore College, Last modified 2016, <https://works.swarthmore.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1600&context=fac-poli-sci>

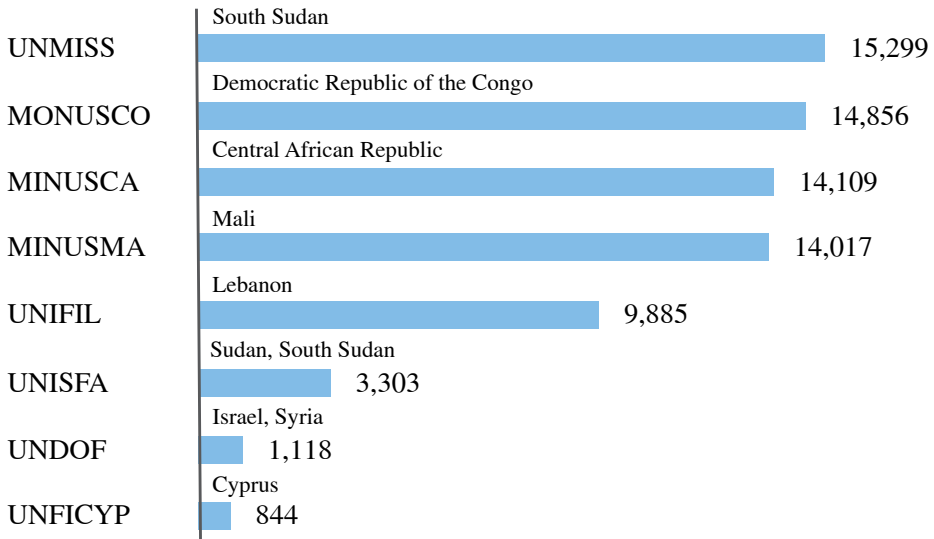
<sup>45</sup> "A Surprising Shift: Is Somalia choosing Moscow over Washington?" Future for Advanced Research and Studies, June 14, 2023, <https://futureuae.com/en-US/Mainpage/Item/8302/a-surprising-shift-is-somalia-choosing-moscow-over-washington> ; "Russia Offers Military Support to Somalia," *Voice of America News*, May 26, 2023, <https://www.voanews.com/a/russia-offers-military-support-to-somalia-/7111117.html>

<sup>46</sup> US re-entry into Somalia aims at Russia, China, *Asia Times*, Last accessed June 6, 2022, <https://asiatimes.com/2022/06/us-re-entry-into-somalia-aims-at-russia-china/>;

<sup>47</sup> "The 'Yugoslavia Scenario': How Russia Intends to Use an Anniversary in Its Ongoing Information War," *Kyiv Post*, Last accessed March 22, 2023, <https://www.kyivpost.com/opinion/14673>

missions could be deployed for partial political interests.<sup>48</sup> The newer peacekeeping operating modules need to revisit how peacekeeping principles should be applied under a less-cooperative and more violence-prone operation condition.

**Figure 3: The Largest UN Peacekeeping Operations in 2022<sup>49</sup>**



In this period of changes, however, the demand for the UNPKO has only increased whereas contraction is forcing the peacekeeping operations to underperform. The demand for recruiting personnel in high-budgeted and large-in-scope UN peacekeeping is emerging in many UN peace operations (Figure 3). To deal with this, several proposals have been on the agenda table which include prioritising the task approach for peacekeeping mandates, taking adaptive approach in mission planning and management and ensuring digital technology usage capacity in a mission.<sup>50</sup> However, it is less probable that the UNPKO will go through a robust, large and costly reformation which will require heavy engagement. To tackle medium-term challenges, peacekeeping operations might go through a conservative phase. A good example would be the UNPKO’s transformative shifts in special political missions,

<sup>48</sup> Emily Paddon Rhoads, *Taking Sides in Peacekeeping: Impartiality and the Future of the United Nations*, 2016.

<sup>49</sup> Katharina Buchholz, “The Largest UN Peacekeeping Operations in 2022,” *Statista* (blog), Last modified May 30, 2022, <https://www.statista.com/chart/24939/personnel-involved-in-the-largest-peacekeeping-operations/>

<sup>50</sup> Cedric de Coning, “The Future of UN Peace Operations: Principled Adaptation through Phases of Contraction, Moderation, and Renewal,” *Contemporary Security Policy* 42, no. 2 (2021): 211–224.

for example in United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS), UN Mission to support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA) and UN Verification Mission in Colombia (UNVMC).<sup>51</sup> This suggests that the UNPKO will be adapting to its new role while maintaining its core principles under various coexistence forms. In future, the UNPKO would be supporting political missions more and expressing itself as the ‘visible symbol of international cooperation’.

#### 4. Adapting Role of the Global South-led UNPKO Governance

##### 4.1 Global South leadership in peacekeeping operations

An exclusive look into the intra-organisational politics within international organisations such as the UN shows that appointment of leaders both in civilian and military echelons is characterised by power disparity of the member states. The UN appoints leaders for its peacekeeping operations on the basis of three prioritising factors: satisfying the powerful member states, recognising the member states with outstanding contributions to the organisation and picking the best leaders possessing the best skills required for particular missions.<sup>52</sup> However, the multiple hierarchical structures of the UN peacekeeping informally exhibit the North-South divide.<sup>53</sup> For example, western members dominate the civilian decision-making posts like SRSG (Special Representative of the Secretary-General) whereas P/TCC dominates the military executive posts like FC (Force Commander).<sup>54</sup> In a broad sense, the nationality of a leader plays a crucial role in his/her appointment in the UNPKO.

Lack of participation of the global South at the policy level causes “free-riding” and “commitment gaps” on the part of the global North. Despite dominating the policy level leadership and the decisions, the troop contributions of the Western countries have gradually become low. Even the countries themselves are debating regarding these issues. Gerame Yong has shown how Canada’s lack of involvement in the field level has created a discontent among the US policymakers, despite the

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<sup>51</sup> Coning, “The Future of UN Peace Operations.”

<sup>52</sup> Kseniya Oksamytna et al, “Leadership Selection in United Nations Peacekeeping,” *International Studies Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (March 8, 2021): 16–28.

<sup>53</sup> Sukanya Podder and Giuseppe Manzillo, “Reflection on Labour Hierarchies in Peacekeeping: A Study on the Operational Experiences of Military Peacekeepers,” *International Peacekeeping* 28, no. 5 (August 2021): 701–31.

<sup>54</sup> Christoph Harig and Nicole Jenne, “Whose Rules? Whose Power? The Global South and the Possibility to Shape International Peacekeeping Norms through Leadership Appointments,” *Review of International Studies* 48, no.4 (2022): 646–67, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210522000262>.

two countries are known to be in close ties between the two countries.<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, the participation of European countries is also staggering. According to Thierry Tardy,

*“All European states are under some pressure from the UN Secretariat because of their absence from UN operations, and critiques are formulated by some of the main troop contributing countries, notably around the issue of the so-called ‘commitment gap’ by which Northern states would design the mandates of the operations but abstain from contributing.”*<sup>56</sup>

While deciding about the posts of SRSR and FC, respective country’s prowess in the UNSC are taken into consideration. Especially, those countries that are crucial for norms and rules implementation within the UN, are given more preferences. The linguistic and cultural skills of a civilian or military leader are also taken into consideration while judging if a candidate is suitable for a conflict region’s local context. Peacekeeping leaders are more likely to be appointed from countries that are highly integrated into the global political processes, contributors of a large number of troops and strategically or geographically proximal to the conflict region.<sup>57</sup> Global South countries such as Brazil, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Ethiopia have been the largest provider of FC posts in Africa and Asia UN missions from 1991 to 2017. Only a few cases such as South Korean diplomat Choi Young-Jin and Japanese diplomat Yasushi Akashi have been appointed as SRSR in Côte d’Ivoire and Yugoslavia.<sup>58</sup> However, countries like Brazil, Mali, India, Nigeria and Nepal are increasingly being more assertive in demanding more representative posts to influence decision making in the peacekeeping operation realm.

Leaders’ appointment in peacekeeping operations provides an exclusive opportunity for the respective countries to implement their foreign policy goals, and exercise discretion and autonomy in policy formulation and determination of action. It also provides a good ground for norms contestation in the international level. What would be the global South’s opportunity in this regard? Brazil’s engagement

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<sup>55</sup> Graeme Young, “Political decision-making and the decline of Canadian peacekeeping,” *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 25, no. 2 (2019): 152-71.

<sup>56</sup> Thierry Tardy, “France: the unlikely return to UN peacekeeping,” *International Peacekeeping* 23, no. 5 (2016): 610-629.

<sup>57</sup> Sukanya Podder and Giuseppe Manzillo, “Reflection on Labour Hierarchies in Peacekeeping: A Study on the Operational Experiences of Military Peacekeepers,” *International Peacekeeping* 28, no. 5 (August 2021): 701–731.

<sup>58</sup> Podder and Manzillo, “Reflection on Labour Hierarchies in Peacekeeping.”

in the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) provides a good example of this. It was the UN's first explicit 'stabilisation' operation where leadership from the global South posited significant alternative turns in exact non-enforcement places.

India and Rwanda provide two strong cases of robust approaches to the UN peacekeeping emphasising more on the operational necessities. There have been 19 FC missions attended by the officers from India of which seven were justified by the Chapter VII mandate. General Chander Prakash's command of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) illustrates a successful norm contestation in this regard. Despite repetitive calls from their Western counterparts to use forceful measures, Prakash took a traditional and reactive attitude against the use of force and implemented the mandate as per his state's policy objectives.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, Rwanda has been very vocal about a robust multilateral peacekeeping approach to conflicts. As an original promoter of Kigali Principles, the country follows a strong mandate on the protection of civilians. Patrick Nyamvumba, former FC of the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (2009) acted as a determined norm implementer in his mission favouring a more robust peacekeeping approach, an expression of his government's formal position.<sup>60</sup>

Cases like Brazil, India and Rwanda suggest that the global South countries are now applying significant norm contestation at micro level implementation with a furthering effect on modifying core functions of international organisations such as the UN. This also means that leadership from the global South, if succeeded to the level of 'mission capture', can have a significant alteration of power stratification within the United Nations.

#### **4.2 *Interest-based regional coordination with the UNPKO***

After 1990, the United Nations has increasingly focused on bolstering and incorporating regional frameworks and mechanisms into its peacekeeping mandates, especially in the African and Balkan regions. Since then, a rising number of regional organisations are facilitating peacekeeping operations in dynamic capacities. Such regional or sub-regional arrangements include the European Union, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Commonwealth of Independent

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<sup>59</sup> Harig and Jenne, "Whose Rules?"

<sup>60</sup> Harig and Jenne, "Whose Rules?"



States (CIS), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), African Union (AU) etc. For example, ECOWAS was involved in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Ivory Coast; CIS engaged itself in Tajikistan and Georgia.<sup>61</sup> The EU and the AU jointly ventured operations in Africa's Burundi (AMISOM). The UN headed directly the peacekeeping mandates of this regional coordination by providing a framework, and guidelines and supervising the conflict resolution mechanism.

As Birger Heldt observes, the UN peacekeeping and regional organisation have thrived together and has proved to be significant in contemporary times despite the surge of a growing concern about personnel and resource shortage in the UN-EU-AU missions.<sup>62</sup> However, the UN Charter's Article VIII and Cooperation Framework between the UN and Regional Organisations/Arrangements for Peacekeeping (1999) explicitly discusses the principles and mechanisms for such regional arrangements.<sup>63</sup> Any regional organisation/arrangement must have consistency with the UN principles/guidelines, non-enforcement mechanism, and full communication with regards to informing the Security Council of any action/operation/strategy undertaken. This framework provides the backbone of the UN's guiding principles regarding regional cooperation in peacekeeping.

In recent times, the UN peacekeeping has shifted to mandating robust peacekeeping in conflict-prone regions through regional organisations or agencies. It is the first priority for any mission to check if any regional organization/framework/agency exists in the conflict area beforehand and if there is any possibility of joint cooperation in the operation venture. There are two types of partnership among the UN peacekeeping and regional organisation: 'subcontracting' involves regional organisation as the primary onus of peacekeeping authorised and monitored directly under the Security Council and 'partnering' refers to an interconnected network of peacekeeping partners, frequently observed in NATO-UN ventures.<sup>64</sup> The partnership trend shows that the global South countries especially in the African region use subcontracting for UN peacekeeping ventures whereas in Balkan areas a more

<sup>61</sup> Hikaru Yamashita, "Peacekeeping Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional Organisations," *Review of International Studies* 38, no. 1 (2012): 165–186.

<sup>62</sup> Birger Heldt, "Trends from 1948 to 2005: How to View the Relation between the United Nations and Non-UN Entities," *Peace Operations: Trends, Progress, and Prospects*, Georgetown University Press, 2008, pp. 9-26, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt2tt36w.7>.

<sup>63</sup> United Nations, "Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional Organizations/Arrangements in a Peacekeeping Environment," *United Nations: Department of Peacekeeping Operations*, 1999.

<sup>64</sup> Hikaru Yamashita, "Peacekeeping Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional Organisations," 165–186.

nanced form of partnership exists between the UN and the EU, especially in the Joint UN-EU Planning Coordination Group.

From the early 1990s, the global-regional peacekeeping partnership, in particular with the AU, also shifted from capacity building to institutional operational linkage. This is partly because African countries have mutual geopolitical and security interests that combine their voice for a greater decision-making role. Hence the AU Commission insisted on proposing the framework of the African Standby Force (ASF) in the early 2000s. Engaging this type of multidisciplinary peacekeeping formation has two benefits: Firstly, a global-regional peacekeeping partnership brings forth the credibility of the UN peacekeeping mechanism within the regional organisation. Secondly, the partnership also brings acceptance of the regional organisation to the host population. Thus, a neutral form of conflict resolution mechanism facilitates host community cooperation faster.

However, this form of engagement is relatively absent in South Asian, Northeast Asian and East Asian counterparts. Despite Bangladesh-India-Pakistan-Nepal robust engagement in the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), a broad-based capability development of this region within a larger cooperative framework seems a far-fetched idea.<sup>65</sup> A short-term ad-hoc basis strategic cooperation is possible, given South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)'s inactivity in facilitating regional interests under one umbrella.<sup>66</sup> Such initiatives may include joint regional cooperation at bilateral or multilateral level, building peacekeeping troops training facilities, involving peacekeeping think tanks' expertise from different regions, a more collective role in peacekeeping mandates based on mutual interests, etc.

While working on the issue, the global South also has to consider the pitfalls of collaborative actions and learn from the existing examples. The Mali example and the decision to withdraw United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) peacekeepers show how complicated it is to maintain interregional collaborations in peacekeeping governance. It also depends on the contributor country's internal dynamics. In April 2023, Germany planned to withdraw

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<sup>65</sup> Rashed Uz Zaman and Niloy Ranjan Biswas, "South Asian Regionalism and UN Peacekeeping Missions: A Case of and Never the Twain Shall Meet?" *Peacekeeping and the Asia-Pacific* (Brill: Nijhoff, 2017): 52–75.

<sup>66</sup> Also supported by respondent from Bangladesh Police (DIG Rank), June 17, 2023.

its soldier earlier than planned, based on the decision of German parliament.<sup>67</sup> Since this kind of collaborations depend principally on a member country's willingness, it is hard to maintain the equal level of engagement for a longer period of time. Sometimes, there is lack of concern unless the issue takes place in a proximal zone.<sup>68</sup> On the other hand, other regional security governance initiatives have not been proven successful in their own plans and actions. The ECOWAS members' intervention in Liberia based on regional paradigm led by Nigeria not only became a failure but also led to chronic problem including creation of the black market. A common issue here is the budgetary concern for which even the NATO had to struggle in Bosnia. Undoubtedly, the only organisation that can successfully lead a regional security governance scheme is the UN and it should make the best use of it.

### 4.3 *Common Security Imperatives in the Peacekeeping Mandate*

The scope and aptitude of the UN peacekeeping have extended beyond traditional security imperatives, the ones upon which UN peacekeeping was first established. Example can be mentioned of how the first mission of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) was mandated in 1964 under the 'Pacific Settlement of Disputes' provision of Chapter VI. Those primary missions had a basic focus on observation and monitoring of ceasefire preventing further escalation of conflict from both groups. The end of the Cold War expanded the UN peacekeeping into broader and more geopolitically risky intra-state conflicts where peacekeepers needed to accept challenging roles beyond engaging in buffer zones.<sup>69</sup> The nature of peacekeeping intervention is again at a great shift, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic which showed that crises do not necessarily tie the world together.

The UN peacekeeping can offer suitable cooperation mechanisms in global common security imperatives. Peacekeepers have proved this stance in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic when they extensively engaged themselves in supporting the local/national authorities to fight back against the pandemic while providing medical equipment, vaccine roll-outs, giving health facilities such as PCR lab, providing training to the local communities, supporting education and awareness campaigns,

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<sup>67</sup> Antonio Cascai, "Mali's MINUSMA peacekeeping mission: A foreseeable disaster," Deutsche Welle, Last accessed July 4, 2023, <https://www.dw.com/en/malis-minusma-peacekeeping-mission-a-foreseeable-disaster/a-66110603>

<sup>68</sup> Walter Dorn, "Regional Peacekeeping is not the way," *Peacekeeping and International Relation* 27, no.2 (1998):1.

<sup>69</sup> Wolfgang Biermann, "Old' Un Peacekeeping Principles and 'new' Conflicts: Some Ideas to Reduce the Troubles of Post- Cold War Peace Missions," *European Security*, Vol 4, no. 1 (1995): 39–55.

etc.<sup>70</sup> African missions such as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) continued supporting civil society and local actors ensuring similar support for disproportionately affected people.

Global public health crises like the COVID-19 pandemic strongly exhibited the need for peacekeepers to tackle socio-economic challenges that traditional peacekeeping mechanisms cannot provide and at the same time exposed inherent tensions within UN peacekeeping.<sup>71</sup> As these crises often have regional security implications, it is very important to provide the host community with their basic need and support in urgency and continue mobilising them and this was done by the UN peacekeepers very effectively during the pandemic time.

Security implications of climate change are increasingly making their appearances day by day. The consequence of climate change is widespread affecting all states, all nations and citizens without discrimination. As the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) report shows, 48 per cent of the current UN missions are situated in areas that are most vulnerable to climate change among which 60 per cent of operations are high budgeted and big in scope.<sup>72</sup>

Climate security threats are appearing as geopolitical concerns in the present mandate of the Climate Security Mechanism of 2021 joined by the UN Department of Peace Operations.<sup>73</sup> It was once believed that regions in the global South would be the ones most affected by changes in the environment. However, the present context of disrupting weather anomalies are affecting the global North

<sup>70</sup> Alexander Gilder, “The Role of UN Peace Operations in Countering Health Insecurity after COVID-19,” *Global Policy*, Vol 13, no. 2 (May 2022): 271–280; Charalampia Armpounioti, “7 Examples of UN Peacekeeping’s Response to COVID-19,” UN Peacekeeping, Last accessed March 13, 2022, <https://unpeacekeeping.medium.com/7-examples-of-un-peacekeepings-response-to-covid-19-4891f5d2cb62>.

<sup>71</sup> Katharina P. Coleman, “COVID19 and UN Peacekeeping: Posing Existing Global Governance Questions with New Urgency,” Weinberg College Center for International and Area Studies, Last accessed October 26, 2022, <https://wccias.northwestern.edu/covid-19-research/covid19-and-un-peacekeeping-posing-existing-global-governance-questions-with-new-urgency.html>

<sup>72</sup> Florian Krampe, “Why United Nations Peace Operations Cannot Ignore Climate Change,” *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*, Last modified February 22, 2021, <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/topical-backgroundunder/2021/why-united-nations-peace-operations-cannot-ignore-climate-change>.

<sup>73</sup> United Nations, ‘Progress in Strengthening the United Nations’ Capacity to Address Climate-Related Security Risks,’ *United Nations | Climate Security Mechanism*, Last modified May 2021, [https://dppa.un.org/sites/default/files/csm\\_progress\\_report\\_2021\\_final.pdf](https://dppa.un.org/sites/default/files/csm_progress_report_2021_final.pdf).

and South altogether, as seen by the extreme heat waves that Europe is now and often experiencing.<sup>74</sup>

Therefore, it is important that the global North and South work together to deal with climate change concerns and public health concerns especially when these common global issues contain potential security challenges both at the regional and global level. The UN peacekeeping mandate is now standing at a crucial linkage between traditional and non-traditional security issues and it is the right time to reconsider the possible ways of incorporating peacekeeping operations to engage more effectively with such climate and public health challenges while traditional peacekeeping missions keep running.

## 5. Implications and Policy Options for Bangladesh

Participation in the UN peacekeeping operations by countries from the global South, in which personnel are shared, contributions are made, and countries take part in a variety of missions, is seen as an effective means of making a country's presence felt in the global arena. Countries from South Asia such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal are thought to be the primary beneficiary of the UN peacekeeping participation in terms of international image, prestige and other institutional and financial benefits.<sup>75</sup> However, this well-known perception of the T/PCC countries might change in the future where countries like Bangladesh and India would be exquisitely vocal about their strong presence in the UNPKO governance. Over the last decade, Bangladesh has topped the list of troops and personnel contribution indicating the country's active and high-level engagement in the UN peacekeeping (Figure 4). The country's troops have proved themselves remarkably resilient in challenging mission areas such as Cambodia, Somalia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Darfur, MONUC etc. Mostly stationed in the African region, Bangladesh has lost 161 army officers in the UN peacekeeping missions including the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), the United Nations Operation in Libya (UNAMIL), the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) etc.<sup>76</sup> There have been seven Force Commanders from Bangladesh Army.

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<sup>74</sup> Henry Fountain, 'Why Europe Is Becoming a Heat Wave Hot Spot,' *The New York Times*, July 18, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/19/climate/europe-heat-wave-science.html>.

<sup>75</sup> Asri Salleh and Asmady Idris, *Malaysia's United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (1960–2010)* (Singapore: Springer Singapore, 2021).

<sup>76</sup> United Nations, "Fatalities," Last accessed August 31, 2022, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/fatalities>

**Figure 4: The Ranking of Bangladesh as T/PCC from 2012 to 2022<sup>77</sup>**

Year	Position of Bangladesh
2022	1 <sup>ST</sup>
2021	1 <sup>ST</sup>
2020	2 <sup>nd</sup>
2019	3 <sup>rd</sup>
2018	2 <sup>nd</sup>
2017	2 <sup>nd</sup>
2016	4 <sup>th</sup>
2015	1 <sup>st</sup>
2014	1 <sup>st</sup>
2013	2 <sup>nd</sup>
2012	2 <sup>nd</sup>

A global South-led UNPKO governance structure can benefit Bangladesh profoundly. In terms of regional leadership, Bangladesh’s armed forces have proved themselves in higher echelons in different difficult missions. Based on the confidence coming from good international image garnered through continuous troops contribution, the appointment of Force Commanders from Bangladesh is increasing over time. In this regard, it is important to devise comprehensive national policy goals with regard to the UN peacekeeping detailing its strategic objectives. National strategic policy framework would also help the country to clearly distinguish its aim and objectives in future UN peacekeeping participation.

A respondent from Bangladesh Police highlighted the fact that both Bangladesh Army and Bangladesh police have become experienced over the years and have established their reputation in the field of peacekeeping.<sup>78</sup> They have also maintained consistency in terms of performance. According to him, top officials including UN Police advisor Luís Carrilho have praised Bangladesh’s contribution publicly. Newspapers of both contributing and affected countries like Ghana, Congo

<sup>77</sup> Bangladesh Army, “Position of Bangladesh in UN Peace Operation in Terms of Troops Contribution,” *Armed Forces Division*, Last accessed October 26, 2022, <https://afd.gov.bd/un-peacekeeping/position-of-bangladesh-in-un-peace-operation>.

<sup>78</sup> In-person Interview, Rank: DIG, Bangladesh Police, June 17, 2023.

and Sudan have published repeated articles on the contribution of Bangladeshi peacekeepers.<sup>79</sup> According to him, these show that there is a consensus among the peacekeeping country to accept and applaud Bangladesh's leadership.

Bangladesh can effectively promote future regional peacekeeping coordination in South Asia. Being the chief initiator of the SAARC, Bangladesh already enjoys an edge in promoting such regional cooperation frameworks. The country is not discouraged by the apparent inactivity of the SAARC. Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT) regularly facilitate world class training to peacekeeping army officers of SAARC countries. Such institutional exchange programs and training arrangements provide a greater platform for future regional peacekeeping partnerships.

Bangladesh has proved itself a successful humanitarian model for certain global causes. For instance, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been awarded the UN's highest environmental accolade- Champions of the Earth for her outstanding contribution to turning the country's natural disaster-prone situation into a greater cause for investing more in climate action.<sup>80</sup> Also, the country's economy successfully recovered from the periodic upsets of COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>81</sup> As for humanitarian causes, Bangladesh is proactive in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in areas like poverty, unemployment, climate change etc. This positive attitude of Bangladesh will be a great asset for a future UNPKO governance nexus led by countries like Bangladesh from the global South.

Experts have opined that Bangladesh should emphasise on its leadership on the basis of South-led values and honor coming from the shared history of human rights and demands for justice. President of Bangladesh Police Women Network (BPWN), during her in-person interview, said that, besides highlighting the number of women peacekeepers from Bangladesh, one should also see how Bangladesh is helping in the development of women's position in peacekeeping mission.<sup>82</sup> Bangladesh co-hosted the first ever UN peacekeeping ministerial meeting on the theme "Women in UN

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<sup>79</sup> Phone Interview, Brigadier General (Retd.), Bangladesh Army, June 13, 2023.

<sup>80</sup> "Hasina Receives Champions of the Earth Award," *The Daily Star*, Last modified September 28, 2015. <https://www.thedailystar.net/country/hasina-receives-champions-the-earth-award-148582>.

<sup>81</sup> World Bank Group, "Bangladesh Economy Shows Resilience Amid Global Uncertainty," Last accessed April 13, 2022, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/04/13/bangladesh-economy-shows-resilience-amid-global-uncertainty>

<sup>82</sup> In-person interview, DIG (Protection & Protocol), Special Branch & President, BPWN, Bangladesh Police, June 11, 2023. (The respondent has agreed to share her designation)

Peacekeeping” with Uruguay and Canada. Bangladesh, as the only Asian or South Asian country, carries the flag of its leadership on this much needed theme.

Regarding the domain of technology, experts suggested looking more into technical and associated fields where Bangladesh is improving day by day. On this issue, experts<sup>83</sup> highlighted that there is a general understanding that the global South lags in technical and scientific arena. However, recently, a contingent of 258 engineers in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) were awarded for their contributions to the infrastructural development and rebuilding of the damaged elements. Bangladesh can utilise these developments and widen the role of the global South lead UNPKO governance.

## 6. Conclusion

The importance of peacekeeping operations has increased over time and the rapid surge of mission numbers as well as their scope are proving this fact. However, the transition and post-transition phases are important historical points to consider the evolution of UNPKO through time. After the Cold War, the transition of peacekeeping operation and mandates were directed by the superpowers such as the United States and other Security Council members. As the paper argues, the UNPKO is on the verge of another transition in the twenty-first century characterised by the intense level of intra-regional conflicts, geopolitical rivalry, global public health crises and global climate change.

This article provides empirical evidence of how the global South has proven itself to be plausible actor in UNPKO governance. It argues that the South’s experience and success in terms of operations and leadership, interest based regional coordination, and common security imperatives should make ample space for it to be in policymaking positions. Bangladesh, in particular, is a glaring example of South-based leadership. The article looks forward to bringing a change to the conventional North-dominated understanding of UNPKO governance in the security studies literature. The paper is expected to work as a foundation for future theoretical and policy-based discussion from the global South on peacekeeping agenda, policy structure and future regional initiatives or concerns.

For a better adaptation to the newly emerging challenges, the UNPKO is expected to evolve in the coming days. In this new transition, a principled guideline

<sup>83</sup> Zoom Interview, Professor, International Relations, University of Dhaka, June 10, 2023.



would follow UNPKO operations but with a greater focus on reducing North-South divide in the decision-making echelon. As the paper argues, regional leadership, interest-based regional coordination and global security imperatives constitute three level entrance points of the global South to have a more influential and facilitatory role in UNPKO security governance. A renewed focus on the South-led governance apparatus in the UNPKO would also have positive implications for South Asian small countries like Bangladesh in the international arena.

As the global future security landscape is getting increasingly complex and difficult to stride through, any new conception of the global security governance must take into account the global South's contribution not only from troops contributing but also from a more assertive decision making role that they can play in mitigating global challenges. The UN peacekeeping architecture is the key institution for making such arrangements. It is only time that would tell how the global South could reap the best opportunities to be the global leader in the future UNPKO-led security governance.