



ODUMUNC 2025 Issue Brief General Assembly Second Committee



Financing Peacekeeping Operations: Challenges and Solutions

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Introduction

Recent years have been difficult for UN peacekeeping operations (PKOs). Peacekeeping is the UN's most distinctive activity. For most of the world, peacekeeping is the UN brand. But after peaking in the 1990s and 2000s, commitment to peacekeeping is declining, as is

political and financial support. But the conflicts peacekeeping was created to suppress go on, leaving the world with no easy way to restore broken peace.

Global uncertainty can be seen in the constant problems of getting the Member States to pay for peacekeeping operations. Without full funding, many of the UN's eleven current missions are undersized, underequipped and unable to achieve their mandates of keeping the peace. Some find themselves weak and vulnerable to attack. Instead of keeping the peace, they struggle for their own safety.¹ New missions lack the resources to get going. Finding a way to better fund peacekeeping is one of greatest problems facing the General Assembly at ODUMUNC 48.

The problems of peacekeeping are largely political. In many conflicts, one or both sides battle for victory, making peacekeeping impossible. One or both sides in major wars—such as Russian-Ukraine or Gaza-Israel—have little interest in allowing UN peacekeeping, which would freeze their conflicts without resolving them. One or both sides in the most violent internal conflicts—especially the Libya, Myanmar, Syria and Sudan civil wars—also demand victory before allowing peacekeeping to stabilize the situation.

According to the UN, peacekeeping is one of the most important and effective “tools available to

¹ Dali ten Hove, ‘The future of UN peacekeeping in a fracturing world: experts weigh in’, *PassBlue*, 23 November 2024,

<https://www.passblue.com/2024/11/23/the-future-of-un-peacekeeping-in-a-fracturing-world-experts-weigh-in/>

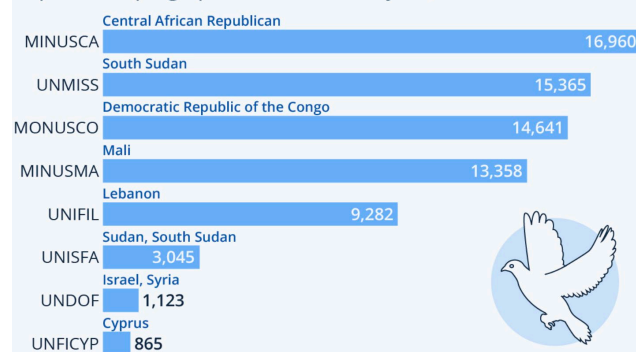
the UN to assist host countries in navigating the difficult path from conflict to peace.”

It also is the most expensive. The total approved budget for the 2021-22 peacekeeping year, the most recent year for which complete data is available, was USD 6.38 billion. Operations with the highest annual budgets are MINUSMA (the UN peacekeeping mission to Mali), at USD 1.17 billion; UNMISS (South Sudan), at USD 1.11 billion; and MONUSCO (Democratic Republic of the Congo), at USD 1.04 billion.²

scope of peacekeeping operations present ongoing challenges, particularly regarding the timely payment of assessed contributions and the equitable distribution of financial responsibilities. The Member States at ODUMUNC 48 face a difficult challenge, finding new formulas to ensure funding for UN peacekeeping operations, while also providing effective oversight, the only way to enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of these missions.

The Largest Peacekeeping Operations in 2023

Personnel involved in the largest active multilateral peacekeeping operations as of May 31, 2023*



Source: Fleck, Anna. ‘The largest UN peacekeeping operations in 2023’, Statista, 29 August 2023, <https://www.statista.com/chart/24939/personnel-involved-in-the-largest-peacekeeping-operations/>
The complete list of all current UN peacekeeping operations is in *Annex 1*.

Peacekeeping operations are critical to maintaining international peace and security, but their success relies heavily on sufficient and reliable funding. However, the increasing complexity of global conflicts and the expanding

Ten top donors of peacekeeping funding

Effective rates agreed 2000

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%)

Source: United Nations. *Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of United Nations peacekeeping operations*, A/RES/55/235, General Assembly, 30 January 2001, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n00/573/25/pdf/n0057325.pdf>

² UNDPO, ‘How we are funded’, *UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations*, n.d (2021), <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/how-we-are-funded>



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The funding crunch: Haiti example

The severe funding problems for peacekeeping immediately affected the UN's newest operation, the Multinational Security Support Mission (MSS) to Haiti, started less than one year ago, in June 2024. The mission is intended to help restore the government of Haiti, where criminal gangs have completely taken over much of the country. Kenya is the lead supplier of personnel. So far, Kenya and a handful of other donors—neighboring Caribbean states—have sent 400 peacekeepers. The hope is to expand the mission to 2,500, but the high cost of operating a country with almost no operating support infrastructure is very high.³

Kenya calculates that the mission needs around USD 600 million annually to operate properly, but total donations have reached just over USD 400 million. This sum includes around USD 300 million in contributions from the U.S., which has already been spent, primarily on building the mission base, procuring equipment and training officers, and USD 85 million in donations from UN member states that is deposited in a UN trust fund. The lack of money means that police officers have been slow to arrive. Kenya has 600 newly trained police officers ready to deploy to Haiti, but requires funding to dispatch them.

The small force that has arrived is too small to secure even the capital city of Port-au-Prince, and has no effect on most of the country. Instead gangs remain in control and massive massacres have become unstoppable.

How peacekeeping gets funded

Each peacekeeping operation has its own budget and account which includes operational costs such as transport and logistics and staff costs such as salaries. The budget for each peacekeeping operations is based on each operation's *mandate* from the Security Council, the resolution that established each one. The Security Council mandates normally don't give budget details, but they set troop targets and operational expectations. The UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPO) determines how much money is required to meet those expectations.

Every Member State is legally obligated to pay their respective share towards peacekeeping. This is in accordance with the provisions of Article 17 of the UN Charter, which gives that power to the General Assembly, 'The General Assembly shall consider and approve the budget of the Organization.'⁴

The General Assembly apportions peacekeeping expenses based on a special scale of assessments under a formula the Member States themselves have established. The *assessments formula* is complicated, taking into account, among other things, the relative economic wealth of Member States, with the five permanent members of the Security Council required to pay a larger share because of their special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The basic principles were resolved in the year 2000, in General Assembly resolution 55/235.⁵

³ Segura, Renata, and Daniel Forti, 'Weighing the Case for a New Peacekeeping Mission to Haiti', *International Crisis Group*, 1 November 2024, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/caribbean/haiti/weighing-case-new-peacekeeping-mission-haiti>

⁴ *United Nations Charter (full text)*. New York: United Nations, n.d., <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>

⁵ United Nations. *Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of United Nations peacekeeping operations*, A/RES/55/235, General Assembly, 30 January 2001,



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How peacekeeping gets paid

Only a handful of UN peacekeeping officials—those directly reporting to the UN Secretary-General in New York—are paid directly by the UN. Instead, the UN pays the expenses of peacekeeping operations by refunding the governments that contribute personnel and equipment and consumables like fuel and food.

Relying on payments to troop-providing governments is much easier for the UN than would be paying every aspect of peacekeeping—such as the thousands of individual soldiers and police, their pensions and health expenses, fund and fuel—directly itself. This indirect process has advantages for the UN, allowing it to run operations with a tiny headquarters, rather than a complete administrative staff, which would require thousands of staff members. The indirect process is preferred by troop-supplying government, which get greater control, and by financial donors, most of whom want to minimize the influence of the UN Secretary-General.

A majority of Member States insist their own governments control the money flow, forbidding the UN from paying directly. Peacekeeping soldiers are paid by their own governments according to their own national rank and salary scale, their governments reimbursed by the UN at a standard rate, authorized by the General

Assembly, of USD 1,428 per soldier per month as of 1 July 2019.

The standard rate reflects the importance for Member States of *sovereign equality*. They demand that all UN Member States that all peacekeeping personnel, regardless of where they come from, are paid equally. For most of the countries that actually volunteer personnel, the standard rate is higher than most salaries, except for high ranking officers. The difference allows peacekeeping governments to reward their peacekeepers or to keep some of the money for other purposes like buying or maintaining equipment. The extra is a major reason they contribute to peacekeeping in the first place.

In other countries, the base rate is so low, they must subsidize their own peacekeepers. For comparison, a typical private soldier in the US Army (rank of E3) is paid about USD 2,600 monthly.⁶ A Kenyan private, to give a contrasting example, typically gets roughly KSH (Kenyan Schillings) 20,000 monthly (equal to USD 155).⁷ Of course Kenya is a more typical peacekeeping personnel donor, while the United States almost never volunteers its own troops

In practice, this usually means major financial contributing countries like the United States, China, Japan and Germany finance actual military operations by poorer countries who typically supply the troops, such as Bangladesh, Kenya and Pakistan.

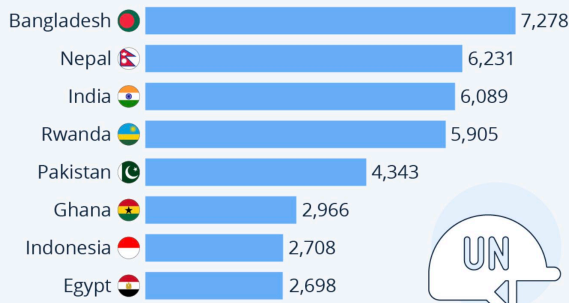
<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n00/573/25/pdf/n0057325.pdf>

⁶ '2024 Active Duty Pay', *Military.com*, n.d. [2024], <https://www.military.com/sites/default/files/2023-12/2024%20AD%20Pay%20Final.pdf>

⁷ 'KDF ranks and salaries', *kintod.36* (TikTok), 15 August 2023, <https://www.tiktok.com/@kintod.36/video/7267447232788499718>

The Biggest Contributors to UN Peacekeeping Operations

Main contributors of uniformed personnel to UN peacekeeping operations as of May 31, 2023*



Source: Fleck, Anna. 'The biggest contributors to UN peacekeeping operations', *Statista*, 29 August 2023, <https://www.statista.com/chart/14007/top-contributors-to-un-peacekeeping-operations-by-country/>

Financing UN Peacekeeping

Financing the UN peacekeeping operations is the collective responsibility of all UN member states. The Security Council decides to establish, maintain, and expand peacekeeping operations. The funding of UN peacekeeping operations is primarily through assessed contributions from member states, with additional support from voluntary contributions and other mechanisms. These contributions are calculated based on a country's economic capacity, considering factors such as gross national income (GNI) and other indicators.

The five permanent Security Council members must contribute more because they maintain a special responsibility for maintaining peace and security. Voluntary contributions also play a role, supplementing the assessed contributions for specific missions. According to the United Nations, "every member state is legally

obligated to pay their respective share towards peacekeeping." This is included in Article 17 of the *Charter*. The challenges of maintaining these financial mechanisms amidst growing geopolitical tensions and an increasing number of missions emphasize the need for reformed approaches to funding.

The budgeting process for UN peacekeeping operations is detailed and comprehensive. The UN General Assembly approves an annual budget, which includes the costs of personnel, logistics, equipment, and operational support for missions. This budget covers 12-month cycles, supporting over 12 peacekeeping missions globally. Member states are assessed based on their economic capacity, and contributions are legally binding. Reimbursement is a key element of the budget, where countries that provide troops or police forces are compensated at a standard rate—currently set at \$1,428 per soldier per month.

Peacekeepers, though serving under their national commands, are reimbursed by the UN through their governments. In addition to the monthly stipend, the UN provides daily mission subsistence allowances (MSAs) to cover personal expenses while on deployment. Countries contributing personnel also receive reimbursements for equipment and transportation costs.

The reimbursement rate is reviewed periodically, ensuring adjustments that reflect inflation or mission complexity. The UN peacekeeping budget includes provisions for compensating peacekeepers who are injured or killed in the line of duty. Countries contributing to military and police forces receive payments for injuries or deaths sustained by their personnel. The UN maintains separate trust funds for specific initiatives, such as addressing particular operational challenges or supporting rapid deployments for new missions.



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The financing model relies on timely payments from member states, yet the UN often faces cash flow issues due to late payments. These delays can compromise the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions, leading to shortfalls in resources and operational setbacks. To address this, the UN continues to explore alternative financing mechanisms, including voluntary contributions and partnerships with regional organizations. The goal is to ensure a more sustainable, transparent, and equitable funding system for peacekeeping missions.

Challenges to Financing Peacekeeping Operations

The current challenges in financing UN peacekeeping operations include budgetary shortfalls, delayed payments from member states, and increasing complexity of missions. These financial constraints affect operational efficiency and the ability to fulfill mandates. Some of these problems are systemic; they affect all UN peacekeeping. Others are a bigger problem for particular missions, typically the largest, most ambitious and expensive. Addressing these challenges is crucial for the sustainability of peacekeeping efforts.

Budgetary Shortfalls and Delayed Payments. Budgetary shortfalls have become a recurrent issue as the complexity and number of peacekeeping operations increase. Delayed payments from member states exacerbate this problem, leading to disruptions in mission effectiveness and delays in the fulfillment of critical mandates. As highlighted during the 2024 budget discussions, delays in payments remain one of the most significant challenges to the sustainability of peacekeeping operations.

Budget Constraints. The increasing number and complexity of peacekeeping missions require

greater financial resources. However, as noted by the Congressional Research Service, the reluctance of some member states to increase contributions leads to budget shortfalls and operational constraints.

Equitable Burden Sharing. The current system, while designed to be equitable, often places a disproportionate burden on certain countries, particularly wealthier nations. This creates imbalances in financial contributions, leading to dissatisfaction and reluctance among some countries to increase their payments. The U.S., for example, has demonstrated fluctuating commitment to financing peacekeeping missions, especially in regions like Africa, which complicates equitable funding distribution (Wilson Center Report).

Delayed Payments. Cash flow issues arise when member states delay their payments, affecting the ability of missions to maintain operations. The UN General Assembly's recent budget approval underscores the urgency of addressing this issue.

Ad-Hoc Financing for New Missions. The ad-hoc nature of financing for new or emerging missions, such as the UN-backed Multinational Security Support Mission in Haiti, underscores the challenges of inconsistent funding models. These missions often lack comprehensive long-term political and financial plans, resulting in delays and inefficiencies (Georgetown Journal of International Affairs). The absence of a comprehensive political plan can further complicate funding and operational effectiveness.

Greater conditionality among funding governments. Member States that previously supplied money to the UN for peacekeeping increasingly expect the money to be spent as they want, rather than the way the Secretary-General and peacekeeping commanders think best. Common demands are for greater oversight to prevent troops from engaging in sexual



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exploitation, such as encouraging prostitution, or to demand greater accountability over the way money is spent. Some donors want their political objectives met, such as making peacekeeping promote democratization, or support particular government leaders.

Some possible proposals for action

As sovereign Member States, the delegations in the UN General Assembly are free to advance the proposals they want. They can find new way to strengthen peacekeeping, or reduce the money available and help push the UN out of the peacekeeping business. They can choose to focus their funding plans on a specific favored peacekeeping mission, or step back and avoid making a rapid decision, possibly by mandating the UN Secretary General to undertake a study of options for future consideration.

Some possibilities for general action, addressing the problems of funding all UN peacekeeping, and a brief sense of who support these proposals, who opposes, and why:

Diversifying Funding Sources: To reduce the financial burden on UN member states, the UN could explore alternative funding sources. Involving the private sector, international financial institutions and regional organizations can help diversify the funding base. The International Peace Institute suggests that innovative financing mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships and investment funds dedicated to peacebuilding, could provide new avenues for sustainable financing.

A major disadvantage is new funders are not angels with wallets. They will want influence or control over the peacekeeping mission they fund.

This proposal will be supported most by governments trying to reduce the role of the UN in world affairs, such as the United States under President Donald Trump, and Russia under Vladimir Putin. It will be opposed by countries like China and the Non-Aligned Movement, which general want to strengthen the United Nations and build their leadership in the organization. The European Union is willing to consider new funding sources, but only if they do not detract from the decision-making authority of the UN.

Improving Financial Accountability:

Enhancing transparency and accountability in the management of peacekeeping funds can increase trust among member states and encourage timely payments. This could include the establishment of more rigorous financial reporting mechanisms, regular audits, and clearer guidelines on how peacekeeping funds are utilized in each mission.

But accountability is not neutral. It comes at a cost. Better oversight requires spending more on accounting institutions. It means officials running peacekeeping must devote more of their time to transparency and review activities, leaving them with less time and staff to run actual peacekeeping operations. Accountability can be used to suppress or even shut down peacekeeping operations. As a result, greater accountability will be opposed by the countries that need peacekeeping most, those that want to see it work at all costs, and those most involved by supplying the personnel.

Establishing a Reserve Fund: Creating a peacekeeping reserve fund could help bridge financial gaps caused by delayed payments and unexpected cost escalations. Such a fund would provide a buffer, allowing missions to continue operations while awaiting contributions from member states.



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A reserve fund requires a decision-making process to determine when and how money is accumulated, when and how it is spent. Most proposals would give this authority to the UN Secretary-General and his Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPO). Their funding and authority will require creation of a new office and institutions to receive, regulate and disburse reserve funds. This will be opposed by some traditional funders, such as the United States and China, which want to increase the power of Member States. It will be supported by countries of the European Union, Japan and some Non-Aligned leaders like Brazil and South Africa, who want to increase the power of the Secretary-General.

Make funding more conditional. Some Member States are unhappy with the UN for its lack of monitoring of peacekeeping and its reliance on cooperating governments for implementing and verification of peacekeeping activity. They demand greater oversight from the Secretary-General. The United States is the leading skeptic. There is continuous pressure from the US Congress to reduce the American role in peacekeeping, based on the widespread American belief that other countries are taking advantage of American generosity.

For example, the US Congress has sought to link American peacekeeping funding to the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers. For example, an Act of Congress in 2008 prohibited the use of American peacekeeping funding unless the US Secretary of State certifies that the United Nations is implementing effective policies and procedures to prevent UN employees and peacekeepers from human trafficking, illegal exploitation or other violations of human rights. In 2017, this law was amended to prohibit assistance to any peacekeeping unit of a foreign country if there is credible information that such unit has engaged

in sexual misconduct.⁸

Other Member States are free to demand their own pre-conditions for spending their peacekeeping fundings or using their personnel. Their demands could be political (requiring peacekeeping to require democracy promotion or, in the opposite way, prohibiting peacekeepers from violating national laws on political activity), social (demanding that peacekeepers deny medical care to specific care), etcetera.

Strengthening Partnerships with Regional Organizations: Regional organizations like the African Union (AU), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) or possibly the European Union (EU) can play critical roles in supporting peacekeeping missions. Strengthening these partnerships by encouraging co-financing arrangements and joint operations can relieve some of the financial strain on the UN. Additionally, such partnerships can enhance the regional ownership of peacekeeping efforts, promoting long-term stability.

This alternative is especially popular with governments like Russia, which want to reduce the role of the UN in peacekeeping and increase their role in peacekeeping operations of their own design, free of UN oversight, such as a possible Russian-controlled peacekeeping operation in Ukraine, or a Chinese-led peacekeeping organization on its borders with India or Myanmar.

Make specific funding arrangements for specific peacekeeping missions. As the UN showed with its current Haiti mission, it does not have to rely on a single universal funding policy. It can negotiate arrangements for particular operations. This can be very helpful for those favored missions. Member States that badly want those operations to succeed may be

⁸ Blanchfield, Luisa. *United Nations Issues: U.S. Funding of U.N. Peacekeeping*, Congressional Research Service, 20

April 2022,
<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10597/20>



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especially supportive. But critics, opponents, and Member States attentive to other missions may object to the elevation of such a priority over others they care about more.

Such a resolution would have to specify a particular mission to be favored and detail funding arrangements from supporting governments. Sponsors probably would be pressured to negotiate offsetting arrangements for other peacekeeping operations, building supports with side-agreements—concessions on other, often unrelated issues—to develop a strong majority in the General Assembly.

Commission a study of the issue by the UN Secretary-General. When countries are sharply divided, when agreement is impossible, often the best the General Assembly can achieve consensus to authorize a study of the issue by the Secretary-General. SG studies keep the issue alive, without committing anybody. They can develop options for future consideration, evaluate choices and clarify the likely effects of choices.

Conclusion

The landscape of international conflict continues to evolve, and so too must the strategies for funding peacekeeping missions. The complexities of contemporary crises, highlighted by the extreme funding difficulties of many peacekeeping missions such as the new mission in Haiti, reveal the critical need for sustained, reliable, and adaptable financial mechanisms.

One of the most significant challenges is the chronic issue of budgetary shortfalls exacerbated by delayed payments from member states. These delays not only hinder operational capabilities but also jeopardize the fulfillment of mandates that are essential for restoring peace and stability in conflict-affected regions.

The solutions are entirely up to the sovereign Member States. They can shift previously allocated funds, possibly taking money allocated for international development or humanitarian aid. They also can identify new funding sources from generous donor countries, possibly China, Saudi Arabia or Turkey, respecting the pre-conditions these donors require. Or they could agree to reduce budget or even close expensive peacekeeping operations, if they agree this is in the best interest of the international community and their own national interests.



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Annex 1: Current UN Peacekeeping Operations, November 2024

Operation	Location	Conflict	Total personnel	Year begun
UN Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO)	Middle East	Monitors various ceasefires	336	1948
UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP)	India-Pakistan	Kashmir conflict	110	1949
UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)	Cyprus	Cyprus dispute	1,019	1964
UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF)	Israel-Syria	Withdrawal by Syria and Israel after Yom Kippur War	1,314	1974
UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)	Lebanon	2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict	10,524	1978
UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO)	Morocco	Western Sahara conflict	475	1991
UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)	Serbia-Kosovo	Kosovo War	342	1999
UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)	Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)	Kivu conflict	14,032	2010
UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA)	Sudan	Abyei conflict	3,628	2011
UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS)	South Sudan	Ethnic violence in South Sudan	18,099	2011
UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)	Central African Republic (CAR)	Central African Republic Civil War	18,695	2014
Multinational Security Support Mission in Haiti (MSS)	Haiti	Haitian crisis	400	2024

Source: *United Nations Peacekeeping Fact Sheet*, 31 July 2024. New York: United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations,
https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/peacekeeping_fact_sheet_july_2024_english.pdf

Annex 2: Countries contributing the most to UN Peacekeeping

Countries Contributing The Most Troops To UN Peacekeeping

Bangladesh was contributing 7,233 soldiers to United Nations peacekeeping missions, the highest number of any country. Nepal followed with 6,251 troops, while India contributed just above 6,000 troops. All the top 20 contributors were countries in the Global South.

As of 31 December, 2022

1.		Bangladesh	7,233	21.		Zambia	946
2.		Nepal	6,251	21.		Niger	946
3.		India	6,043	22.		Mongolia	882
4.		Rwanda	5,927	23.		Italy	877
5.		Pakistan	4,331	24.		Malaysia	857
6.		Egypt	2,822	25.		Ethiopia	848
7.		Ghana	2,767	26.		Mauritania	795
8.		Indonesia	2,689	27.		Malawi	788
9.		Senegal	2,444	28.		Burundi	769
10.		China	2,211	29.		Cambodia	762
11.		Morocco	1,718	30.		Guinea	731
12.		Tanzania	1,600	31.		Spain	682
13.		Chad	1,448	32.		Uganda	661
14.		Cameroon	1,109	33.		Germany	660
15.		Togo	1,104	34.		Jordan	651
16.		South Africa	1,071	35.		France	620
17.		Uruguay	1,065	36.		Sri Lanka	590
18.		Tunisia	974	37.		South Korea	546
19.		Côte d'Ivoire	956	38.		Ireland	493
20.		Burkina Faso	953	39.		United Kingdom	447

Source: <https://rankingroyals.com/global/countries-contributing-the-most-troops-to-un-peacekeeping/>