

## Middle East, Non-UN Operations (MFO Sinai, TIPH 2)

The Multinational Force and Observers Sinai (MFO Sinai) was established on the basis of a protocol appended to the Camp David Accords of 26 March 1979, which marked the formal cessation of war between Israel and Egypt. The Camp David Accords contemplated creation of a UN peacekeeping mission, but Arab opposition to the accords meant it proved difficult to gain agreement on such a force. In the interim, verification functions were carried out by the US Sinai Field Mission (SFM). In 1981 the president of the Security Council announced that the UN could not provide a peacekeeping force, leading to efforts by the United States to secure an arrangement outside the United Nations framework.

The mandate of MFO Sinai is tripartite: to observe compliance with the security arrangements of the peace treaty through the operation of checkpoints, reconnaissance patrols, and observation posts; to verify and report on

the implementation of the provisions of the annex to the Treaty of Peace at least twice per month and upon request from either party; and to protect the Strait of Tiran and ensure freedom of navigation.

After two decades of quietly and successfully fulfilling its mission, and contributing to stability along the Israel–Egypt border in an otherwise fraught region, 2005 brought a significant new development: the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. In negotiations in advance of the withdrawal, Egypt agreed to deploy additional security forces and police along its border with Gaza to help guarantee security, especially regarding the smuggling of weaponry via tunnels—a recurring problem in past years. In the first expansion of MFO Sinai’s mandate since its inception, the sponsoring parties agreed to monitor the deployment of Egyptian border guards. The multinational observers are tasked with verifying that the deployment is consistent with the terms agreed between Egypt and Israel. They are to maintain permanent, temporary, and mobile sites in the area where the border guard force is deployed, and verify the number and characteristics of personnel, weapons, equipment, and infrastructure of the border guard force. In November 2005, the European Union agreed to deploy observers to the Gaza–Egypt border.

This new element of MFO Sinai’s mandate, combined with the EU’s planned deployment, could have ramifications beyond the immediate area of operations. In a fraught region, creative peacekeeping configurations may help to untangle the ongoing Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

### Multinational Force and Observers (MFO Sinai)

• Authorization date	3 August 1981 (Protocol to the Treaty of Peace)
• Start date	March 1982
• Head of mission	James A. Larocco (United States)
• Budget as of 30 September 2005	\$51 million (estimated budget for 2005)
• Strength as of 30 September 2005	Military observers: 1,686 Civilian staff: 15

The Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH) was established in the aftermath of a political crisis that arose after an Israeli resident of the Kiryat Arba Settlement on 25 February 1994 opened fire on Palestinian worshippers during Friday dawn prayers at the Mosque of Ibrahim, killing twenty-nine. The Security Council condemned the massacre and called for a temporary international presence to guarantee the safety and protection of the Palestinians, as required by Annex II of the Oslo Accords (the Declaration of Principles). The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) also withdrew from further peace negotiations pending the agreement of Israel to international observers in Hebron. Following Norwegian mediation, on 31 March 1994, the PLO and Israel signed an agreement to create TIPH.

The function of TIPH—which was withdrawn in August 1994 and reestablished in 1996—is to provide the Palestinian residents of Hebron with a sense of security, to promote stability through monitoring and reporting, and to conduct various assistance activities. Despite its broad mandate, TIPH is a very small mission of seventy-two personnel from Denmark, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and Turkey, armed only with pistols for self-defense. Its reports are strictly confidential and are shared only with Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and the six member countries. TIPH operates on a strict nonintervention policy, using digital cameras and notebooks to record incidents.

The TIPH has had a difficult history in Hebron, especially since the outbreak of the

#### Temporary International Presence in Hebron 2 (TIPH 2)

• Authorization date	15 January 1997 (Protocol Concerning the Redeployment in Hebron); 21 January 1997 (Agreement on the Temporary International Presence in Hebron)
• Start date	January 1997
• Head of mission	Arnstein Øverkil (Norway)
• Budget as of 30 September 2005	\$1.5 million (2005)
• Strength as of 30 September 2005	Troops: 6 Civilian police: 26 Civilian staff: 40

second intifada in 2000. In 2002, two TIPH observers were killed by a Palestinian gunman, who was eventually arrested by Israeli police. Relationships with settlers have often been troubled, with frequent incidents of stone-throwing, causing minor injuries to TIPH staff. The past year, in particular, has seen many moments of tension and small incidents of stone-throwing or harassment, though fortunately the situation has not exploded as many feared. Regional political developments in 2005, including the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, did not affect TIPH directly. If and when the question of full or partial Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank is engaged, the question of Hebron—and thus TIPH's mandate—will be a thorny issue.