

Nepal

The UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) was authorized by Security Council Resolution 1740 in January 2007, and had an expected duration of only one year. It was mandated to monitor the management of arms and armed personnel and advise the government of Nepal on holding elections for the Constituent Assembly. The year was dominated by the twin pressures of mission startup and mission implementation, with the prospect, at year's end, of mandate renewal after the government postponed the Constituent Assembly election.

UNMIN was established to assist implementation of specific elements of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed in November 2006, which ended the decade-long conflict between the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and the government. The conflict, which began in 1996, pitted a Maoist insurgency against a government that was itself often split between Nepal's king and the parliament's fractious political parties. Over the course of the conflict, the Maoists extended their reach across significant swathes of Nepal, displacing local government in as much as 70 percent of the country. By the time the CPA was signed, roughly 13,000 had been killed, over 1,000 had disappeared, and tens of thousands had been displaced. The conflict's resolution was spurred by the king's seizure of authority in 2005, which generated new unity among the political parties (Seven-Party Alliance), created the foundation for a broad-based people's movement that in April 2006 ended the king's direct rule, led to restoration of parliament, and enabled the series of cease-fire and related agreements over the course of 2006 that culminated in the CPA.

UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN)

• Authorization and Start Date	23 January 2007 (UNSC Res. 1740)
• SRSG and Head of Mission	Ian Martin (United Kingdom)
• Chief Arms Monitor	Jan Erik Wilhelmsen (Norway)
• Budget	\$88 million (26 March 2007–31 December 2007)
• Strength as of 31 October 2007	Military Observers: 153 International Civilian Staff: 222 Local Civilian Staff: 179 UN Volunteers: 200

For detailed mission information see p. 306.

UNMIN was preceded, in August 2006, by the appointment of a Personal Representative of the Secretary-General and, in November 2006, by authorization for advance deployment of up to thirty-five arms monitors and twenty-five electoral personnel. In January 2007, the Security Council established UNMIN as a special political mission with a mandate to monitor the parties' management of arms and armed personnel, provide technical support for the election of the Constituent Assembly, and assist in monitoring nonmilitary aspects of cease-fire arrangements.

Despite the initial pressures of mission startup (compounded by the absence of an authorized budget until late March and limited precommitment spending authority), UNMIN moved quickly to begin implementing the core components of its mandate. Arms monitors established twenty-four-hour monitoring of

weapons storage in the designated Maoist army and Nepalese army sites, comprehensive liaison with commanders on both sides, and routine monitoring at the seven Maoist army cantonment sites (and twenty-one satellite sites) and Nepalese army barracks. Maoist combatants at four of the seven cantonment sites have been registered and verified. UNMIN also established and chairs a joint monitoring coordinating committee designed as a primary forum for addressing violations of the agreement and resolving disputes between the armies.

UNMIN's electoral office, in turn, established a presence with Nepal's electoral commission at the national, regional, and local levels to advise it on preparations for the Constituent Assembly election, initially slated for June 2007. The in-country electoral advisers were supplemented by an expert electoral monitoring team that makes periodic assessment visits and reports independently to the UN Secretary-General. Despite progress on many of the preparatory steps required to hold the election, disagreement between the parties over core issues led to a first postponement of the election, from June until November. Over the summer, tensions between the parties intensified, as did tensions within them, especially for the Maoist leader-

ship, who faced increasing pressure from hardliners within their ranks. Inability to overcome these differences led, in October, to a second postponement of the election, without a specified new date, and to the Maoists leaving the interim government.

Meanwhile, new risks surfaced in the form of rising communal and criminal violence, partly due to political mobilization among traditionally marginalized groups excluded from the initial peace agreement, and partly due to the continued vacuum of state presence beyond the capital, especially in relation to public security. These dynamics, together with the double electoral postponement, were generally seen as symptomatic of the underlying weaknesses and diminishing credibility of the peace process, which needed to be addressed as such.

The year drew to a close with a series of developments including the dissolution of the monarchy, which led the Maoists to join the interim government thereby putting in motion plans to hold constituent assembly elections in the first half of 2008. Meanwhile, UNMIN's mandate remained unchanged, and the government requested a six-month extension, pending Security Council approval.