



Strategic Summary 2008

2008 was the worst year for peacekeeping in over a decade. The largest and most visible peacekeeping operations worldwide faced serious military and political reversals. These endangered not only specific missions, but also the entire global peacekeeping enterprise. No major peacekeeping provider was unaffected. The United Nations was tested in the Congo and Sudan, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Afghanistan, the European Union in Kosovo, and the African Union in Somalia. There were very few bright spots.

This was despite the fact that, by the end of the year, there were nearly 200,000 uniformed and civilian peacekeepers under UN and non-UN command across over forty missions. Though this represented a record high for global peace operations, their overall increase slowed in 2008. After experiencing significant growth for several years at an annual rate of 15–20 percent, during 2008 the global peacekeeping footprint expanded by only 8.7 percent, with roughly 13,000 military personnel added to the roster—almost all in Afghanistan.

NATO's Afghanistan mission—with 50,700 troops, up 20 percent from 41,100 in late 2007—is now as large as the next three biggest peace operations combined. When we launched the first *Annual Review of Global Peace Operations*, in 2006, NATO's Afghanistan mission was only the fourth largest operation, with 12,400 troops. Its growth, combined with the Kosovo mission, means that NATO now commands two-fifths of global peacekeepers. And for the second year in a row, the United States, due to its contributions in Afghanistan, was the largest contributor to UN-authorized (if not UN-commanded) peace operations in 2008.

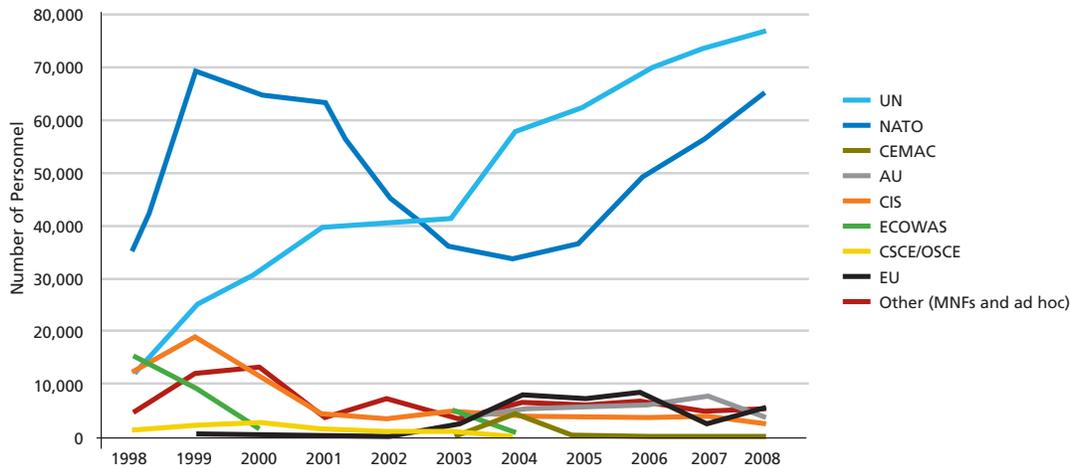
The United Nations remains the largest institutional provider of peacekeepers, accounting for about half of global deployments—with nearly 80,000 military personnel, 12,000 police, and thousands of civilian staff in the field. The UN's forces grew at a rate of about 7 percent in 2008, driven by its African operations (71 percent of its total commitments). Its missions elsewhere largely remained static. Africa remained home to 40 percent of global peacekeeping, from not only UN operations but also AU, EU, and ad hoc deployments.

A Grim Year

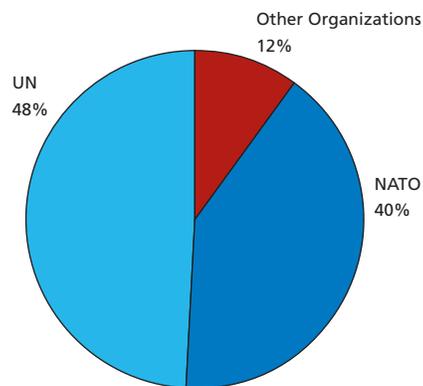
Throughout 2008, these high deployment levels were a source of concern. In some cases, the international community appeared unable to meet its targets. In Sudan, not only did the suffering in Darfur continue with increased violence, but the UN struggled to find troops and helicopters, meanwhile the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that settled the north-south war in 2005 began to fray. In neighboring Somalia, the AU barely managed to deploy just 2,650 of 8,000 authorized troops into a maelstrom of unsettled politics and violence. In Chad, EU forces arrived late after force- and equipment-generation difficulties and rebel advances on the Chadian capital Ndjamena.

However, crises emerged even where large deployments were in place. In Afghanistan, NATO lost ground to the Taliban, and the United States confronted acute tensions between its counterterrorism tactics and broader statebuilding goals. In Lebanon, the UN's recently upgraded mission, designed to stabilize the south and help the government disarm

Military Deployments in Global Peace Operations: 1998–2008



Global Deployments of Military Personnel: 31 October 2008



nonstate groups, could not stop Hezbollah from mounting a major challenge to the government in Beirut. In Kosovo, years of negotiation toward a final settlement were jeopardized by political deadlock between the Western powers and Russia—and sizable military and police forces did not prevent Kosovo Serbs from asserting de facto control of northern areas.

In the second half of the year, the variety of peacekeeping challenges were underlined

by events in Georgia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In Georgia, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and United Nations observers were sidelined during the clash between Georgian and Russian forces. The fact that Georgian and Russian forces had both technically been part of the peace operation undertaken by the Commonwealth of Independent States in South Ossetia (where the Georgians had ceased patrolling) demonstrated how peacekeeping can

be overwhelmed by its internal contradictions. Meanwhile, the UN and OSCE faced the reputational risks associated with observer missions neither mandated nor equipped to influence events—a risk taken up by the EU, which deployed a new observer mission to Georgia to monitor Russia’s withdrawal and the stabilization that followed. The crisis inflamed already raw tensions between Russia and the other major powers, both Western and non-Western.

In the DRC, the UN’s mission had repeatedly defied caricatures of feckless blue helmets by using force—twice in collaboration with the EU—to beat back threats to the peace agreement and the civilian population. But with 17,000 troops stretched over a territory four times the size of France and with a mandate inappropriate for the situation at hand, the mission was rapidly overwhelmed when General Laurent Nkunda’s Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple (CNDP) forces launched an aggressive assault on government positions in the east in October 2008. The UN was confronted with the specter of a replay of the combined failures in Srebrenica and Rwanda; only Nkunda’s decision to call a tactical cease-fire, generated in part by substantial EU, UK, and US pressure on his alleged Rwandan backers, kept a greater failure at bay. At the end of the year, and as UN-backed negotiations in Nairobi got underway, the prospects for a negotiated settlement appeared remote.

There were some bright spots amid the gloom. In Nepal, a medium-sized mission with a limited mandate nevertheless helped the country bring its civil war to a more decisive close and mount democratic elections, leading to the formation of an inclusive government. In Cyprus, there was a return to peace talks for the first time since the collapse of the previous process in 2004. And in Timor-Leste, the government stabilized after significant turbulence in the first half of the year.

Also, West Africa, once the site of several large peacekeeping operations, made some progress toward greater stability. That was especially so of Sierra Leone, where the UN

Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL)—a peacebuilding mission that had replaced a full-scale military operation in 2006—was in turn replaced by a far smaller office, the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL). Liberia entered its third year of postcrisis stability, albeit faced with daunting social and economic challenges. The peace process in Côte d’Ivoire made modest gains, but the situation remained tense due to difficulties associated with postponed elections.

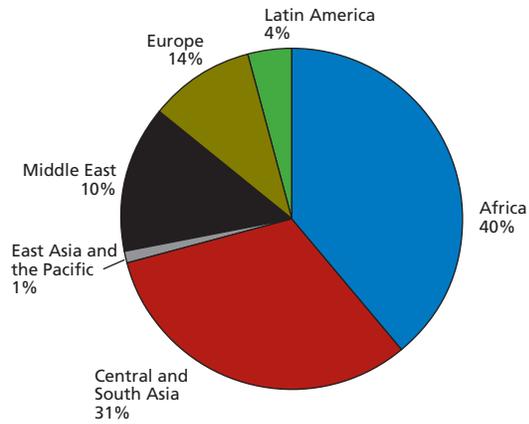
Elsewhere, though, even peacekeeping missions that had seemed set on a stable foundation in 2007 were rocked by challenges both political and natural in 2008. In Haiti, the progress made by MINUSTAH in 2007 toward a credible state-building agenda was threatened by a combination of rising food prices, the government’s inability to mount a coherent response, subsequent political unrest, and then the devastating effects of hurricanes. In Burundi, renewed fighting between the government and rebels threatened to undermine wider peace consolidation efforts. In Chad, EU and UN missions were deployed to provide security for the humanitarian overflows from Darfur, but met considerable doubt about their efficacy due to limited mandates, a one-year timeline for the EU mission, and uncertainty over the UN’s ability to generate troops for a planned follow-on mission. And on the Ethiopia-Eritrea border, the UN, facing obstruction, closed down its monitoring mission—increasing the risk of further instability in an already unstable region.

Sources of Failure

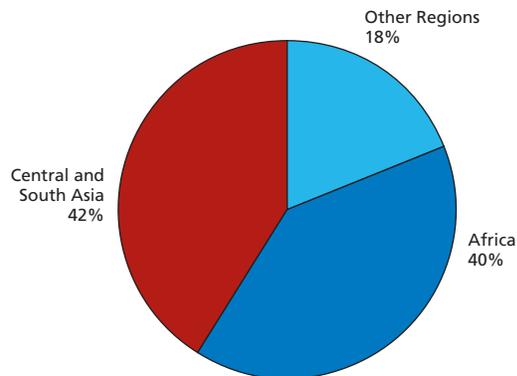
The range of challenges to peace operations throughout 2008 reflected an increasingly complex international environment, preventing simple explanation of what went wrong. What is clear, however, is the regional character of the challenges to peacekeeping in 2008, a reality that is reflected in the regional presentation of Mission Reviews in this edition.

In Europe, the primary cause of peacekeeping setbacks was geopolitical. Rising tensions between Russia and the West meant that

**Where Peacekeepers Go:
UN and Non-UN Military Deployments to Regions, 31 October 2008**



**Where Peacekeepers in Africa Come From:
Origin of UN and Non-UN Military Personnel in Africa, 31 October 2008**



the European theater was once again a political battleground, with UN, NATO, and EU operations in Kosovo direct victims and the UN and OSCE monitoring forces in Georgia suffering significant collateral damage. The political clash with Moscow was acutely felt in Europe, straining emergent EU security and foreign policy structures. More keenly felt in Washington was the military clash in Georgia, which briefly played into the US presidential campaign and

sparked a rash of “new Cold War” analyses by US pundits and policymakers. Later, cooler heads argued that the United States had been running roughshod over key Russian interests in Europe with a singular lack of realism, risking a backlash. The episode cast a pall over international politics, with potentially far-reaching consequences. Among them, several NATO members began expressing doubts as to whether the Afghanistan mission was appropriate for the

Patterns of Deployment 2008

The regional distribution of peace operations changed very little throughout 2008. Ninety-five percent of troops continue to be deployed in three large clusters of missions: those of the UN and the AU in Africa, alongside smaller AU and EU deployments; those of NATO and the UN in the broader Middle East, drawing primarily on US and European troops; and those of NATO and the EU in Europe.

Africa remained home to 40 percent of global peace operation deployments. The UN remained the largest military deployer on the continent, accounting for approximately 87 percent of all deployments there in 2008. The UN provided more than ten times the number of military peacekeepers in Africa than any other organization. Large-scale UN deployments in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Darfur, Liberia, and Côte d'Ivoire made up the bulk of these troops. Peacekeepers in Africa emanated primarily from two regions: Africa itself (40 percent) and South and Central Asia (42 percent). In 2008 the European Union deployed a short-term bridging and humanitarian security operation, the EU Force in the Republic of Chad and the Central African Republic (EUFOR TCHAD/RCA), whose mandate was set to expire in March 2009, after which the operation would be replaced by a proposed force of 6,000 UN troops.

Within Africa, the broader Horn represents a major locus of activity, accounting for 40 percent of deployments on the continent and includes operations launched by the AU, EU, and UN. When—or if—proposed deployment levels are reached, including deployment of the UN-AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) as well as 20,000 troops for Somalia, over 60,000 peacekeepers will be operating in the region.

The broader Middle East and European regions accounted for 55 percent of global military deployments during 2008. The nearly 90,000 peacekeepers deployed across these two regions were largely drawn from Europe and the United States and operated mostly under NATO's command in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the Kosovo Force (KFOR). European contingents continued to compose 62 percent of the expanded UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the largest contribution of Western military personnel under UN command.

Rounding out the final 5 percent of global deployments in 2008 were regional peacekeeping responses involving troop deployments from nearby states acting through the UN, regional organizations, or multinational forces. Two examples exemplified this pattern of deployment: Haiti, where roughly 60 percent of troops for the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti

(MINUSTAH) were drawn from nearby Latin American countries; and Timor-Leste, where the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) operated alongside the Australian-led International Security Forces (ISF). Similarly, the International Monitoring Team (IMT)—sent to oversee the cease-fire on the Philippine island of Mindanao—was largely drawn from regional actors Malaysia and Brunei.

Police deployments have nearly doubled over the past three years. In 2008 UN deployments grew at a rate of over 33 percent, from 9,000 to 12,000 personnel. The surge in police deployments was also reflected in non-UN missions, particularly the large number of EU police authorized for Kosovo.

Recognizing the central role of policing and rule of law in contemporary peace operations, in late 2007 the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (ROLSI) was established within the UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). Led at the level of assistant secretary-general, the office integrates five formerly disparate sections of DPKO (police; criminal law and judicial advisement; security sector reform; disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration; and mine services) to provide strategic guidance on these critical aspects of peace operations.

organization in the context of potentially resurgent East-West tensions.

Wavering European support for the NATO mission in Afghanistan added to a host of causes for peacekeeping's troubles in the broader Middle East. But more simply, peacekeepers in Lebanon and especially Afghanistan are deployed in extremely tough situations: highly fractured national politics with a long history of violence; well-armed, well-organized opposition forces, some of them with Manichean

worldviews and a willingness to use violence targeted at civilians to achieve their aims; neighbors with a potential interest in destabilization, and the tools to achieve it; and in the case of Afghanistan, extremely inhospitable terrain and mounting cross-border threats to the mission from undergoverned Pakistani territory.

Tensions between counterterrorism and peacekeeping objectives complicated the Afghanistan mission as well, as did recurrent

civilian casualties. Some arose from the consequences of the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom working with one-eighth of the land-to-troop ratio of the US presence in Iraq, resulting in too-frequent recourse to air power. Civilian casualties continued to create significant knock-on political consequences for NATO and the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

Some of these features also characterized the UN, AU, and EU deployments in the broader Horn of Africa. In Chapter 2 of this *Annual Review*, A. Sarjoh Bah elucidates the myriad sources of ongoing mission distress in this troubled region. At the core is the continued use of peacekeepers in the absence of a viable political framework—when there is no peace to keep, and no immediate prospect of one.

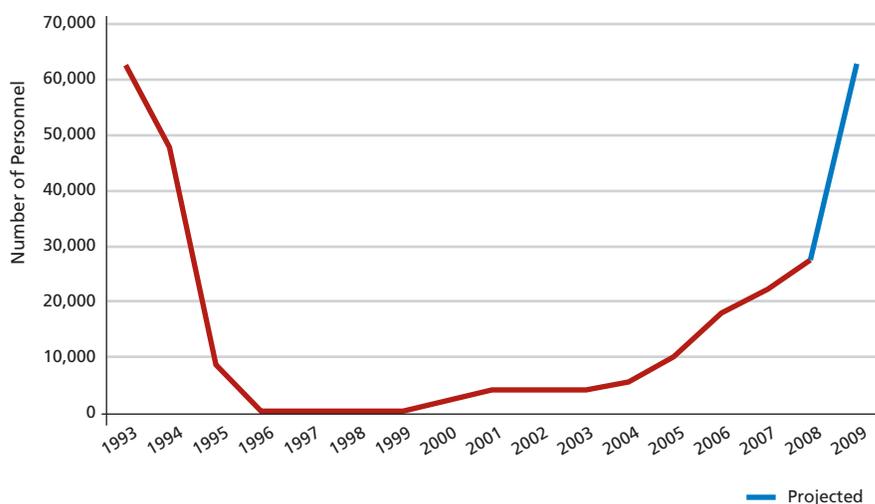
This leaves already overstretched peacekeeping operations dependent on consent from governments that have decidedly partial interests in providing it. Here too, counterterrorism objectives clash with peacekeeping objectives. Bah points out that the deployment of the UN-AU Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), without firm troop commitments, critical mission

support elements, or a peace to keep, raises fundamental questions about the risks of ignoring lessons from the past decade.

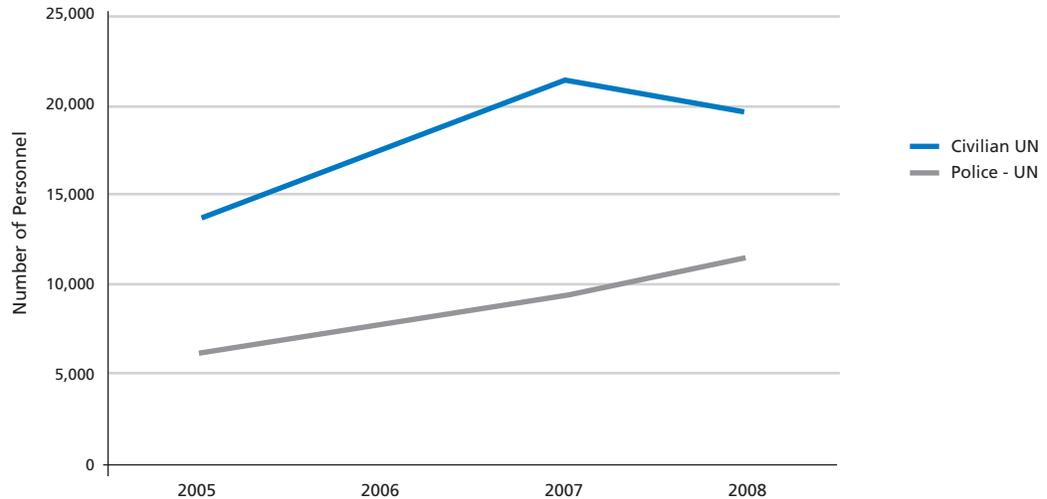
Bah's analysis of the Horn exemplifies what guest contributors William Durch and Madeline L. England identify in Chapter 1 of this *Annual Review* as a systemic source of tensions in the global peacekeeping enterprise: the steady blurring of the line between peacekeeping and war-fighting. In the face of this growing lack of clarity, Durch and England argue that while a peacekeeping force may need to undertake combat in defense of its mandate or to protect civilians, combat cannot be its "baseline stance." Where it is, the authors posit that such missions cease to be peace operations—regardless of the mandate on paper and the mandating authority.

Durch and England argue that there is a pressing need to reidentify the fundamental purposes of peacekeeping—and address the associated questions of when to deploy, who to send, and what to mandate them to do. Previous editions of this *Annual Review* have described how peacekeeping has gone from unheralded successes in the middle of this decade to the brink of failure just four years later. Another

Military Deployments to the Broader Horn of Africa, 1993–2008 (and beyond)



Police and Civilian Staff Deployed in UN Peace Operations: 31 October 2008



reversal of fortune is not impossible, if states accept more sustained engagement in peace operations. That means a more strategic attitude to mandating missions and a more systematic approach to raising, deploying, and renewing peacekeeping forces.

How such an attitude and approach can emerge in a period of wider international instability is unclear. But the sheer scale of the crisis for peacekeeping we outline in this *Annual Review* should stimulate policymakers worldwide to recognize that if they do not act on it, today's peacekeeping system will soon break.

Conclusion

The year in review also saw renewed concern about the ability of peacekeeping providers to rapidly deploy suitable civilians to oversee the

political aspects of missions or contribute to key statebuilding functions. At the UN, the Security Council mandated a Secretary-General's report on early recovery from conflict, encompassing the question of civilian deployments, while the EU as an institution and several of its member states explored greater national contributions. Largely absent from the discussion was a shared sense of the scale of the problem, or any focused discussion on civilian contributions from the global South. The year ahead looks likely to see sustained attention to the civilian question, as well as to the perennial challenge of linking peacekeeping and broader peacebuilding strategies into a coherent whole. That debate will be complicated if peacekeeping's current malaise deepens, or faces still more acute crisis in any one of the currently troubled theaters.