

SPECIAL REPORT

Mapping Pacific contributions to UN peacekeeping

Past experiences and future opportunities



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Acknowledgement

The authors would like to acknowledge and thank the Australian Civil-Military Centre for its partnership on this project and its ongoing assistance, particularly with the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic in undertaking the necessary field research. We pay particular thanks to the government officials, academics and civil society representatives from Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga and Vanuatu, as well as staff in UN Headquarters and peacekeeping practitioners, who made time to meet with us and share their views. We are particularly grateful to current and former peacekeepers for sharing their time with us to inform the project. We would like to extend our thanks to the staff of the Australian diplomatic missions in the region and in New York, as well as Australian government departments in Canberra, for their ongoing support for the research. The authors would like to thank Dr Alex Bellamy, Dr Richard Herr, Dr Anna Powles and Leanne Smith for their invaluable insights as external reviewers. Finally, we would like to extend our thanks to Steve Clark and the publications team at ASPI for their support in getting this report to publication and research intern Albert Zhang for his tremendous assistance with our datasets.



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Funding for this report was provided by the Australian Civil-Military Centre

Cover image: Helmet and flack jackets of MONUC Peacekeepers. UN Photo/Marie Frechon, [online](#).

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Australian Civil-Military Centre

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December 2020

First published December 2020

Published in Australia by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute

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Executive summary

There's a long and proud history of peacekeeping in the Pacific. Countries in the region have hosted missions, and contributed to them, to support their neighbours, resolve conflicts and maintain a more secure and peaceful region. They have also sent personnel abroad to contribute to global efforts to maintain international peace and security. Yet, this is an area that's less explored and understood. The Pacific is frequently viewed as a beneficiary of peacekeeping rather than as a substantive contributor. In this report, we attempt to address that gap, drawing on interviews and discussions with government officials and returned peacekeepers in seven case-study countries (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu). We offer recommendations for Pacific countries, as well as the Australian Government, about opportunities for further partnerships to support the engagement of countries in the region in UN peacekeeping.

Over the past 40 years, countries in the Pacific region have deployed hundreds of military and police personnel to serve in peacekeeping missions around the globe and to support peacebuilding efforts within the region. For most, that has mostly involved deploying individual police and military officers; Fiji is the only country in the region to deploy sizeable troop contingents to missions. Several factors have motivated those deployments, including support for conflict-affected countries, contributing to the rules-based order and maintaining national pride, as well as gaining the benefits of operational experience and financial incentives. For countries such as Timor-Leste and Solomon Islands, which have previously hosted peacekeeping missions, there's a strong desire to support conflict-affected countries, drawing on their own experiences of hosting peacekeeping missions.

There is interest among Pacific countries in initiating, resuming and continuing engagement in UN peacekeeping. Indeed, the focus on human security and collective action in response to security concerns underpinning the Boe Declaration aligns with contemporary peacekeeping endeavours. However, there are many barriers and challenges to the ongoing deployment of personnel to peacekeeping missions, ranging from limited domestic resources, through to poor access to information and a lack of strategic approach to peacekeeping. While women are represented in some countries' deployments from the region, they haven't deployed in others.

To overcome some of those challenges and barriers, Pacific countries could seek to engage more strategically and sustainably with UN peacekeeping by putting in place institutional measures and processes to support engagement. That might include options such as identifying opportunities for deployments and influencing reforms; supporting professional development and leadership opportunities; elevating the training profile of the region; advancing women, peace and security; enhancing regional security cooperation; supporting peacekeepers on operations and on return; and sharing the Pacific's experiences and lessons. Some of the challenges will require working with partners in the region to support training, enablers, and deployments.

There are many different countries engaged in providing support in the region to facilitate UN peacekeeping engagement, as well as broader security cooperation. Australia has a history of working with partners in the region to support peacekeeping engagement, including deployments as part of missions in Bougainville, Timor-Leste, and Solomon Islands. This has been complemented by the ongoing work of the Defence Cooperation Program, and the Australian Federal Police's Pacific Development Program. However, there is scope to provide more support.

The 'Pacific Step-up' offers an opportunity to build on work that has already taken place with countries in the region to support their peacekeeping engagement. Australia should continue to work with Pacific counterparts to identify areas where they are interested in support, whether it be in the form of technical assistance to develop whole-of-government strategies on peacekeeping, facilitating engagement with UN headquarters and regional peacekeeping institutions, undertaking an audit of training and capability gaps, identifying the barriers to women's participation, or facilitating regional discussions on engagement in UN peacekeeping. There would be considerable benefits if these activities were undertaken in a coordinated manner with New Zealand. Work underway to

facilitate a Memorandum of Understanding with Fiji on peacekeeping, and to support the development of the Blackrock Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Camp, will offer opportunities for further cooperation. Mechanisms such as the annual Joint Heads of Pacific Security leaders' meetings could offer a valuable platform to exchange lessons and identify areas for further civil-military cooperation in this regard. Importantly, this support needs to be guided by the requirements and objectives of the countries in the region. Any initiatives will need to listen carefully to the needs of countries in the Pacific and recognise potential limits.

Engaging in dialogue around UN peacekeeping can also offer an opportunity for preliminary conversations about what the region can do to talk about peace in a Pacific way. With concerns about potential crises in the region in the future, dialogue and cooperation offer an opportunity to plan and facilitate responses when there are threats to regional security. Cooperation to support the development of skills and further professionalise civil-military approaches as part of preparation for UN peacekeeping missions, will have longer-term benefits for the region in the event of a crisis, whether or not the UN is involved.

Introduction

For more than 40 years, countries in the Pacific have contributed uniformed personnel to UN peace operations around the globe.¹ From 1978 to the present, Fiji, Vanuatu, Samoa, Palau, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste have collectively deployed to 30 UN peace operations.² Some of those deployments have taken place in the region, such as the UN missions deployed to Timor-Leste. However, most deployments to UN peace operations haven't been in the Pacific region but Europe, Africa, the Caribbean and Asia. Countries in the Pacific have deployed military contingents (in the case of Fiji), military observers, individual police officers and corrections officers to remote and insecure environments across the globe, all in support of efforts to maintain international peace and security.

There's a long and proud history of peacekeeping in the Pacific region. In addition to the UN missions in Timor-Leste, the Pacific has led and contributed to regional missions in Bougainville (in 1994, from 1997 to 2003) and Solomon Islands (2003 to 2017). More recently, countries from the region deployed to Bougainville as part of the Regional Police Support Mission in 2019. Researchers, and governments that supported those peacekeeping missions have sought to document many of the lessons that have been learned.³ However, there's been far less research that has comprehensively examined the contributions of Pacific countries to global UN peace operations.⁴ As a consequence, there's limited understanding of the rationales for countries contributing, the barriers to their ongoing participation, and some of the consequences of their engagement.

From our interviews in the region, there's interest among Pacific countries in initiating, resuming and continuing engagement in UN peacekeeping. However, some countries in the region have been overwhelmed by the bureaucratic hurdles. The barriers to ongoing participation are often poorly understood in capitals, in part due to the limited resources among Pacific permanent missions to the UN to follow peacekeeping debates and engage with the UN Secretariat in New York (in addition to many other UN interests and priorities). While Fiji has wielded some influence in New York due to its size and substantial footprint in UN peacekeeping, the Pacific region's broader contribution has often been overshadowed by larger contributors and regional blocs from South Asia, Europe and Africa, which have greater resources to put into peacekeeping and consequently significantly more ability to shape its reform. Of course, those barriers haven't prevented countries from the region contributing in the past, but those challenges are only likely to become more acute if UN peacekeeping missions continue on their trajectory of drawing down and the UN is more selective about the types of contributions that it's willing to accept.

Peacekeeping requires partnerships. Countries in the Pacific have expressed their political support for the UN's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) agenda as current and former contributors.⁵ One of the eight pillars of the A4P agenda is improving peacekeeping partnerships, with a focus on 'pursuing innovative approaches' to prepare, train and equip uniformed personnel for UN peacekeeping, including through triangular partnerships and co-deployments. Opportunities exist for countries in the Pacific to engage more substantively in UN peacekeeping through partnerships, particularly with the investment and support of partners, and greater regional coordination. There's also scope for a greater 'Pacific voice' in those discussions, and that voice would be well received by the international community, given the region's experiences of conflict. Working with partners in the region that have a more substantial peacekeeping footprint may also support broader regional security interests and stability at a time of greater strategic uncertainty, but such expectations will need to be carefully assessed and managed, as history has shown there are risks that contributing to UN peacekeeping could detract from security needs at home or result in unintended consequences for domestic security and broader society.

In this report, drawing largely on interviews with government officials in case-study countries in the region and desktop research on UN documents, country statements and academic research (see Appendix: Methodology), we examine why countries in the Pacific have contributed to UN peacekeeping missions and whether they have an interest in continuing to do so. First, we provide a brief overview of UN peacekeeping developments and the

Pacific's approaches to peacekeeping, examining the different rationales for countries contributing to the effort. Second, we map the contribution of Pacific countries to UN peacekeeping through a series of in-depth case studies and identify future ambitions.⁶ Third, we explore some of the different barriers and challenges to the ongoing participation of countries in UN peacekeeping, at both the country and the individual level. Finally, we offer a series of recommendations for countries in the Pacific, and partners such as Australia, to strengthen engagement in UN peacekeeping. This report and its recommendations are directed at government officials in the Pacific, as well as the Australian Government. The report will also be of interest to partners in the region, UN officials, scholars and researchers.

Pacific contributions to UN peacekeeping

The context of UN peacekeeping

The UN deployed its first peacekeeping mission in 1948 to the Middle East. Since then, it has deployed more than 70 peacekeeping operations to manage a wide variety of threats to international peace and security in every region of the world. At the peak of operations in 2015, there were close to 125,000 peacekeeping personnel deployed to 16 missions.⁷ However, there's been a reduction in the mission footprint since then.⁸ Around 95,000 military, police and civilians from approximately 120 countries are currently deployed to 13 peacekeeping missions across the globe, predominantly in the Middle East and Africa.⁹

The nature of UN peacekeeping has changed and evolved over the past 70 years, but it has always been guided by three principles: the consent of the parties to the conflict, impartiality, and non-use of force except in self-defence and in defence of the mandate. While earlier missions were deployed to observe, monitor and report on ceasefires and peace agreements—and many of those missions still operate (such as in the Middle East and Cyprus), from the 1990s onwards, peacekeeping has been increasingly used by the UN Security Council to respond to outbreaks of conflict and atrocities, protect civilians, disarm combatants and undertake peacebuilding tasks to support the establishment of the rule of law and governance institutions. However, UN peacekeeping has been pushed to its limits in some contexts in recent years as the Security Council deployed missions to complex security environments such as Mali, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Darfur and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the consent of the parties can be tenuous at times and peacekeepers are required to fulfil their mandates in complex and asymmetric threat environments. These environments have also presented increasing threats to security of personnel in recent years, with missions experiencing an increase in fatalities because of violent acts between 2013 and 2017. The recommendations of the Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers continue to guide efforts to strengthen training and performance across peacekeeping missions.¹⁰ Missions continue to require the deployment of well-trained military and police personnel and advanced capabilities.

Due to these ongoing challenges, the Secretary-General initiated the new A4P agenda in 2018 to make UN peacekeeping more effective. The agenda's declaration is centred on eight core themes: the primacy of politics; the women, peace and security agenda; protection of civilians; safety and security; performance and accountability; peacebuilding and sustaining peace; partnerships; and strengthening conduct. To date, the A4P agenda has been endorsed by 154 member states, demonstrating high-level commitment from UN members.¹¹ It continues to guide the direction of peacekeeping reform and offers opportunities for member states' engagement to improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions on the ground.

The delivery of peacekeeping missions on the ground is also guided by the work of member states in the Security Council, as well as the General Assembly through the UN's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34) and Fifth Committee, where intergovernmental processes guide and shape the development of peacekeeping policy, including through the adoption of thematic resolutions and reports.¹² They give member states opportunities to influence and shape peacekeeping reform, reflecting in part on their own experiences as troop- and police-contributing countries. For smaller contributing countries, they can be useful platforms to express their views and engage with other member states and the UN Secretariat on peacekeeping reform.

Peacekeeping is one of the most visible aspects of the UN's work and has shaped the world's perception of the organisation over recent decades. Failures of peacekeeping to halt conflict and atrocities in places such as Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia have also been matched by successes, such as in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, where missions have drawn down and departed in recent times. Peacekeeping remains a valuable way for member states to demonstrate their commitment to the UN and contribute to the rules-based global order and multilateral institutions.

Peacekeeping interventions in the Pacific

In the Pacific and its near region, there have been varied efforts to create and keep peace in the past, even if not all have occurred under the UN flag. Colonialism and interventions in the region left flashpoints for conflict and instability, including in countries such as Timor-Leste, Solomon Islands and PNG. Those conflicts and that instability have been tackled through a variety of regional and international peacekeeping mechanisms.

As early as 1980, regional efforts were being used to respond to unstable political environments. For example, the PNG Defence Force (PNGDF) undertook its first international deployment in response to the 1980 Santo crisis in Vanuatu.¹³ In the late 1990s, while the UN had maintained two political missions in Bougainville,¹⁴ the regional Truce Monitoring Group and then Peace Monitoring Group—with contributions from Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Vanuatu— led the way in monitoring the situation there.

After the regional INTERFET intervention in Timor-Leste in 1999, the UN undertook a succession of peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions to establish peace in what was then the world’s newest country.¹⁵ Many nations in the Pacific region contributed to those efforts, developing expertise in peacekeeping and peacebuilding processes, which has then been transposed into other mission contexts.

Similarly, the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) between 2003 and 2017 was led by the region, and participation in that effort is a significant point of pride for many nations. Many brought their peacekeeping experience from Bougainville and Timor-Leste to this mission.

Those peacekeeping missions have offered a path into peacekeeping for many countries in our region. The regional contributions to Bougainville and RAMSI are seen as a uniquely successful Pacific endeavour in which cultural links and significant investment from the region enabled fruitful cooperation among the host entities and participants. The deployments were formative for many Pacific security forces, broadening their capabilities and accelerating their professionalisation. The commitment to building and sustaining peace as part of peacekeeping in the region, and the experiences of several countries in hosting peacekeeping missions, have enabled countries to draw on those experiences and skills as part of UN peacekeeping to share with other countries experiencing conflict.

Key trends in Pacific contributions

The earliest contributions from the Pacific to UN peacekeeping missions came from Fiji, which started deploying to the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in 1978. Over the past 40 years, countries in the Pacific have deployed to more than 30 peace operations in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the Caribbean.

As of October 2020, deployment statistics show that the following Pacific nations currently have peacekeepers deployed:¹⁶

- Fiji—344 military and police
- Samoa—19 police
- Timor-Leste—4 police.

In addition to those three countries, other Pacific nations have contributed to UN peacekeeping in the past but don’t currently contribute:¹⁷

- PNG
- Solomon Islands
- Vanuatu
- Palau.

Fiji has been and remains the most significant contributor from our region. Its long commitment to peacekeeping has given Fijians a strong footprint across the world since their first deployment in 1978,¹⁸ but particularly in the Middle East for its contingent deployments. Elsewhere in the world, Fiji has typically sent smaller numbers. This commitment to UN peacekeeping imbues itself throughout Fijian defence and foreign policy circles, where it's been noted as a 'calling ... deeply embraced by the Fijian people',¹⁹ and Fiji self-identifies as a 'peacekeeping nation'.²⁰

The deployment of several UN peacekeeping missions to Timor-Leste from 2000 onwards was the starting point for many countries in the region becoming contributors in UN peacekeeping deployments globally. Samoa, for example, has consistently deployed personnel since it first deployed to Timor-Leste in June 2000. Likewise, Timor-Leste was one of the first missions to which ni-Vanuatu police officers were deployed. Vanuatu deployed at various times from 2000 until 2017. Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Palau have deployed police personnel on missions, while PNG has sent military personnel. Despite these countries not currently contributing, many aspire to restart their contributions in the future. In addition, Tonga, while not ever contributing to UN missions, has undertaken significant overseas deployments with Coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As the only host of a UN peacekeeping mission in the region, Timor-Leste has also deployed in the past. It first deployed police officers to the UN Mission in Kosovo, while the country was still hosting a UN peacekeeping mission. It has more recently deployed alongside a key partner—Portugal—to the UN Mission in Lebanon. Discussions are underway for a similar co-deployment to occur to the mission in the Central African Republic. It currently has police personnel deployed to the South Sudan.

While Pacific countries haven't deployed more recently to complex multidimensional mission environments such as MONUSCO (Democratic Republic of the Congo), MINUSCA (Central African Republic) and MINUSMA (Mali), they have operated in many environments where there are ongoing and considerable risks. All countries from the Pacific region that have deployed to UN peacekeeping missions have deployed to Sudan or South Sudan, including Darfur. Some countries in the region have had their security jeopardised on deployment,²¹ and many personnel have lost their lives in the cause of peace.

Our case studies in this report explore the individual footprints of Pacific contributions in UN peacekeeping missions more extensively.

Figure 1: Map showing global footprint of Pacific countries to UN missions

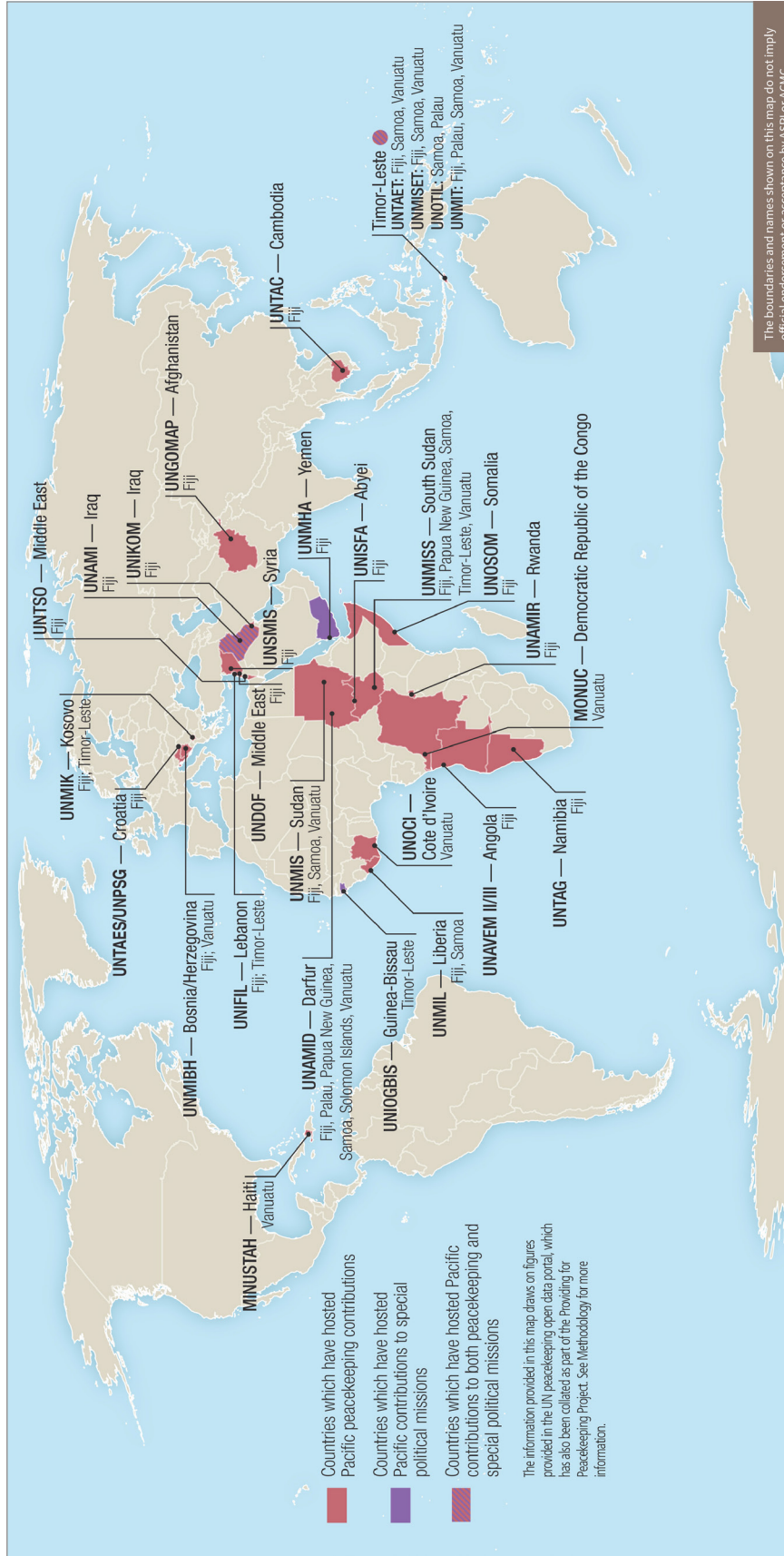


Table 1: Contributions of Pacific countries to UN peacekeeping missions

Mission	Location	Fiji	Palau	PNG	Samoa	Solomon Islands	Timor-Leste	Vanuatu
UNGOMAP	Afghanistan							
UNTAES	Croatia							
UNPSG	Croatia							
UNTAG	Namibia							
UNIFIL	Lebanon							
UNIKOM	Iraq/Kuwait							
UNTAC	Cambodia							
UNOSOM	Somalia							
UNAMIR	Rwanda							
UNAVEM II	Angola							
UNAVEM III	Angola							
UNMIBH	Bosnia/Herzegovina							
UNMIK	Kosovo							
UNTAET	Timor-Leste							
UNAMID	Darfur							
UNMISSET	Timor-Leste							
UNOTIL	Timor-Leste							
UNMIL	Liberia							
UNMIS	Sudan							
UNOCI	Cote d'Ivoire							
MINUSTAH	Haiti							
MONUC	DRC							
UNAMI	Iraq							
UNMIT	Timor-Leste							
UNMISS	South Sudan							
UNSMIS	Syria							
UNDOF	Golan Heights							
UNTSO	Middle East							
UNIOGBIS	Guinea Bissau							
UNMHA	Yemen							
UNISFA	Abyei							

Rationales for contributing

Countries contribute to UN peacekeeping for a range of reasons. Understanding the rationales that guide decisions to contribute, and the factors that deter them from deploying, are important to ensure that peacekeeping benefits from a broad base of skill sets and different contributions. It's also important for countries seeking to partner with potential contributors to understand what drives their commitment to peacekeeping and what factors are likely to diminish support from governments, institutions or society.

Many of the reasons why countries contribute to UN peacekeeping have been documented in peacekeeping research literature.²² For instance, in their research as part of *Providing for Peacekeeping*, Alex Bellamy and Paul Williams identify five rationales for countries contributing to UN peacekeeping: political, economic, security, institutional and normative. Many of those rationales were raised throughout our interviews with government officials in the region, although some had more weight than others. Our interviews also included discussions of some of the reasons that countries find it difficult to contribute to UN peacekeeping. There were few, if any, objections to supporting the UN as a crisis management tool or the agenda for peacekeeping (although that was perhaps less understood by many of the officials we spoke with). However, several barriers to contributing were identified and are likely to influence why countries in the region don't contribute. Those are discussed later in the paper under 'Challenges and barriers to contributing'.

Factors motivating Pacific Islands engagement

We have identified five specific rationales for contributing:

- supporting conflict-affected countries
- gaining operational experience
- financial incentives
- political and cultural links
- national pride.

Supporting conflict-affected countries

For many countries in the region, UN peacekeeping offers an opportunity to 'give back', support the rules-based global order and demonstrate a tangible commitment to multilateral institutions. This is particularly the case for Timor-Leste and Solomon Islands, which have both benefited from the deployment of UN and regional peacekeeping missions on their own territory. Those experiences prompted them to start sending personnel to serve in UN peacekeeping missions. In the case of Timor-Leste, 10 police officers deployed to Kosovo in December 2005, having been trained by UN police officers and partners on the ground.²³ Similarly, Solomon Islands deployed police to Darfur in August 2016. It was viewed as a modest contribution but powerful as a 'contribution to the world stage'.²⁴ Notably, both countries deployed personnel while peacekeeping missions were still underway on their own territory.

In the framework put forward by Bellamy and Williams, those motivations sit between the political and normative rationales. Officials in Timor-Leste and Solomon Islands noted the importance of giving back to the international community for the support they had received.²⁵ For Timor-Leste, engaging in peacekeeping also supports its work with the g7+ as a conflict-affected state. The g7+ recognises that conflict-affected states are best placed to assist other countries with peace building and state building through peer-learning.²⁶ Peacekeepers that had deployed from Solomon Islands, for instance, reflected upon the comparative advantages that they could bring to peacekeeping, given their own experiences of conflict back home.²⁷

Similarly, the motivations of peace building and nation building have also been identified by other Pacific countries. This was something Fiji's President Konrote noted on the 40th anniversary of Fiji's first deployment with the UN.²⁸ Countries in the region recognise that it's likely that they'll face a range of security threats in the future, and that human security will be under threat due to the impacts of climate change. Fiji identified this as a new area that countries needed to prepare skills for: 'Peace operations need to understand these climate-related drivers of conflict far better.'²⁹ While that might not be a primary motivation, countries in the region have an interest in supporting the rules-based international order and UN system, possibly in the hope that those systems will support them again if required.³⁰

Gaining operational experience

Peacekeeping operations offer an opportunity to gain experience in a range of complex and challenging civil-military operational environments. All the former peacekeepers interviewed as part of our research noted that their skills and expertise had been greatly enhanced through their deployments. For some, that included the acquisition and application of new language skills in mission environments, experience working in culturally diverse operating environments, training on the protection of civilians and on sexual and gender-based violence, logistics, and leadership experiences for members of certain contingents.³¹ Government officials who were interviewed noted the benefits of having military and police officers returning with a diverse range of professional skills that could then be applied domestically. This acts as a further incentive to deploy personnel to peacekeeping missions. The benefits are particularly tangible for those countries that are new to peacekeeping or sending only a few officers.

Financial incentives

There are financial incentives for deploying to UN peacekeeping missions, but information about the incentives is often quite opaque. Contingents are deployed at a rate of US\$1,428 per soldier per month, and countries deploying contingent-owned equipment are reimbursed for it through the terms of their memorandums of understanding with the UN. Such measures have particular significance only for Fiji, which is the only country in the region to deploy contingents and equipment to peacekeeping missions. The financial rationales for Fiji's ongoing contributions have been analysed in some of the literature on the country's contributions to UN peacekeeping and reiterated in the media key drivers of the country's ongoing engagement.³² A narrative persists that peacekeeping can not only fund a country's military but also turn a country's military into a profitable venture.³³ However, that rationale and the weight it should be given have also been disputed.³⁴ Nonetheless, the experience gained by many Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) members has enabled them to gain financially through deployments in the private sector (particularly as security contractors), providing remittances to the country and support socio-economic development.

In the case of other Pacific contributors, there are financial benefits to deploying to peacekeeping, but they're largely at the individual level, given the size and contribution of each country to peacekeeping. Military observers and individual police officers, who are deployed on salary, receive a UN Mission Subsistence Allowance in US dollars. Those benefits offer considerable individual incentives for personnel to deploy to UN missions. In the words of one former peacekeeper, those who had returned were able to buy a house or buy a car.³⁵ There was a real perception that those deploying benefited financially, benefiting their families and the wider economy.

Political and cultural links

Partnerships have also influenced decisions to deploy, both to peacekeeping operations and to other types of coalition-led military operations. Although Tonga hasn't deployed to a UN peacekeeping mission yet, some of the key drivers for its deployment on coalition operations were its political links with the UK and the US, which led it to deploy with their support to Afghanistan and Iraq, respectively. That support included financial and material support from both countries. The deployments offered many of the same benefits to Tonga that UN peacekeeping missions do in terms of financial support and operational experience.

The geographical location of a peacekeeping mission is unlikely to have significant influence on the decision to deploy peacekeepers at present, given the absence of any peacekeeping missions in the Pacific region. Peacekeepers from the Pacific have deployed to missions across the globe in areas where there are limited strategic interests. However, language and shared cultural interest, usually due to a shared colonial history, have influenced decisions on which peacekeeping missions countries deploy to. For instance, Timor-Leste deployed to the UN special political mission in Guinea-Bissau, given the Lusophone links between the two countries. The deployment was also aided by the political influence of former Timorese President Jose Ramos Horta, who remains very influential in Timorese politics and within the UN, and who served as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the mission. Similarly, Vanuatu sent several peacekeepers to francophone missions, drawing in their language ties.

Peacekeepers from the Pacific have also deployed overwhelmingly to missions where there are other partners from the region, which has offered informal connections within the Pacific. For instance, peacekeepers from the region have deployed to Darfur and South Sudan. The presence of other more sizeable contributors from the region, such as Australia, was acknowledged as a factor in the deployment of some of those countries to those missions.

National pride

For some countries in the Pacific, contributing to UN peacekeeping offers a real sense of national pride. It's ingrained in their politics and military cultures. That's particularly the case for Fiji, which has developed a reputation as a peacekeeping country. Even when Fiji has been tested in missions, such as when peacekeepers were kidnapped in the Golan Heights in 2014, it has remained committed to supporting UN peacekeeping.³⁶ The experience of UN peacekeeping is ingrained among the political and military leadership in the country. While this means that Fiji's contributions are likely to continue in the future, some have argued that those experiences have contributed to the country's political instability, due to the inflated size and image of the military.³⁷

Country case studies

In order to inform the findings of this project, we identified seven case-study countries to understand the reasons why countries in the Pacific have contributed peacekeepers, the barriers to their participation and their interests in contributing in the future. The case-study countries are Fiji, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga and Vanuatu. All of those countries (with the exception of Tonga) have previously deployed to UN peacekeeping missions. Tonga was included as a seventh case study, as it had experience deploying to coalition operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as RAMSI, and is one of few countries in the Pacific that maintains a military.

As part of our analysis of each of the case studies, we document the history of contributions, trends in deployments and the participation of women, the reasons countries contribute, barriers to their participation, and their future interests. Where possible, the case studies have relied on UN data where it's available, supplemented by information provided by countries or other publicly available sources in the cases where there's a lack of clarity. The development of the case studies has been largely informed by interviews with government officials in country or virtually. Where possible, we have attempted to include the strength of military and police forces in each country, however these figures are only estimates as there is limited publicly available data available and the information often provided in interviews varied.

The printed case studies are supplemented by a visual representation of the trends and deployments on the ASPI website. Scan the QR code below to be taken to our website.



Fiji

First UN peacekeeping deployment	1978, UNIFIL (Lebanon)
Period deployed to UN peacekeeping	1978 to present
UN missions	26 missions (Abyei, Afghanistan, Afghanistan/Pakistan, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Croatia, Golan Heights/Syria, Iraq, Iraq/Kuwait, Kosovo, Lebanon, Liberia, Israel/Middle East, Namibia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan/Darfur, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, Timor-Leste, and Yemen). Fiji also contributes to the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) in the Sinai.
Highest number deployed to UN missions	849 (2000–2001)
Current number deployed to UN missions (October 2020)	344
Percentage of women deployed in contingents (October 2020)	7% (21 women)—on target
Percentage of women deployed as staff officers and experts on mission (October 2020)	0% (0 women)—below target
Percentage of women police deployed (October 2020)	55% (17 women)—above target

Figure 2: Map showing deployments by Fiji to UN missions

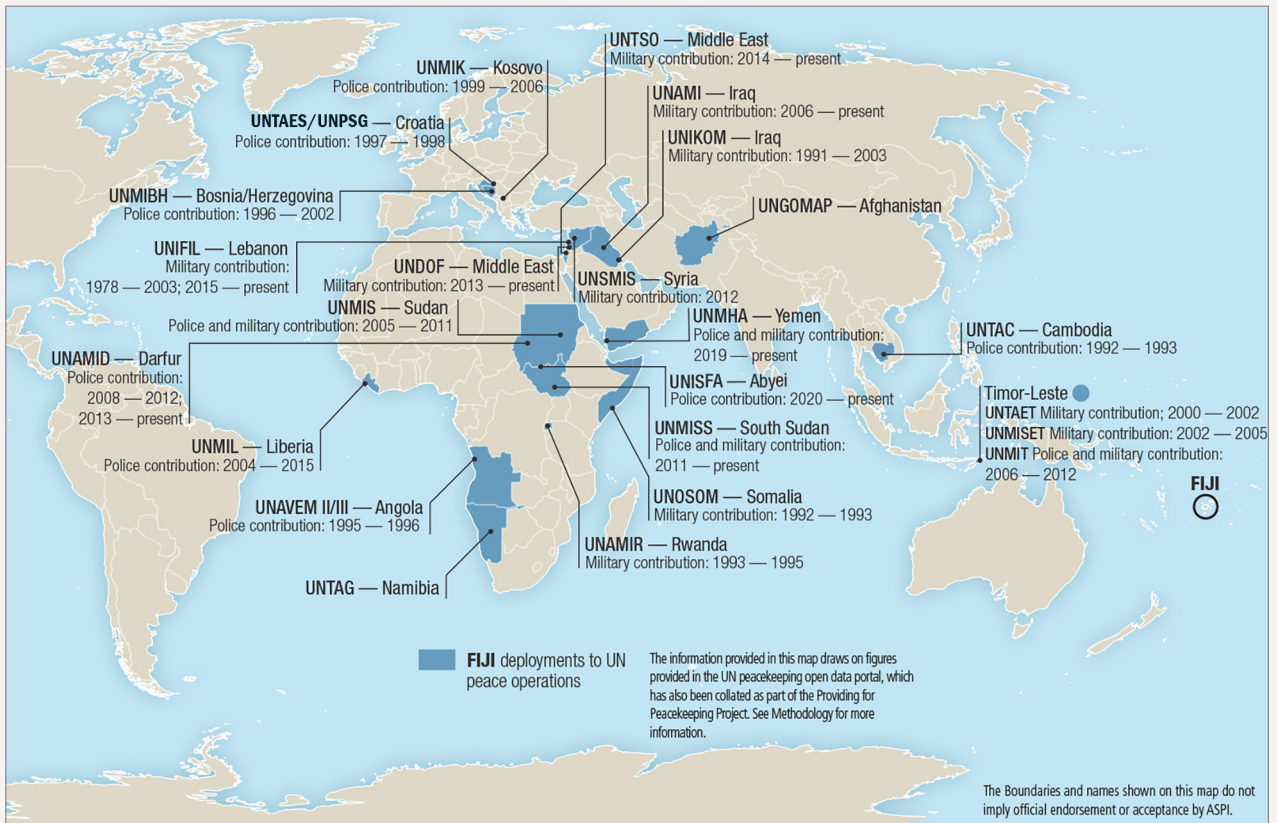


Figure 3: Fiji total deployment, 1990–2020

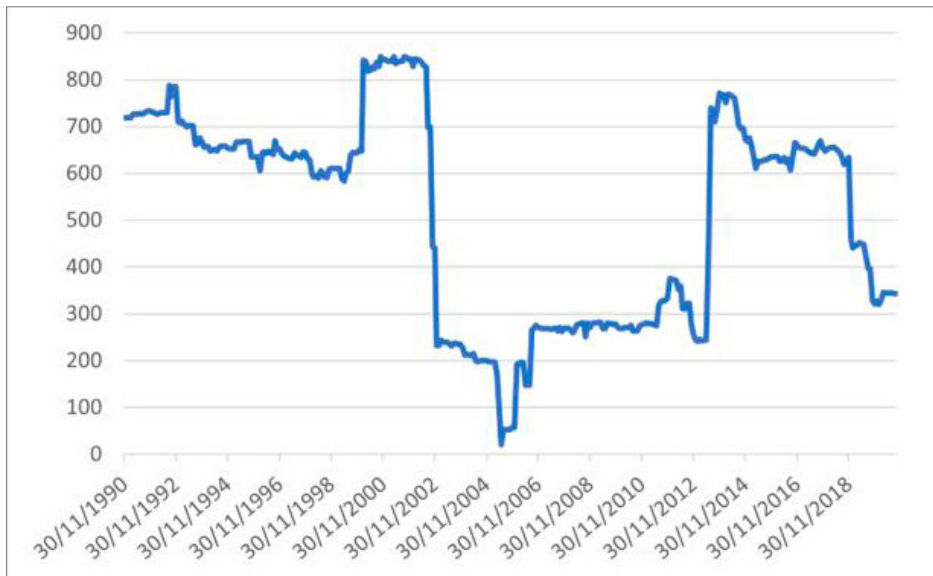


Figure 4: Fiji deployment by gender, 2009–2020



Fiji has a long and proud history of deploying to UN peacekeeping missions. It stands apart from other Pacific island countries contributing to UN peacekeeping. It has served longer than any of its counterparts and deployed thousands of personnel to more missions than any other Pacific island contributor. In October 2020, Fiji was the 42nd largest contributor to UN peacekeeping.

Key trends. Fiji was the first Pacific island country to deploy to a UN peacekeeping mission, sending more than 500 troops overseas to serve in UNIFIL in South Lebanon in 1978.³⁸ Since that deployment, Fijian military, police and corrections officers have served in more than 20 UN peace operations over the past 40 years. Fiji has consistently focused on contributions to missions in the Middle East, maintaining a sizeable presence in Lebanon (UNIFIL) from 1978 to 2003, then again from 2015 to 2018, deploying contingents to the Golan Heights in 2013 (UNDOF), a guard unit to support the political mission in Iraq (UNAMI) since 2006, and various personnel to other missions in the region, including in Iraq following the first Gulf War (UNIKOM), observers to the Middle East (UNTSO), experts on mission to the special political mission in Yemen (UNMHA) and observers to the short-lived observer mission during the Syrian civil war in 2012 (UNSMIS).

In the Asia–Pacific region, Fiji has contributed to missions in Cambodia (UNTAC) and Timor-Leste (UNTAET, UNMISSET and UNMIT). Across the globe, Fiji has also contribute to missions in the disputed region of Abyei between Sudan and South Sudan (UNISFA), Afghanistan (UNAMI), Angola (UNAVEM), Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH), Croatia (UNTAES), Kosovo (UNMIK), Liberia (UNMIL), Rwanda (UNAMIR), Somalia (UNOSOM), South Sudan (UNMISS) and Sudan (UNMIS, UNAMID).

Fiji’s police peacekeeping deployments were focused on Cambodia (UNTAC), Angola (UNAVEM), Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH), Croatia (UNTAES), Kosovo (UNMIK), Liberia (UNMIL) and Darfur (UNAMID), and police and military observers deployed to South Sudan (UNMISS).

Fiji’s contributions to UN peace operations peaked in 2000–2001, when it had total of 849 personnel deployed, with 602 in UNIFIL, 191 in UNTAET and personnel also deployed to Iraq, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo. Its largest commitment to one mission was more than 700 personnel to UNIFIL in the early 1990s. Fiji’s contributions to peacekeeping fell to their lowest in late 2005 (fewer than 30 personnel deployed). The number of Fijian peacekeepers deployed in October 2020 was 344.

Fiji has also deployed corrections officers. There’s currently one corrections officer in UNMISS.³⁹

Women’s participation. Women have been represented in Fiji’s peacekeeping deployments for several decades, and more recently in leadership positions. Unaisi Bolatolu-Vuniwaqa was appointed Police Commissioner of UNMISS in May 2018.⁴⁰ She’s the first woman to serve in the role. A Fijian lieutenant colonel, Siliva Raradoka Druavesi Vananalagi, is also serving as the Chief Observer Group Golan in UNTSO.⁴¹

In October 2020, Fiji’s representation of women in military contingents on missions was at 7%, placing it ahead of the 6.5% target set for 2020. It currently has 21 women serving out of 298 troops deployed. The number of women experts on mission and staff officers has varied, but in October 2020 there were no women in these roles.

Fiji’s representation of women in the police is above target: women make up 55% of police officers deployed (in UNAMID, UNMISS and UNISFA), with 17 women deployed from a total of 31.

For military contingents, women’s representation has been at 10% in some missions, which is above current targets. For instance, the guard unit deployed to UNAMI had 10% women in December 2017 (17 women, 151 men). As one former woman peacekeeper noted, their deployment to these units assisted with tasks such as searching local women.⁴² But women’s levels of participation weren’t higher relatively when double the number of men were deployed, and women’s participation numbers remained relatively static. Women’s representation levels in contingents deployed to UNIFIL, for example, were much lower (around 4% at their peak). Very few military women have served as experts on missions since figures were collected from 2009.

Within the police, women’s representation on deployments has ranged from none through to 30% (although that was when the overall footprint was smaller). Very few women, and in some cases no women, were deployed throughout 2014 and 2015, when numbers of police dropped. Representation of women serving in UNMIL was generally very low or non-existent for periods of time, despite Fiji having 30 police deployed in some instances. Women’s representation in UNMISS and UNAMID tended to be higher.

Rationale. Peacekeeping has been a key multilateral priority for Fiji since the country’s first deployment in 1978. There’s a ‘noble’ aspect to peacekeeping, according to an official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It also enables Fiji to show leadership in the world.⁴³ Fiji has increasingly sought to have its voice included in international discussions on peacekeeping. It has taken part in negotiations of the C-34, delivered statements at the General Assembly’s Fourth Committee, participated in open debates of the Security Council, and regularly highlighted peacekeeping as part of its annual leaders’ statement to the UN General Assembly. No other Pacific island country has engaged that substantively in discussions on peacekeeping reform. Fiji was the only Pacific island country to make pledges at one of the peacekeeping ministerial summits that have been hosted by the UN in recent years. At the summit hosted in London in 2016, Fiji signed onto the communiqué and reiterated its 2015 commitments.⁴⁴

Unlike other Pacific countries, Fiji has focused heavily on certain geographical regions. As one official noted, Fiji is most comfortable deploying to the Middle East,⁴⁵ and that's generally been where its most sizeable military contingent deployments have taken place. The deployment of contingents offers opportunities for reimbursement per soldier by the UN, offering financial incentives for ongoing deployments to UN peacekeeping missions.

The size of Fiji's military and its desire to ensure that personnel are offered opportunities to continue to deploy overseas are likely to have contributed to Fiji's ongoing commitments to UN peacekeeping over the past four decades. As some commentators have pointed out, this is one of the unintended consequences of UN peacekeeping missions.⁴⁶ With many political leaders having previously served in the RFMF on peacekeeping missions, including the current Prime Minister and President, there are ongoing interests in maintaining Fiji's reputation in peacekeeping.

Actors and governance. The main actors are the RFMF, the Ministry of Defence and National Security, the Fiji Police Force, the Fiji Corrections Service and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Most work to advance peacekeeping is done by the Ministry of Defence. There were efforts to establish a peacekeeping unit in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but that didn't eventuate.⁴⁷ Fiji's Permanent Mission to the UN has a defence adviser (from the RFMF) and remains engaged in peacekeeping debates in New York.

Challenges and barriers. Fiji has aspirations to increase the number of its personnel deployed by several hundred, but is cognisant that other troop- and police-contributing countries are coming into UN peacekeeping and the numbers of opportunities are currently decreasing due to the drawdown of missions. Furthermore, the UN has made clear the troop- and police-contributing countries have to have their own equipment when deploying, which has created problems for Fiji, which has been reliant on UN-provided equipment.⁴⁸

These developments are likely to present ongoing challenges for Fiji. Peacekeeping deployments have enabled Fiji to support the growth of its military.⁴⁹ That dynamic has led to concerns that the military was more sizeable and influential than required to defend the small island nation. While peacekeeping is highly lauded, there have been consequences for Fiji's own security over the past 40 years, including coups led by former commanders of Fiji's peacekeeping deployments to Lebanon.⁵⁰

Although we haven't seen the detail, more recent alleged misconduct in the past couple of years by RFMF soldiers in UN peacekeeping missions has threatened to jeopardise Fiji's ongoing deployment to UN peacekeeping, and some personnel have been repatriated due to their poor discipline. According to some of the officials we interviewed, those performance issues may be a legacy from a lapse in standards when Australia and New Zealand suspended their defence cooperation and training with Fiji following the 2006 coup. There were concerns within the UN during that period about the type of peacekeeping training Fiji may have been receiving.⁵¹ Fiji has acknowledged that it 'is making consistent efforts to improve performance and standards'.⁵²

Some officials also acknowledged the need for improvements in post-deployment care. The 'costs' of overseas military service in UN peacekeeping operations aren't well understood; nor is the impact of things such as post-traumatic stress disorder on families and loved ones.

Partners and the region. Countries engaged in providing peacekeeping support to Fiji have included Australia, New Zealand, the US, the UK, Indonesia, Malaysia, China and Russia. Fijian personnel have also travelled abroad to undertake specific peacekeeping training courses and to attend defence colleges. Corrections officers have received training through the Swedish Prison and Probation Service.⁵³

Australian and New Zealand engagement with Fiji has stepped up considerably since the resumption of defence relations in 2014. Both countries are working closely with Fiji to develop Blackrock Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Camp, including significant investment by Australia in the redevelopment of the facility and its infrastructure. Australia and Fiji have signed the Vuvale Partnership, which, among other things, commits Australia and Fiji to enter into a 'peacekeeping partnership' with support for joint ADF-RFMF deployments on peacekeeping missions and training activities. According to Fijian officials, there were plans for five ADF warrant

officers to deploy to UNDOF with Fiji, but the Syrian Government didn't approve their deployment as part of the peacekeeping mission. The ADF would have had a role training personnel to use Bushmaster protected mobility vehicles and maintain them.⁵⁴ The ADF continues to provide strategic lift in support of Fiji's deployments to the MFO, UNDOF and UNAMI.

The US is working with the Fijians to stand up Fiji's Formed Police Unit (FPU),⁵⁵ although that's proving a challenge, given that Fijian police aren't currently armed but need to be in FPUs. Fiji is also working with the Nevada National Guard as part of the US National Guard's State Partnership Program.

China has provided peacekeeping support to Fiji by providing funding support for peacekeeping training and equipment and hosting officers undertaking courses in China.⁵⁶ Similarly, Russia has provided arms and equipment to support Fiji in its peacekeeping deployments.⁵⁷ Some of these developments have highlighted that the 'regional security orthodoxy' continues to change, and that traditional partners such as Australia and New Zealand will continue to face competition in the region.⁵⁸

Fiji has expressed interest in deploying with a Melanesian Spearhead Group unit at a later stage, but those discussions are still in the planning stages, as the cost implications need to be understood. Fiji has also explored training and co-deployment options with PNG.⁵⁹

Future plans and opportunities. Fiji wants to take the lead regionally. The Blackrock Camp offers an opportunity. There are aspirations for this to be a regional peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief training centre, particularly given its location close to an international airport. Trainers have been sent abroad for training (including to Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia and Malaysia). Fiji will need to work with partners and the UN to identify training needs and gaps and what comparative advantages Blackrock may be able to offer compared to other training centres in the region. A more thorough understanding of the varying levels of aspirations and capacity across the Pacific region to deploy to UN missions would help Fiji offer well-targeted and well-rounded training.

Fiji is in a unique position compared to its Pacific counterparts, given the size of its military and the breadth of deployments among its military and police. It has leverage and influence within the wider UN system, having previously chaired the G77 plus group in the UN, and as a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, which has sway on peacekeeping politics and policies in New York. There are opportunities here to amplify the voice of Pacific countries on peacekeeping if there's interest and appetite for it in the region.

Fiji has a good story to tell when it comes to supporting women's participation in peacekeeping, as women serve in leadership positions in missions. However, the levels of Fiji's deployment of women across the police and military has not always been consistent, and attentiveness will be required to ensure women continue to be well represented in deployments. There's opportunity for Fiji to lead the way as the UN drives contributors to meet the targets in the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy. This would also position Fiji well, as posts and deployments remain selective.

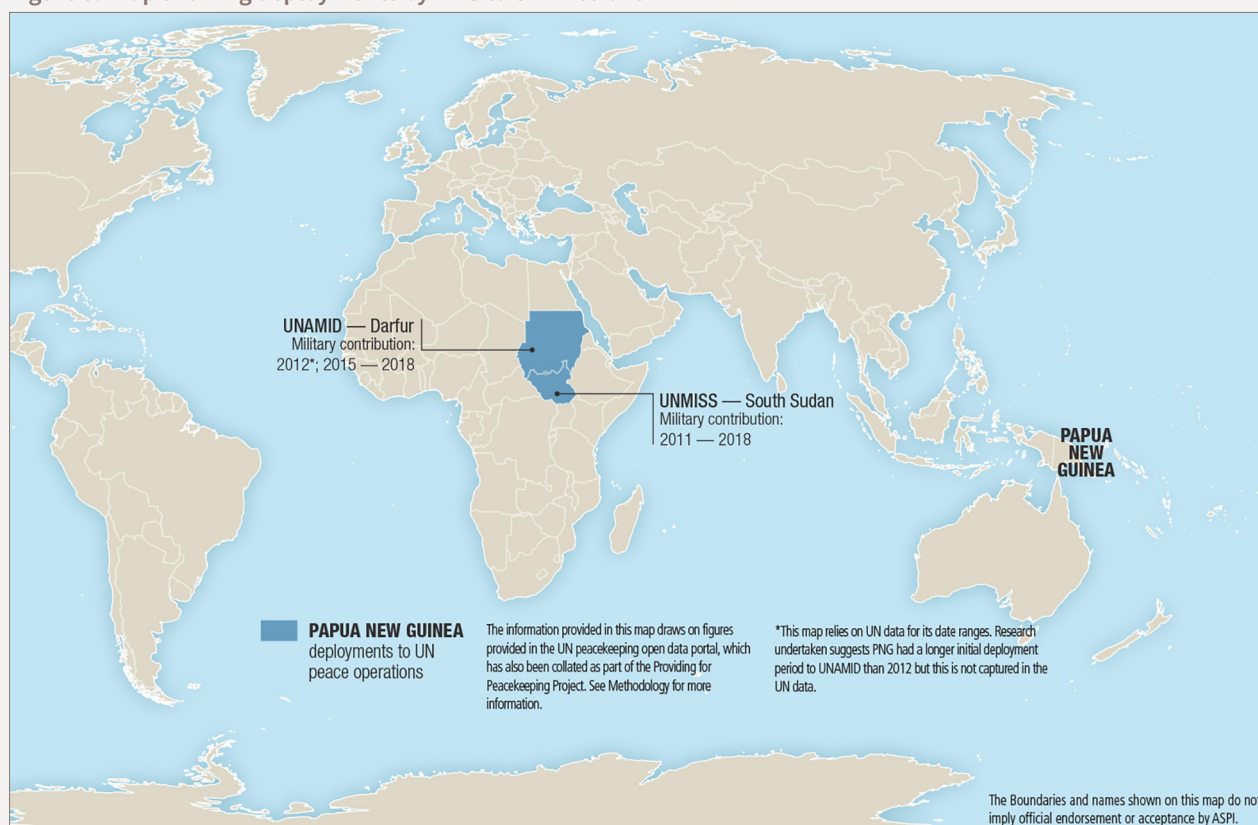
Fiji would like to deploy more personnel but is likely to be restricted by how competitive it remains compared to other countries contributing. Developing niche capabilities and skills that address the range of gaps in existing missions would put it in a better position in future. That would require it to adjust its model for and approach to peacekeeping. Partners have an important role to play. Australia and Fiji currently have plans to undertake a bilateral peacekeeping dialogue and to develop a memorandum of understanding to manage their peacekeeping partnership.

Strength of military and police. Fiji has around 3,500 active personnel in the serving in the Republic of Fiji Military Forces, including approximately 139 women.⁶⁰ The Fiji Police Force has approximately 4,283 personnel,⁶¹ of which 944 are women.

Papua New Guinea

First deployment	November 2011, UNMISS (South Sudan)
Period deployed	November 2011 – November 2018
Missions	Two missions (South Sudan, Darfur)
Highest number deployed	4
Current number deployed (September 2020)	0

Figure 5: Map showing deployments by PNG to UN missions



Key trends. PNG’s experience in deploying to peacekeeping environments started like that of many other Pacific nations, by participating in RAMSI.

On UN missions, from late 2011 to late 2018, PNG deployed from one to four personnel on peacekeeping missions. There is a discrepancy in UN data making it difficult to determine the precise start date of the deployment to UNAMID. Open source research suggests it was in late 2011.⁶² There are no members of the PNGDF currently deployed to UN peacekeeping missions.

No personnel from the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (RPNGC) have previously deployed to a UN mission.

Women’s participation. No women have deployed from the PNGDF or RPNGC to a UN peacekeeping mission.

There are more women in the RPNGC than in the PNGDF. Rough statistics based on public data from 2018 show that there were only 170 women in the PNGDF out of a then-total of 3,000 personnel,⁶³ equating to roughly 5% of the military.⁶⁴ No women currently serve in combat roles, instead filling support roles.⁶⁵ The first woman to become a sergeant in the PNGDF was promoted to that rank in October 2019, which indicates slow signs of improvement.⁶⁶ One interview with a PNG Government official noted that there was a need to increase women's participation in the PNGDF. Considering that the UN has gender deployment targets, when PNG wishes to redeploy to UN missions, it will have to consider deploying women personnel.

Rationale. A number of reasons have been cited for PNG's desire to participate in UN peacekeeping missions. The notion of 'nation building' was raised as a key motivator. This is more about building national pride and less about the professionalisation of the force. The constitutional requirement to contribute to the international order also drives PNG's deployment ambitions. While these factors drive PNG's desire to participate, it has previously been noted in speeches to the UN General Assembly that domestic economic growth is a necessary precondition for the country's deployment of peacekeepers.

Actors and governance. From 2008, discussions were underway for PNGDF to participate in UN missions.⁶⁷ In 2010, amendments to the Defence Force Act were passed to allow soldiers from PNG to participate in international combat or civil operations.⁶⁸ Even though both the PNGDF and the RPNGC had previously deployed to RAMSI, the amendments clarified the legal authority under which international participation in missions operated.

When they are deploying, peacekeepers are selected via a call for nominations. After selection, PNGDF personnel attend pre-deployment training with partners (usually Australia, New Zealand or the US). PNG's most significant defence and security partner is Australia. There's a deep, general defence relationship that spans a very wide range of activities. Indeed, PNG is the biggest element in Australia's Defence Cooperation Program. For example, following the passing of the amendments to the Defence Force Act in 2010, a training team from the ADF, alongside instructors from the Australian Federal Police, the Malaysian Peacekeeping Training Centre and the International Committee of the Red Cross, was sent to train and accredit 15 PNGDF soldiers and five RPNGC police officers as UN military observers.⁶⁹

In 2015, a new UN peacekeeping directorate was created by the PNGDF to manage and support deployments. Unlike many of the other case-study countries, PNG has a military adviser to its Permanent Mission to the UN in New York, which can greatly assist in facilitating deployments.

Challenges and barriers. A significant barrier to PNG's participation in UN peacekeeping is inadequate resourcing. Both the RPNGC and the PNGDF commit significant resources to ensuring security domestically, especially in undertaking deployments to the PNG Highlands and increasingly on the border with Indonesia. Both forces intend to increase their forces significantly and, if they're resourced to do so, there may be greater opportunities and resources to commit to re-establishing UN peacekeeping deployments.

Partners and the region. One returned military member interviewed for the project noted that Australia was a key partner on peacekeeping. He did his pre-deployment training in Australia and used Australian-issued equipment. While deployed to South Sudan, PNG personnel were supported by Australian personnel also deployed to that mission.

Future intentions and opportunities. There are aspirations by the PNG security forces to redeploy to peacekeeping missions, but the capacity and financial circumstances of the PNGDF are limiting those ambitions. Domestic deployments require significant resourcing from the country's security forces. Until there's greater expansion of the forces, there'll be limited scope to contribute to UN missions. Additionally, ambitions have previously been hampered by administrative challenges and delays in information flow between key stakeholders, presenting another opportunity for improvement ahead of any future deployments.

Strength of military and police. Currently, the PNGDF has 5,000 members, of whom 3,300 are active force personnel. There are ambitions to grow the PNGDF to 10,000 by 2030. The RPNGC has 7,500 officers, of whom 6,500 are sworn members.⁷⁰

Samoa

First deployment	June 2000, UNTAET (Timor-Leste)
Period deployed	June 2000 to present
Missions	8 missions (Timor-Leste, Liberia, Darfur, Sudan and South Sudan)
Highest number deployed	50 (October to December 2006)
Current number deployed (October 2020)	19
Percentage of women deployed (October 2020)	10.5% (2 women)—below target

Figure 6: Map showing deployments by Samoa to UN missions

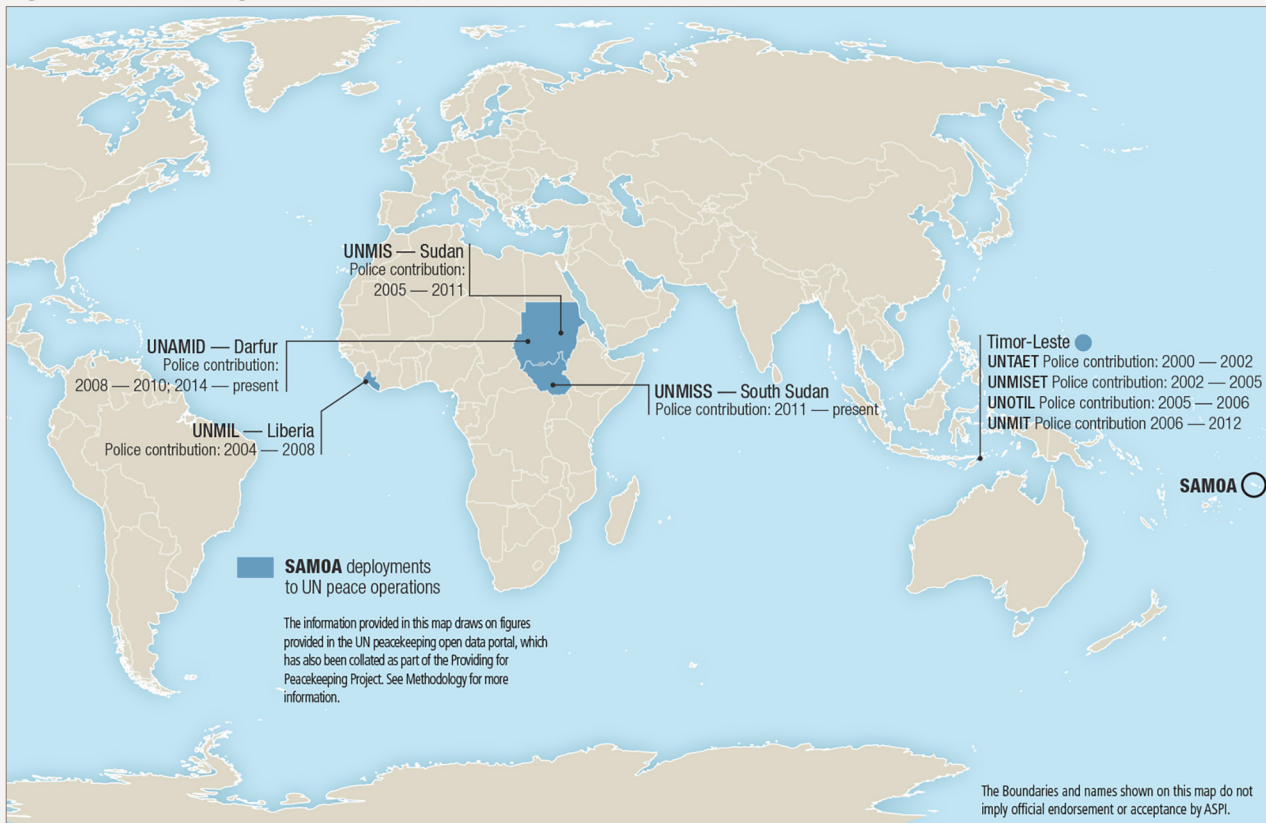


Figure 7: Samoa total deployment, 2001–2020

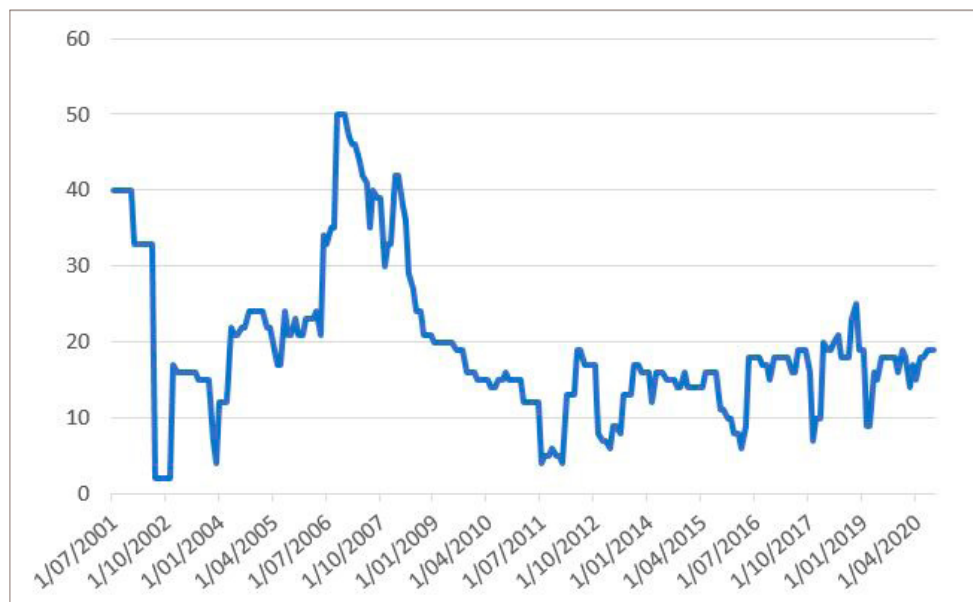
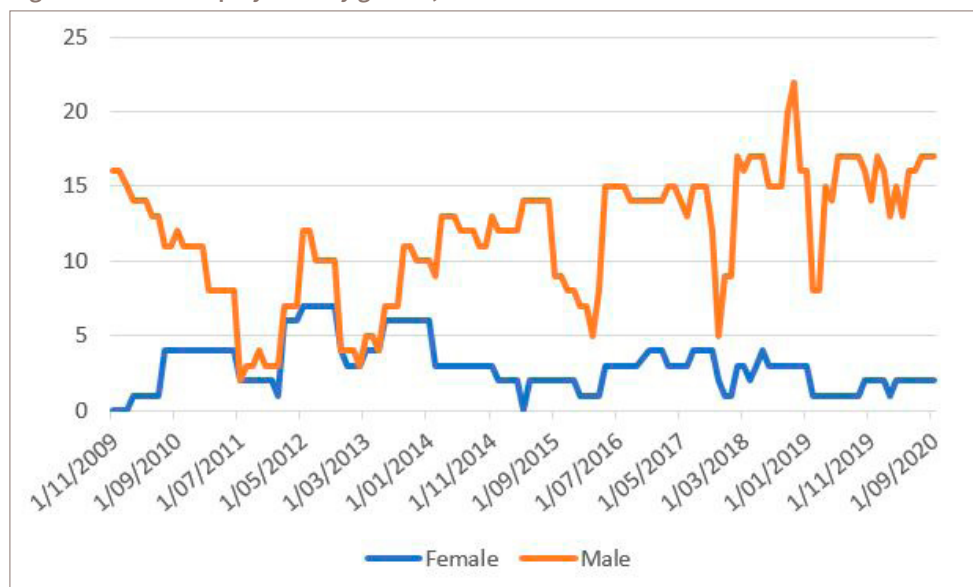


Figure 8: Samoa deployment by gender, 2009–2020



Key trends. Samoa deployed to its first UN peacekeeping mission in June 2000, when it sent 25 police to UNTAET in Timor-Leste. Over the past 20 years, it has deployed to a total of eight different UN peace operations in four countries. Four of those missions were in Timor-Leste (UNTAET, UNMISSET, UNOTIL and UNMIT), while the other four were in Africa in Liberia (UNMIL), Sudan (UNMIS), Darfur (UNAMID) and South Sudan (UNMISS).

Samoa’s contributions to UN peace operations peaked between October to December 2006, when it had 50 peacekeepers deployed in three missions.⁷¹ Its largest commitment to one mission was 40 police personnel to UNTAET between July and December 2001. Nineteen peacekeepers were deployed in October 2020.

Women's participation. There have been brief windows of time when there was gender parity in Samoa's deployments, but those have often been when the numbers deployed have been historically low (for instance, in 2012 and 2013). Women have deployed to all missions in which Samoa has deployed since 2009 (UNAMID, UNMIS, UNMISS and UNMIT), although very few have deployed to UNAMID. Samoa is currently behind the representation targets for women serving as individual police officers in peacekeeping missions (the current target is above 20%).

Rationale. Samoa's contribution is driven by a 'firm belief in the role United Nations peacekeeping plays in helping eliminate the causes of conflict and in bringing peace and stability'.⁷² That's the strongest narrative that comes through the past decade of UN General Assembly debate statements made by Samoa. Financial motivations were another rationale noted in interviews. One returned serviceperson noted how allowances benefit the Samoan economy broadly.⁷³

Actors and governance. Samoa doesn't have a military. The Samoa Police Service is the primary security force in the country.

Samoa has given 20 years of uninterrupted service to UN peacekeeping missions. This is facilitated through a selection and testing process. At this stage, UN representatives come to Samoa every two years to conduct that process. At the first stage, an expression of interest is requested and is currently limited to officers who have served for at least five years. It's a very competitive process; one round of selection for peacekeeping deployment attracted more than 100 candidates, of whom only eight were ultimately selected.⁷⁴ Preparation for testing is now also facilitated for those interested in deploying, which has greatly increased the number of personnel passing the selection process.

Challenges and barriers. In an interview with a Samoan police official,⁷⁵ it was noted that not having a dedicated officer or adviser for peacekeeping based in New York hampered access to opportunities that could be taken by Samoan police personnel.

Some returned personnel noted that there wasn't adequate support during and after deployment. For example, one returnee noted that the price of accommodation in Darfur was high, and it was difficult to cover on the remuneration she was provided. Another returnee noted that she was left out-of-pocket by the UN after missing a connecting flight in Hong Kong, as the UN didn't see that as its responsibility after her deployment had ended.

A Samoan official noted that there needed to be greater support after returning from deployment, such as an exit program or better health checks by the UN before repatriation.

Partners and the region. Australia and New Zealand are key partners of the Samoa Police Service. It was also noted that an informal connection has been made between Fijian personnel co-located with Samoan personnel while deployed.

Future plans and opportunities. In previous statements to UN General Assembly debates in 2012 and 2013, Samoa expressed its intention to increase its contribution of police personnel to UN peacekeeping missions.⁷⁶

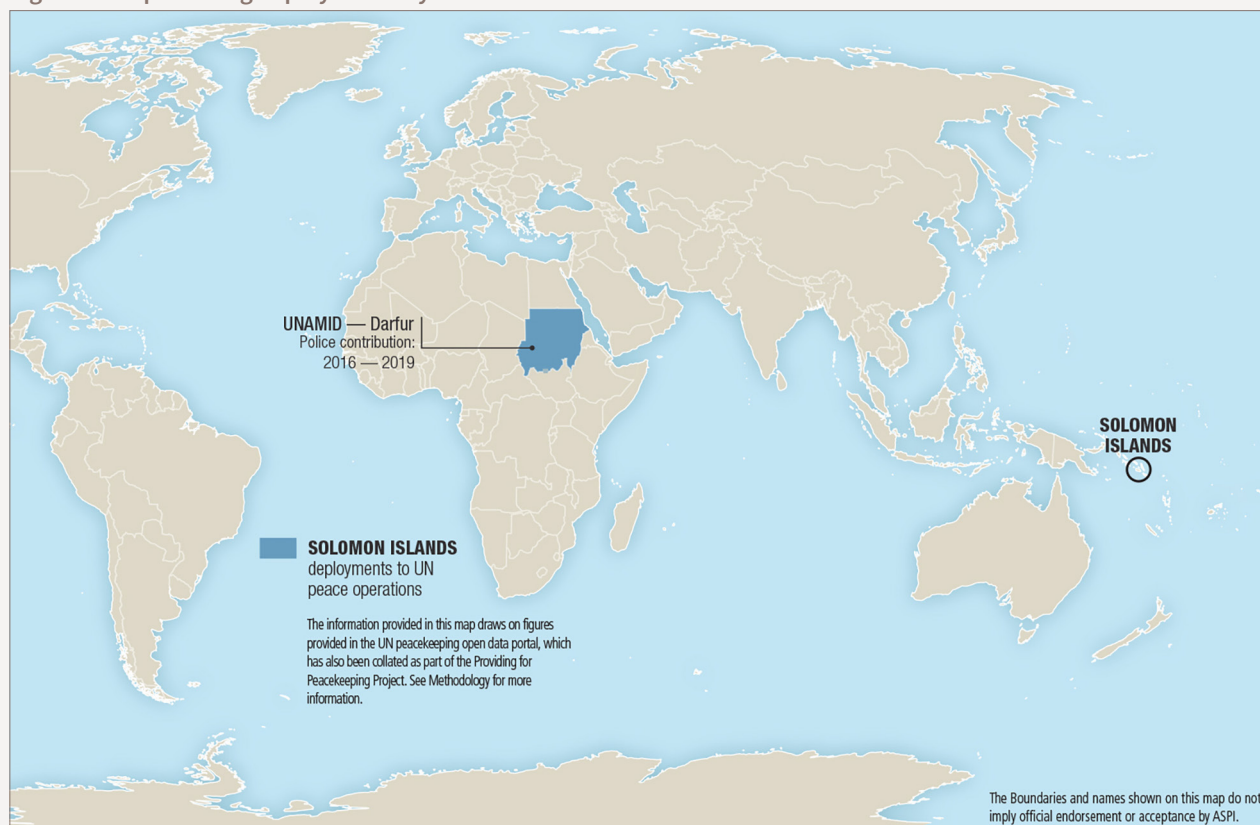
In an interview, a Samoan police official expressed interest in expanding the mission footprint of Samoan personnel and deploying Samoan personnel to other missions.

Strength of military and police. The Samoa Police Service has a strength of 609 personnel, of which 25.58% are women.⁷⁷

Solomon Islands

First deployment	August 2016, UNAMID (Darfur, Sudan)
Period deployed	August 2016 – May 2019
Missions	1 mission (Sudan)
Highest number deployed	7 (June to September 2018)
Current number deployed (October 2020)	0
Percentage of women currently deployed	n.a. (2 women deployed on previous occasions)

Figure 9: Map showing deployments by Solomon Islands to UN missions



Key trends. Solomon Islands has deployed to only one peacekeeping mission: UNAMID in Sudan. It first started deploying in 2016. Its contributions peaked in mid-2018, when seven personnel were deployed at one time. Currently, it has no personnel deployed.

Women's participation. Over the first 21 months of Solomon Islands' deployment to UNAMID (August 2016 – June 2018), no women were deployed. From June 2018, two women were consistently deployed until deployments ceased in May 2019. There was a four-month period during which two women and five men were deployed; however, after that, deployments dropped to only one man deployed alongside the two women until deployments ceased, meaning that there was a brief window of time when female deployments outnumbered male deployments.

Rationale. During the UN General Assembly's 70th session in 2015,⁷⁸ then-Prime Minister Sogavare, first noted his country's willingness to deploy to UN peacekeeping missions. Solomon Islands' contribution to peacekeeping was an initiative borne out of its own experience of peacekeeping in RAMSI. It was an opportunity for Solomon Islands to demonstrate its success in transforming from a conflict-affected country as well as to give back to the international community, which supported that transformation. One senior official noted that it was also a way of maintaining capabilities gained through RAMSI.⁷⁹

On an individual level, during interviews it was noted that the pay conditions for personnel while deployed were much better than while they were working in Solomon Islands. The deployments are seen as both prestigious and lucrative, which helps improve the standard of living back home.

Actors and governance. Solomon Islands doesn't have a military. The Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) is the primary security force in the country, which is overseen by the Ministry of Police, National Security and Correctional Services. Personnel are deployed solely from the RSIPF at this stage. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade and its Permanent Mission to the UN in New York also have a role to play, but a government official noted that there are varying levels of engagement from the relevant desk, sometimes resulting in delays.⁸⁰

For the selection process, an expression-of-interest system was used. The first screening of candidates was conducted by RAMSI, but since then it's been operated by the RSIPF. After the expression of interest, interviews before a selection panel were undertaken before medical and driving tests.

A Solomon Islands official noted that internal systems weren't yet adequately prepared to welcome returnees and maintain the skills they gained while deployed, but this is an issue that the institutions are working to improve. For example, some areas of the RSIPF—such as the Police Response Team—have been identified as more appropriate for returnees to use their skills. Despite that, a senior Solomon Islands official noted that the RSIPF has derived benefits from key skills developed while members were deployed, such as problem solving and leadership. Officers' work performance improved upon their return, and a number of returned personnel have been promoted.⁸¹

Challenges and barriers. One former peacekeeper noted that the current RSIPF process allows only those up to a certain rank to apply for deployment. This was the only rank-limitation noted in our interviews across the Pacific. That restriction, if kept in place, may limit the potential of Solomon Islands to obtain senior leadership positions in missions. Similarly, those interviewed noted the benefit of higher ranked personnel being exposed to different experiences while deployed on UN missions and the potential to implement change within the RSIPF based on those experience upon return.

A number of interviewees noted that there could be greater support during and after deployments. Rest and recuperation breaks weren't seen as adequate, particularly as it was impossible to travel home for those periods. Additionally, a number of personnel were stranded without the correct visas while transiting home. Personnel were left out-of-pocket, and the UN didn't take responsibility for the problem. Issues such as those create potential barriers for future deployments, as associated costs to the Solomon Islands Government may hamper its future ability to deploy, and the potential to incur such costs again may increase apprehension about future deployments.

On the training side, the UN team sent to assess personnel in Solomon Islands noted that key English language skills needed to be improved for deployments.

Partners and the region. Personnel from Solomon Islands deployed to UN missions have undertaken their pre-deployment training in Australia, except initial training for the first peacekeepers sent from Solomon Islands, which was undertaken by RAMSI. New Zealand is also seen as a key partner for supporting Solomon Islands' peacekeeping deployments. Personnel who deployed to Darfur acknowledged the support and assistance of their Pacific colleagues from Fiji and Samoa while in the mission area.⁸²

Discussions are currently underway with Fiji for further partnership, and Solomon Islands is assessing the financial implications of that. It has also signed memorandums of understanding on police cooperation with PNG and Vanuatu, but the memorandums don't include peacekeeping provisions.

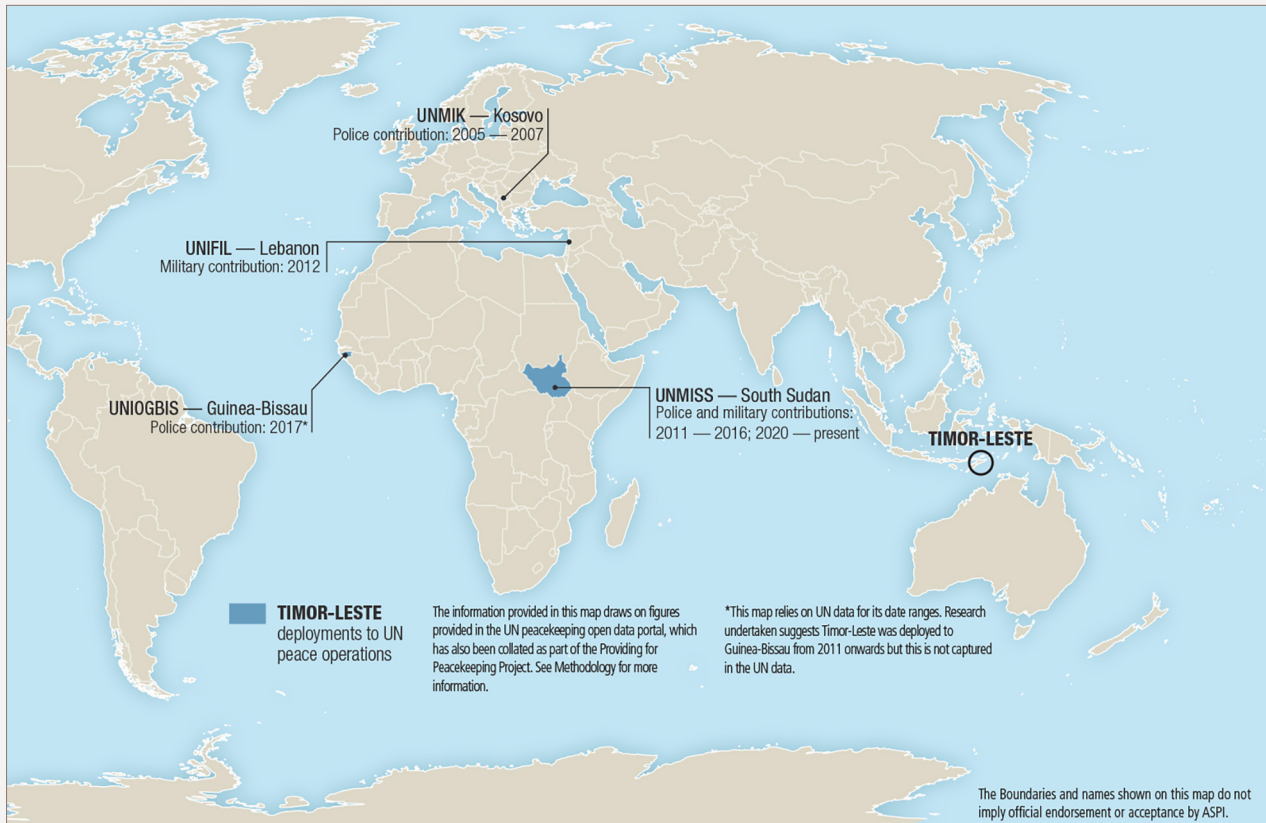
Future plans and opportunities. There are discussions underway currently with Fiji for how the Blackrock training facility could be used to support Solomon Islands' training needs and aspirations. One official noted that Solomon Islands still sees itself in its infancy of deployment and is not yet prepared to pursue leadership positions in missions, but that's something that would be of interest further in the future.⁸³

Strength of military and police. The strength of the RSIPF is around 1,555 personnel,⁸⁴ of which 23% are women.⁸⁵

Timor-Leste

First UN peacekeeping deployment	December 2005, UNMIK (Kosovo)
Period deployed to UN peacekeeping	December 2005 – November 2007; November 2011 – February 2016; July 2017; February 2020 – present. See note on map.
Missions	4 missions (Kosovo, South Sudan, Lebanon, Guinea-Bissau)
Highest number deployed	12 (February to May 2012)
Current number deployed (October 2020)	4 (individual police)
Percentage of women deployed	50% (2 women)—above target

Figure 10: Map showing deployments by Timor-Leste to UN missions



Timor-Leste's commitment to UN peacekeeping is intertwined with the country's creation. In 1999, an Australian-led UN-sanctioned coalition—INTERFET—intervened in Timor-Leste to control the political and security crisis unfolding there. Later, a series of UN peacekeeping missions were established successively.⁸⁶ As the only country in the Pacific region to host a UN peacekeeping mission, Timor-Leste's experience with peacekeeping is unique and provides it with experiences that it can share with other countries where its personnel may be deployed (as was the case when Timorese peacekeepers deployed to Guinea-Bissau). This is reflected by Timor-Leste's engagement and role hosting the secretariat of the g7+, which focuses on mutual support among fragile countries.

Key trends. Timor-Leste has deployed military experts on missions and troops and police to four peacekeeping missions over the past 15 years. It first provided a small police unit to UNMIK in Kosovo from December 2005 to November 2007. Timor-Leste contributed troops to UNIFIL from February 2012 to May 2012, sending an engineering platoon to embed with the Portuguese in Lebanon. The country's more recent contributions to peacekeeping missions has come in the form of contributing military experts on missions. Between November 2011 and February 2016, except for short periods, from one to three Timorese experts were deployed to UNMISS. Likewise, police officers from Timor-Leste deployed to Guinea-Bissau between 2011 and 2017. Currently, Timor-Leste contributes four individual police officers to UNMISS.

Women's participation. In the past, one woman from the National Police of Timor-Leste (PNTL) deployed to Guinea-Bissau. Currently, the PNTL deployment to UNMISS has gender parity. Timor-Leste Defence Force (F-FDTL) hasn't deployed any women to UN peacekeeping missions. There are currently no females above the rank of captain in the F-FDTL, meaning that there are few if any opportunities to deploy them into individual military observer roles on mission.⁸⁷

Rationale. There's a strong desire to give back to the international community. In the words of one F-FDTL officer, 'Today we need to support other countries facing struggles as we did in the past'.⁸⁸ The opportunity to raise the identity, profile and culture of Timor-Leste through peacekeeping abroad is another motivation, as is potential financial remuneration for individuals. Political figures also have a role in influencing Timor-Leste's engagement in peacekeeping. For instance, former President Jose Ramos-Horta has been influential, encouraging Timor-Leste to deploy in Guinea Bissau, where he was the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the mission.

Actors and governance. In Timor-Leste, the Ministry of Defence and Ministry for Interior are the key agencies for peacekeeping policy, which is operationalised through both the F-FDTL and the PNTL. The Peacekeeping Training Centre (CTOAP) was opened in 2018 to assist in fulfilling the country's deployment aspirations, particularly for the F-FDTL. Military expert on mission courses are a current focus of CTOAP. Candidates for the course are identified by CTOAP's Chief of Staff among lieutenants and captains.

There have been some efforts to develop a more strategic approach to peacekeeping training engagement in Timor-Leste. For instance, in 2017, the General Chief of Staff, F-FDTL issued a Directive on Peace Support Operations Training, which articulated responsibilities for and guidance on capacity building and training to support F-FDTL's engagement in peace operations.⁸⁹

Challenges and barriers. When the F-FDTL expressed interest in deploying to UN peacekeeping again in 2017, there was a deficiency in foundational military skills that needed to be addressed. The F-FDTL hasn't deployed an operational infantry unit, limiting its military skills and experience on operations. Personal safety is also consequently a key risk.

Language skills are a key barrier for the Lusophone/Tetun-speaking country. To overcome that barrier, English-language training courses are a focus for CTOAP and the Australian Defence Cooperation Program in Timor-Leste. This is less of a concern if F-FDTL or PNTL are embedded with contingents that are self-contained, which is a model that the Portuguese have been exploring based on their experience working with the Timorese in Lebanon. Coordinating and managing different offers from partners will remain an ongoing challenge for Timor-Leste. In the words of one interviewee, there's a risk that Timor-Leste is being colonised with military advisers, and the Timorese need to be taking the lead.⁹⁰ This requires a clear strategy regarding its goals for UN peacekeeping, which may help to clarify expectations and manage offers.

Partners and the region. In February 2020, Timor-Leste redeployed peacekeepers to UNMISS after not deploying any peacekeepers since July 2017. Partnerships are key for Timor-Leste's re-engagement in peacekeeping.

Peacekeeping is a second line of effort as part of Australia's Defence Cooperation Program in Timor-Leste. The ADF has been actively engaged in supporting Timor-Leste's engagement with the UN, supporting visits to UN headquarters to meet officials and discuss future training recognition opportunities, as well as attending the annual International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres conference in Peru in 2019.

Portugal is another primary partner and has a unique relationship with Timor-Leste, demonstrated by the fact that some Portuguese advisers are supported and funded in country by the F-FDTL. Portugal has focused on training gendarme and special forces personnel to accompany Portuguese deployments. An invitation to the F-FDTL to deploy with a Portuguese contingent in the Central African Republic was under discussion in late 2019. New Zealand, Indonesia, Malaysia, the US and China are also present in the defence and security training space in Timor-Leste.

Future plans and opportunities. Plans to increase Timor-Leste's current contributions are already underway. Based on our interviews in Timor-Leste, there are aspirations for the country to contribute larger numbers of peacekeepers in the future, including as part of FPUs (although equipment remains a barrier).

CTOAP offers opportunities for Timor-Leste to engage with partners and the region on peacekeeping training. The centre is already offering military expert on mission courses, which have included Australian and New Zealand participants. There are plans to include a military observer course and to invite participants from Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore and Fiji, among other countries, to participate. Timor-Leste is aiming to have its courses recognised by the UN by 2021, but the ongoing effects of the Covid-19 pandemic may delay that. The F-FDTL has also expressed some interest in exploring secondments to the Office of Military Affairs in New York, the posting of a military adviser to the Timorese Permanent Mission, or both.

Strength of military and police. The F-FDTL has 2,158 personnel with women making up around 10.8% of the force. The PNTL has 4,081 personnel with women making up around 15% of the force.⁹¹

Tonga

First deployment	n.a.
Period deployed	n.a.
Missions	No deployments to UN peace operations. Tonga has deployed to Bougainville, RAMSI and on coalition operations in Iraq and Afghanistan
Highest number deployed	n.a.
Current number deployed (August 2020)	n.a.
Percentage of women deployed currently	n.a.

Key trends. Tonga hasn't deployed to a UN peacekeeping mission, but it's eager to explore future opportunities for deployment by its military and police personnel.

Most of Tonga's operational experience serving overseas has taken place as part of coalition deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. The US and UK, respectively, provided support to enable Tongan military personnel to deploy to those operations. Tonga's understanding of peacekeeping has been shaped largely through its deployments to Bougainville and as part of RAMSI. Although Tonga hasn't deployed to any UN missions, it has gained experience in peacekeeping training exercises, taking part in the US-led Global Peace Operations Initiative peace operations training exercise Khaan Quest in Mongolia with 46 other countries.⁹²

Tonga isn't currently deployed on any overseas operations.

Women's participation. Women from His Majesty's Armed Forces in Tonga served in RAMSI, Afghanistan and Bougainville, but weren't deployed to Iraq.⁹³ However, women primarily served in support roles, engaging with locals. One official we interviewed noted that Tonga was trying to increase the representation of women in its military up to 9%–10%.⁹⁴ Considerable reform will be required, as only six years ago rules were changed to allow women in the Tongan military to marry. The Tongan military is starting to open trades to women (for example, two women are undertaking patrol boat training). After RAMSI, there was an appreciation of the role of women in the military, particularly in peacekeeping. As a consequence, Tonga started sending women to training in Australia and New Zealand.

Women's representation in the police is around 20%. Currently, two of the three deputy commissioners are women. There's a 50/50 policy in place for recruitment, and women made up 60% of applicants at the time of our interviews.

Rationale. Historical links and regional security have driven Tonga's participation in overseas military operations. In the case of Iraq and Afghanistan, historical relationships with the US and the UK were motivating factors for Tonga to provide personnel. Similarly, regional interests and partnerships with countries in the Pacific motivated Tonga to contribute to regional peacekeeping missions.

Contributions to overseas operations have been aided by financial incentives. Such deployments offer lucrative employment opportunities for military personnel. However, civil society raised concerns that some of the deployments would have impacts on families when soldiers returned (due to their exposure to trauma), and may contribute to a 'coup culture' like that in Fiji.⁹⁵ Some civil society representatives expressed concern that the wider community wasn't engaged in a more comprehensive discussion about overseas deployments.

Similar rationales are likely to drive Tonga's contribution to UN peacekeeping. There are financial incentives, as well as operational experience to be gained. In the words of one official, 'Peacekeeping can be a seasonal worker program.'⁹⁶ The police have always wanted to contribute to peacekeeping, but, according to some government

officials we interviewed, haven't had the political will. Three of the motivations for police are upskilling, gaining international stature and supporting world peace. Many also recalled the financial benefits for individual officers when they deployed to RAMSI. The biggest limitation is likely to be a lack of international pressure to do more in peacekeeping, as that tended to drive past overseas operational commitments. Security concerns about the deployment environment may also guide decisions. For instance, Afghanistan was viewed as safer than Iraq when the deployment took place. One military official noted that South Sudan was a high-risk mission.

Actors and governance. The background of the sovereign or the Foreign Minister is essential in gaining support for a deployment and has added weight to previous deployments in coalitions. According to officials we interviewed, there's generally no interest in peacekeeping if the Foreign Minister doesn't have a background in the military. Similarly, the Tongan Parliament has also been actively engaged in debates about previous military deployments, including to Afghanistan. Other actors engaged in discussions about peacekeeping policy include the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, His Majesty's Armed Forces and the Tongan Police Service.

Challenges and barriers. Tonga doesn't have the capacity to field a contingent to a peacekeeping mission, and acknowledged that it would be unable to afford to do so, given the investment that would be required up front to establish and sustain the effort. When Tonga deployed to RAMSI, for instance, some defence skills (such as legal skills) were provided by qualified civilians. There are also concerns about the need for the force at home, particularly in the context of security demands such as humanitarian relief and disaster response.

There have been some discussions with Fiji about partnering on deployment, but, as one official noted 'We don't want to learn bad habits from Fiji'.⁹⁷ Whether that view is widespread across the government is unclear. However, there was interest in military observer positions.

A senior official acknowledged that many serving Tongans have struggled with the deployment cycle. If Tongans were to deploy to a UN peacekeeping mission, there are concerns that they wouldn't be reimbursed quickly enough to cover costs.

The Police Commissioner is interested in UN deployments, but training and processes are obstacles. The police service is also understaffed. And, unfortunately, it's the best people who want to go to peacekeeping missions. The police service isn't engaged with the Permanent Mission in New York on the issue of deployments. If that avenue were there, then the police could probably explore it further.

Partners and the region. Tonga works closely with Australia, New Zealand, the UK, the US and France. Notably, it's working with the Nevada National Guard as part of the US National Guard's State Partnership Program in a partnership established in 2014.⁹⁸ The focus includes cooperation on issues such as women, peace and security and food security.⁹⁹ Tonga also hosts Exercise Takaful with Australia, New Zealand, New Caledonia, the Nevada National Guard and the US Marine Corps.¹⁰⁰ There's a tendency to approach Australia first, as many have links to the Australian Defence College.¹⁰¹ Australia has provided pre-deployment training in support of missions such as RAMSI. China was also noted as a potential supplier of equipment for involvement in the UN, if Tonga requires it.¹⁰²

In the area of regional engagement, there's been some discussion of a Pacific police contingent (such as an FPU). There's also some information sharing among the Pacific's chiefs of police.

Humanitarian relief, disaster response and civil emergencies remain the primary demands on the military and police. Representatives from civil society noted that there would have been chaos if the army hadn't intervened after the 2006 riots. It should be noted that the ADF and the New Zealand Defence Force deployed in response to the riots at the request of the government.

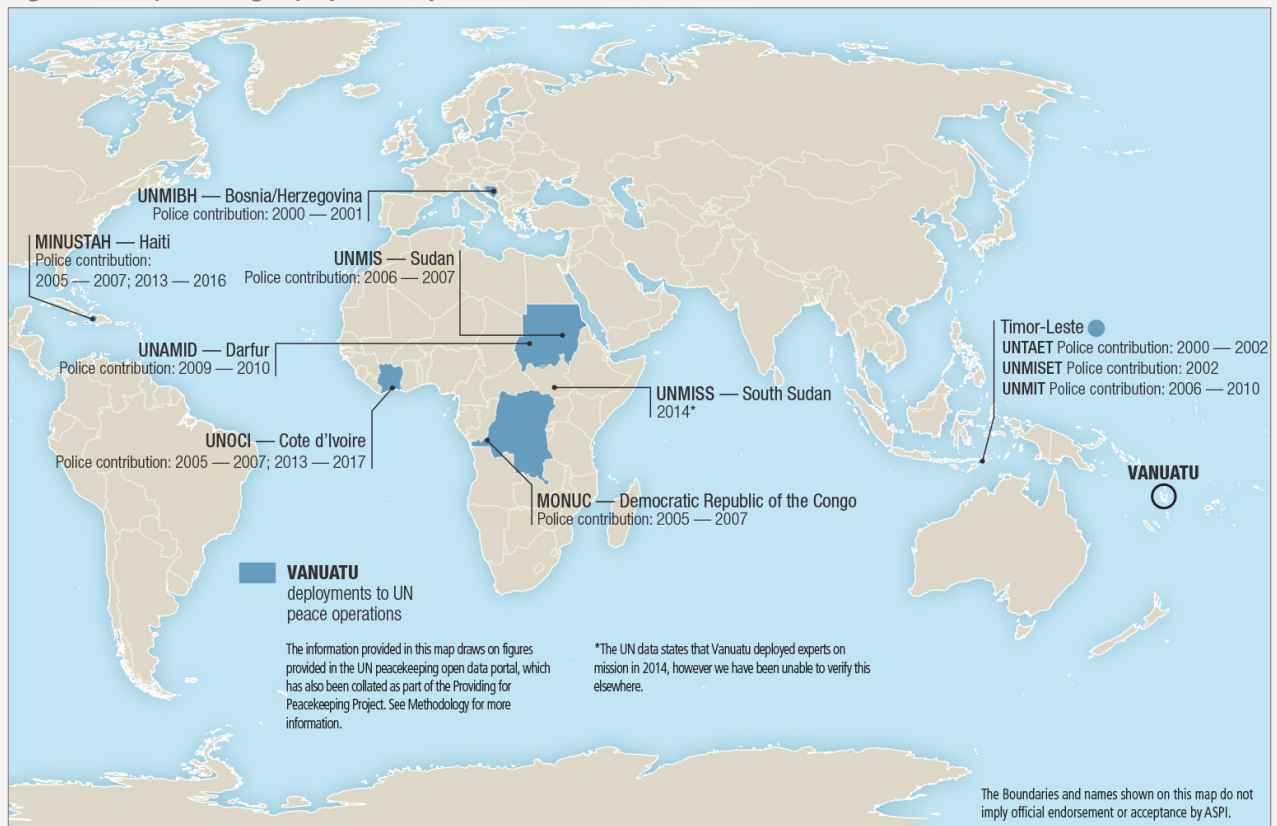
Future plans and opportunities. Tonga has an interest in contributing to UN peacekeeping, but it's still trying to determine the best way of doing so without jeopardising its national security interests. Cooperating with regional partners may be a way to fulfil those ambitions.

Strength of military and police. His Majesty's Armed Forces have a strength of approximately 450 personnel. The Tonga Police Service has around 473 personnel, of which approximately 20% are women.¹⁰³

Vanuatu

First deployments	2000, UNTAET (Timor-Leste) and UNMIBH (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
Period deployed	2000 – July 2010; October 2013 – January 2017
Missions	10 missions (Timor-Leste, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sudan, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Darfur, Haiti, Cote d'Ivoire). See note on map.
Highest number deployed	47 (July 2009)
Current number deployed (October 2020)	0

Figure 11: Map showing deployments by Vanuatu to UN missions



Like many other Pacific island nations, Vanuatu doesn't have a formal military. Instead, alongside the Vanuatu Police Force and the Police Maritime Wing is the paramilitary force known as the Vanuatu Mobile Force. All three services have previously been deployed in peacekeeping efforts. In 1994, 50 members of the Vanuatu Mobile Force were deployed for the first time in a peacekeeping capacity to Bougainville.¹⁰⁴ Since then, the three services have contributed to UN peacekeeping missions.

Key trends. From our dataset, it's evident that Vanuatu has had two distinct periods of deploying to UN missions. From November 2000 until July 2010, it deployed police peacekeepers in numbers ranging from four to 47 to missions in Timor-Leste, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Haiti, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, South Sudan, Cote d'Ivoire and Darfur. Vanuatu then restarted deploying police peacekeepers from October 2013 until January 2017, during which time the number of deployed ranged from one to 16.

Deployments are currently on hold due to unresolved investigations into mission conduct by ni-Vanuatu personnel on two separate occasions. Through our conversations with government officials in Vanuatu, it's unclear what is necessary at this stage to bring about a resolution. However, there's interest in contributing again in the future.

Women's participation. Women's participation in the Vanuatu security forces varies. The Police Maritime Wing started accepting female recruits in 2013.¹⁰⁵ In contrast, 20 female recruits for the Vanuatu Mobile Force were accepted for the first time among a hundred new recruits in July 2019.¹⁰⁶ The number of women deployed to peacekeeping missions ranged from none to four, with women serving in UNAMID and UNOCI.

Rationale. Exposing Vanuatu's officers to external environments in order to develop their skills and strengthening the Vanuatu economy through remittances were flagged as benefits of deployment on both the individual level and the country level. In interviews, interviewees also noted the benefits deploying had had for their career progression.

The francophone nation of Vanuatu is uniquely positioned among our other case-study countries to contribute to UN peacekeeping missions (but is one of a number of francophone Pacific nations). Bilingualism offers significant advantage in a peacekeeping landscape dominated by francophone missions. This adds another dimension to the importance of language training skills, which has been drawn out in all our case studies.

Actors and governance. Various agencies of the Vanuatu Government are actively involved in developing and implementing peacekeeping policy and managing deployments. Deployments are managed by the wings of the ni-Vanuatu police: Vanuatu Police Force, the Vanuatu Mobile Force and the Police Maritime Wing. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinates opportunities with its Permanent Mission to the UN in New York, but the police stated that there would be some value in a police adviser being embedded in the UN mission, as there had been some problems with information flow between the ministry and the police. The Ministry of Internal Affairs also has an interest in Vanuatu's peacekeeping contributions, as it identified the recommencement of Vanuatu's contributions to UN peacekeeping as an action item under the country's National Security Strategy (2019).¹⁰⁷ One senior official noted that it's a matter of government priorities, and peacekeeping isn't perceived as a matter of priority for the current government. The disciplinary cases that have arisen in Vanuatu deployments have revealed some governance issues in deployment processes. One primary issue was a lack of understanding about the roles each actor plays in supporting Vanuatu's peacekeeping contributions. During interviews with multiple government officials from many departments, it was clear that there's confusion about which department was now responsible for finalising the disciplinary questions; some agencies believed they had been resolved, while others believed that the questions were under another agency's remit.

Another issue identified was the lack of extraterritorial jurisdiction for Vanuatu's legal processes, meaning that any crimes arising out of conduct committed overseas couldn't be prosecuted in Vanuatu. UN processes for dealing with misconduct require national jurisdictions to take the primary role in investigating and appropriately disciplining their deployed personnel. This lack of extraterritorial jurisdiction may be one of final hurdles for Vanuatu to overcome before it can restart UN deployments.

When peacekeepers were being selected for missions, it was done through a transparent process in which the police college called for expressions of interest before testing. The initial request for expressions of interests came from the UN desk at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Challenges and barriers. It was noted that there's a need to strike a balance between ensuring local security and deploying overseas; that is, ensuring that resources aren't stretched too far because of overseas deployments. This was the case in other case-study countries as well. Vanuatu's National Security Strategy notes that deployments should be 'commensurate with Vanuatu's resources and domestic demands'.¹⁰⁸

Another challenge that was raised was the importation of arms into Vanuatu after deployments. Interviewees noted that weapons weren't able to be returned from both Cote d'Ivoire and South Sudan due to international couriers or international airline carriers refusing to carry them. This presents a barrier for nations wanting to participate in missions, if their resources are unable to be returned home for use after missions.

Partners and the region. Each wing of the police receives varying support from partners. Australia is perceived as a key partner on peacekeeping, particularly due to the pre-deployment training provided to ni-Vanuatu personnel at the Majura facility of the Australian Federal Police.

The Vanuatu Mobile Force notes its partners to be China, Australia, New Zealand, France, the US and other Melanesian Spearhead Group countries.¹⁰⁹

Among interviewees, there was little knowledge of the role that the Blackrock training facility could play for the region. One interviewee stated that he had been told by a colleague in Fiji that Blackrock was a facility only for Fiji. There was ambivalence among other interviewees about whether it was a positive development.

Future plans and opportunities. Despite the current hold on deployments from Vanuatu, the country intends to restart deployments as soon as possible. A number of the problems identified above will have to be ameliorated before that can occur.

Strength of military and police. There are approximately 823 personnel serving in the Vanuatu police service.¹¹⁰

Challenges and barriers to contributing

Challenges and barriers to participation in UN peacekeeping exist on multiple levels. The current context and environment for UN peacekeeping makes it more challenging for smaller, less-established peacekeeping nations to contribute. While it's difficult to predict what types of missions may take place in the future, there's been a decline in the size and number of UN peacekeeping missions over the past five years. Several missions have closed, and some larger missions have begun transitioning to a small mission footprint. In addition, no new UN multidimensional peacekeeping missions have been mandated recently.¹¹¹ This creates an environment in which a smaller number of personnel spots may be available for those countries wanting to contribute to UN peacekeeping missions. Many missions also demand highly specialised and niche capabilities. The days of simply deploying an infantry battalion or FPU that doesn't have specialist capabilities are likely to be numbered. If current peacekeeping trends continue, then the supply of some of those capabilities is likely to outweigh demand, meaning that countries need to develop skills that address some of the existing capability gaps in missions.¹¹² While it's difficult for smaller militaries and police forces that are still in the process of professionalising to provide those kinds of capabilities to UN missions, it does offer an opportunity to work with partners to develop a range of new skill sets.

Country-level barriers

Barriers affect the ability of countries to stand up their first deployment to a peacekeeping mission, maintain their existing deployments (and their hold on potential positions), and identify opportunities for future deployments. In this section, we have pulled out six common barriers based on the case studies.

Small numbers and limited domestic resources

The populations of Pacific countries and the number of their security personnel are comparatively small than those of larger troop- and police-contributing countries, so the burden of deploying is much heavier for them. In an interview, a Tongan official noted that, while there's a desire to contribute to UN missions, the requirements set by the UN are likely to present a significant burden for a military force the size of Tonga's.¹¹³ Similarly, deploying has resourcing ramifications for the security forces' in-country duties. By deploying to UN missions, police officers or military personnel are taken away from their in-country duties, affecting the ability to provide safety and security back home. And often, it's the more accomplished and skilled officers that are recruited for these opportunities, meaning that the country doesn't benefit from their skills domestically while they are deployed. This was a concern noted by several countries.¹¹⁴ While many of the countries studied are attempting to grow their security forces, this concern is difficult to mitigate. This suggests that most Pacific countries (with the exception of Fiji) will be in a position to deploy only small numbers (military observers, staff officers and UN Police) unless they partner with other contributors or seek to develop a regional capacity that can deploy to peacekeeping operations.

There are also several challenges in the financial costs of deployments. Most Pacific countries are reliant on partners to provide language and basic skills training, in addition to pre-deployment training for missions. The physical deployment of personnel to mission areas is generally manageable, as the UN covers the costs of flights and allowances (although cost implications for individuals are noted below). Allowances also provide a form of remittances. However, aspirations to deploy larger units to peacekeeping missions that may require contingent-owned equipment or specialist capabilities are likely to be beyond the reach of most Pacific countries.¹¹⁵ Some countries in the region, such as Tonga and Timor-Leste, referred to the Fijian model to generate income and build military capacity. However, they also recognised that it was beyond their current capabilities. There were also concerns that standing up such a capability would involve upfront costs (requiring a donor or partner country) that were unlikely to be reimbursed in the near future, given the liquidity crisis facing the UN at present.¹¹⁶

Women's representation

The UN increasingly sees women's participation in peacekeeping as essential in delivering on the mandates set by the Security Council. The participation of women, which contributes to gender-equal representation, supports the operational effectiveness of peacekeeping missions. That point has been recognised by the Security Council for 20 years, since it adopted its first resolution on women, peace and security. However, women remain woefully under-represented in peacekeeping missions, particularly in the military and police components, reflecting their poor representation within the domestic security institutions of contributing countries. In 2018, the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy was launched, aiming to create an enabling environment for women involved in peace operations.¹¹⁷ As part of that strategy, the UN is attempting to hold countries accountable for reaching certain targets to increase the participation of women (Table 2) and integrate women into infantry battalions with engagement teams that include at least 50% women (a requirement from 2021). It has gone as far to suggest that it will preference the selection of those countries that meet targets over those that don't. The strategy also outlines a range of measures to reduce barriers to women's participation (such as attendance on training courses and revised levels of years in service for women applying).

Table 2: Targets for women's representation by 2028

Year	Military contingents	Staff officers/ military observers	Formed police units	Individual police officers
Target 2028	15%	25%	20%	30%
Target 2020	6.5%	17%	10%	22%
Current UN contributions ¹¹⁸	4.7%	18.4%	11% ¹¹⁹	28.2%

These efforts are complemented by the Elsie Initiative, which is focused on addressing the barriers to women's participation in peace operations and understanding how those barriers reduce the ability of different countries to contribute women to peace operations.¹²⁰

Most Pacific nations that have deployed to a UN peacekeeping operation have deployed women (PNG is the exception). Given the focus within the UN on enabling the greater participation of women, it will be imperative that countries in the Pacific actively seek to increase the pool of women available to deploy to peace operations if they hope to continue securing and sustaining deployments. Looking for opportunities to address existing barriers, perhaps through the Elsie Initiative in partnership with other countries, could demonstrate a commitment to addressing these challenges as well as a broader commitment to women, peace and security.

Access to information

A persistent challenge among the countries studied is managing and maintaining the flow of information between UN Headquarters in New York, the Pacific missions to the UN in New York, personnel deployed to UN peacekeeping missions and relevant government departments in Pacific capitals. Those bureaucratic and administrative barriers create ongoing challenges for deployments to UN peacekeeping missions.

Decisions about peacekeeping missions are made in several different forums, departments and agencies at UN Headquarters. Member states engage in and influence peacekeeping reform discussions in the General Assembly's Fifth Committee, Fourth Committee and Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34), as well as in *ad hoc* high-level events, ministerial meetings and groups of friends.¹²¹ The UN Secretariat in New York, primarily through the Department of Peace Operations and Department of Operational Support, engages with current and potential troop- and police-contributing countries about deployments (including positions, rotations and modalities to deploy).

For permanent missions that are under-resourced, it can be challenging to maintain awareness and access to information about peacekeeping opportunities. Many of the larger troop- and police-contributing countries have a military adviser, a police adviser, or both, at their missions who are responsible for engaging on opportunities to deploy, managing rotations and engaging in peacekeeping reform. They may be further supported by foreign affairs staff who have responsibility for engaging in peacekeeping budgetary discussions and policy reform and backstopped by staff in their capitals with institutional knowledge of those processes. Even countries that have a less sizeable footprint, such as Australia and New Zealand, have staff to support such engagement.

Most Pacific countries have a very small number of staff at their permanent missions in New York, so prioritising peacekeeping and securing deployments becomes a challenge among myriad other tasks and issues needing to be addressed. At this stage, only Fiji and PNG have dedicated military or defence advisers working for their permanent missions. This presents a substantial challenge in securing and sustaining deployments to UN peacekeeping missions. Poor communication with permanent missions and a limited understanding of peacekeeping developments in New York were noted by several government officials we interviewed in Pacific capitals as barriers to ongoing peacekeeping contributions. Timor-Leste, for instance, noted that it hoped to deploy a military adviser to New York in the year ahead, and Vanuatu expressed interest in posting a police adviser to New York (but the costs were prohibitive, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs wasn't willing to pay).¹²²

There are several ways this barrier could be overcome. For example, in 2019, Australia supported representatives from the F-FDTL Peace Operations Training Centre to travel to the annual conference of the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres in Peru and then on to New York to meet with officials in the UN Secretariat about deploying to peacekeeping operations.¹²³ This supported Timor-Leste in building professional networks and understanding the political environment. Similarly, participation in peacekeeping training courses and briefings offers another opportunity to bridge this gap with officials working in the Integrated Training Service, the Office of Military Affairs and Police Division. Finally, the posting of a dedicated military, defence or police adviser and adequate resources at permanent missions to broaden the focus to peacekeeping developments could significantly assist in removing this barrier to participation.

Lack of strategic approach

For deployments to be most effective, a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to peacekeeping deployments can focus resources on priority deployments, long-term planning across government and influencing strategic peacekeeping reforms with other partners and supporters. Currently, to varying degrees, many countries in the Pacific have not taken or are unable to take a coordinated approach to peacekeeping, hampering either the potential to deploy or the potential benefits of deployments or exacerbating the potential risks and pitfalls of deployments.

A recurring subject in interviews for this report was a lack of understanding of who led or contributed to the country's peacekeeping policy and coordination of deployments. It was unclear in some countries what role, if any, foreign ministries might have in coordinating or contributing to peacekeeping policy, especially as they dealt with the information flowing from their diplomatic posts in New York.

Likewise, due to the small populations and resourcing of these governments' departments, agencies and security forces, it can be difficult to equally prioritise and coordinate policy on peacekeeping among those entities, particularly when other security challenges have come to the fore in recent years (specifically, climate change).

Looking ahead, if countries want peacekeeping to form a part of their foreign policy, their contribution to the international order and one line of effort for their security forces, a coordinated approach among each government's relevant stakeholders needs to be laid out. This is also important if countries in the region wish to expedite regional cooperation in support of peacekeeping or work with partners to develop a regional capability that's recognised and has the capacity to engage substantively with the UN.

Operational readiness and performance

For countries wishing to commence or restart their deployments, preparedness for deployment can be a difficult barrier to overcome. Depending on the type of desired deployment—that is, whether the nation is seeking to deploy contingents or smaller numbers of staff officers—this can be an onerous activity. The UN has a range of guidance and manuals specifying training and equipment requirements. For contingents, the UN regularly makes advisory and assistance visits (although many of those have been delayed or shifted to virtual media in 2020). Similarly, for UN Police, individual officers who hope to deploy are required to sit and pass a range of tests.¹²⁴

For example, language skills can present either a barrier or an opportunity for those countries wishing to deploy. Not only is it a key requirement noted in the Uniformed Capability Requirements for UN Peacekeeping,¹²⁵ the importance of language skills was a common theme throughout our research. For Vanuatu, the country's bilingualism in both English and French gave some personnel access to opportunities to deploy to francophone missions, which a number of key UN missions are. Similarly, the Portuguese language link between Timor-Leste and Guinea-Bissau was a key reason why Timor-Leste chose to deploy its police officers in a support mission to that country as well as in the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office for Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS).

However, language skills can also be a barrier for participation if personnel are unable to pass UN standard tests. English-language skills are a focus at CTOAP, the peacekeeping training facility in Timor-Leste, for that reason. Sustained engagement on English-language and French-language skills (where applicable) would allow for greater participation as well as improved experiences while deploying.

Similar challenges exist for some countries in the Pacific when it comes to developing basic skills to fulfil their roles in the military, the police, or both. As the UN increasingly demands specialised capabilities, the onus will be on Pacific countries to demonstrate that they can deliver some of those capabilities in order to remain competitive. For example, there's a demand for staff officers with specialised capabilities in military planning, intelligence, unmanned aerial systems, countering improvised explosive devices, defence sector reform and civil-military liaison.¹²⁶ Similarly, for police, that may include SWAT capabilities (if efforts to deploy an FPU move forward) and specialised police teams in the areas of intelligence-led policing, forensics, public order management, sexual and gender-based violence, training and curriculum development, climate security, community policing and countering serious organised crime.

There's an opportunity here for the Pacific to develop some of those capabilities by drawing on regional expertise addressing some of those issues (such as climate security), but strategic planning and training need to be developed to support their further development. At the moment, most countries are heavily reliant on partners, and largely for basic skills training rather than specialisations.

Outstanding cases of sexual exploitation and abuse

Under the A4P agenda, improving the conduct and discipline of UN personnel is a priority. Failure to address instances of misconduct, particularly those involving sexual exploitation and abuse, can not only harm individuals whom a mission has been deployed to protect but also damage the reputation and security of the mission. If a contributing country doesn't respond swiftly to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, the UN will take action to prevent the country from contributing further to peacekeeping missions if the issue isn't investigated and resolved.

There have been some previous instances of misconduct and poor discipline by Pacific personnel while deployed; media have reported on such cases from Fiji¹²⁷ and Vanuatu.¹²⁸ In Vanuatu's case, officials working in the police and for foreign affairs didn't understand why their efforts to address instances of sexual exploitation and abuse haven't allowed the cases to be resolved within the UN. There was confusion among the different government departments about what reforms needed to take place to allow Vanuatu to keep contributing, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

blamed the police response to the matter (which hasn't been heard or resolved).¹²⁹ Some thought that further legislation was needed to extend extraterritorial jurisdiction over personnel and hold them accountable. Vanuatu had been asked to put forward nominees for police roles in late 2019, but there was uncertainty about whether the UN would consider them.¹³⁰

The situation with regard to Vanuatu, in particular, highlights the importance of training in zero tolerance as part of peacekeeping. While this is an integral part of pre-deployment training provided by partners, it needs to be constantly reinforced. But it's also about ensuring that countries are positioned to put in place legislation and mechanisms that will enable them to act swiftly if there are allegations of misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse, in the future.

Individual and institutional-level challenges

While some issues amount to barriers for countries seeking to participate in UN peacekeeping, others have an impact on the ability of individuals to deploy, their careers, and the institutions that send them. Most of the former peacekeepers we spoke to reflected well on their time working for the UN and being deployed overseas. Deployment as a UN peacekeeper was viewed as prestigious, with financial benefits and opportunities for career development. But it wasn't without its challenges either, in terms of financial support, isolation on deployment, missed career opportunities, support after returning from deployment, and longer term unintended consequences across society. Those challenges need to be mitigated if Pacific countries are going to position themselves to be reliable contributors of peacekeeping personnel.

Financial support

Individual officers deploying on missions are generally paid their home salary by the sending country, along with the mission subsistence allowance paid by the UN. The fluctuation of currencies while they were on missions created challenges for some of those deployed. This was noted by police who had returned from Solomon Islands. Despite the mission subsistence allowance being provided, some suggested that it wasn't enough to cover price fluctuations.¹³¹ This presented particular challenges when those deployed were expected to find their own housing without an in-country support network.¹³²

Isolation on deployment

Many personnel were deployed for a year or longer without a return flight home to visit family as part of rest and recreation leave, as the UN only covered the cost of one return flight and sending governments weren't offering additional benefits to those deployed (probably due to the prohibitive costs). So, while there are some financial benefits compared to remaining in service at home, there were also many challenges when deployed in the field.

Furthermore, personnel were often the only representative of their country in some areas of deployment, exacerbating feelings of loneliness and isolation on missions. Many had also not been adequately prepared for the cultural environment they would find themselves in. Some women peacekeepers noted that they weren't prepared to encounter the disrespect they received from some male mission leaders who weren't used to working with women.¹³³ Some of those challenges could be addressed with greater support networks while people are on deployment, particularly in mission areas where several Pacific countries are serving together. While that may be happening informally, further structured programs could help peacekeepers address feelings of isolation. There may also be scope to draw on networks in the region, such as the Pacific Women's Military Advisory Network and the Women's Advisory Network as part of the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police.

Post-deployment health and opportunities

Most former peacekeepers also noted that only limited after-care was provided on their return from deployment. Being separated from family for a year wasn't easy for many, particularly those who went on missions multiple times. There often wasn't strong support from welfare units back home. Unfortunately, this is an area in which even the UN facilitated limited discussions with member states, as this responsibility for returning military and police personnel rests with them.

This may be compounded by missed opportunities while on deployment. Some police from Solomon Islands noted that they had missed career promotions while deployed, as they weren't assisted in taking part in interviews.¹³⁴ Similarly, skills gained on deployment might not be used on return. If countries in the Pacific follow through in deploying more peacekeepers, then it's in their interests to ensure that those personnel are supported on their return with appropriate medical care and support, and that their experience and skills are drawn on. This may also serve to enhance their institutional knowledge about UN peacekeeping and better prepare individuals deploying in the future.

Unintended consequences

At the institutional level, deploying personnel to peacekeeping missions may have some consequences for military and police institutions, as well as wider society. This may be driven by what Bellamy and Williams refer to as 'path dependency': when peacekeepers are deployed at a certain level, it's more likely that processes will be developed that institutionalise processes to deploy to peacekeeping.¹³⁵ Fiji's experience with peacekeeping could be partly explained in this way.

As the Fijian President noted on Fiji's 40th anniversary of its first contribution to UN peacekeeping in 1978, 'every time the RFMF grew in size was a direct response to requests for peacekeeping.'¹³⁶ It's an issue that former RFMF officer Jone Baledrokadroka has written about quite extensively, noting that Fiji's military became a power unto itself due to the experience and perceptions of its own power gained through peacekeeping, contributing to subsequent coups in the country.¹³⁷ While Fiji has entered a new chapter in its peacekeeping engagement, as it works to engage with partners in the region in developing peacekeeping training capacity, it nonetheless serves as a reminder to ensure that efforts to build peacekeeping capacity are commensurate with the security needs and interests of regional countries.

Recommendations: Seizing opportunities and building partnerships

Pacific countries are well positioned to contribute to UN peacekeeping missions. As a region, the Pacific has experienced the consequences of conflict and witnessed the benefits that peacekeeping missions can bring. Countries in the Pacific have a long history of supporting contributions both in the region and in remote locations around the world. For most Pacific governments, UN peacekeeping is viewed as a way to give back to the international community and demonstrate their commitment to the global order. Peacekeeping is overwhelmingly viewed as a positive endeavour.

The Pacific also has unique perspectives to offer. As big ocean countries, the Pacific nations are threatened by the ravages of climate change and natural disasters and must mitigate the impacts of transnational organised crime and the security interests of larger powers in the region. The Boe Declaration has recognised these challenges and offers a regional perspective on addressing many of them. In particular, it affirms an expanded concept of security placing emphasis on human security while affirming the ‘importance of the rules-based international order founded on the UN Charter’.¹³⁸ Yet the Pacific’s voice is rarely heard as part of debates in New York on peacekeeping reform, and that’s a missed opportunity for shaping and influencing peacekeeping in a way that reflects Pacific countries’ experiences.

Countries in the region are also overwhelmingly looking to partners for support to deploy to peacekeeping missions but want to develop their own sustainable processes and institutions that can support peacekeeping. A range of actors are involved across the region to support peacekeeping interests, build security professionalism and even supply countries with arms and equipment. However, this is lacking coordination in many areas, which is diminishing a more strategic approach within certain Pacific countries in determining their own paths forward.

Australia continues to provide support to Pacific countries to facilitate their peacekeeping engagement, however, from our interviews in the region there is understanding that Australia could do more to provide support. Efforts underway to support the Pacific Step-up (announced by then Australian Prime Minister Turnbull at the Pacific Islands Forum in September 2016), offers an opportunity for Australia to recalibrate the approach it takes to engaging neighbours and partners in the region in support of peacekeeping, and to address some of the deficits that have emerged as Australia’s deployments to UN peacekeeping have declined over the last decade.

Australia has worked to support partners in their peacekeeping deployments, including through the provision of strategic airlift, and delivery of training programs such as those run by the AFP at Majura. However, there are gaps in what Australia is able to offer, in part due to Australia’s modest commitments to UN peacekeeping. For instance, while the AFP’s UN training recognition for police pre-deployment training remains valid until June 2021, with no more Australian Federal Police personnel deployed to UN peacekeeping missions, there is a gap in what Australia can offer to the region in terms of sharing recent experience serving in UN missions. Similarly, the ADF Peace Operations Training Centre works with minimal resources and a largely reservist workforce. If Australia seeks to co-deploy with others and support initiatives such as the Blackrock Camp, resourcing will need to increase to support those initiatives. Australia has the capacity to deliver training and capacity-building programs that focus on professional policing and military education. This is well respected by the UN and needed in the region, but the gaps in peacekeeping-specific training are likely to be a liability in the future if those gaps aren’t addressed.

The Peace Operations Training Centre has innovated during the Covid-19 pandemic. It has established the Association of Like-Minded Indo Pacific Peace Operations (ALIPOTC), which offers a regional forum for countries (largely from South East Asia) to provide updates and engage with the UN Department of Peace Operations Integrated Training Service.¹³⁹ POTC has also started delivering online and blended learning and has plans to roll out key packages for the independent use of countries in the Pacific and Asia. Such innovation may offer a cost-effective way for Australia to work with countries in the Pacific in the future; however, it won’t remove the need for in-person

training or train-the-trainer exercises. Australia also has a lot to learn from its Pacific neighbours in this regard, given their deployments to missions in which Australia doesn't have a presence. Opportunities should continue to be identified to exchange lessons in two-way reciprocal relationships.

Importantly, any efforts to identify areas where Pacific countries can engage in peacekeeping require an understanding of the UN's needs and the future trajectory of UN peacekeeping. With missions drawing down, the UN can be more selective in the types of capabilities it selects for missions. Countries in the Pacific should be seeking to identify areas where they have a comparative advantage to offer peacekeeping missions. For instance, the skills of police personnel remain in demand, as multidimensional missions focus on activities that support peacebuilding and capacity building of host state institutions, and some missions prepare to transition and drawdown.¹⁴⁰ The experiences gained from RAMSI and other regionally-led peacekeeping missions—which have had a significant focus on community policing—are an asset in this regard. Partnerships are also important, so the UN may look favourably on arrangements that draw on the skills of several countries (such as training partnerships or co-deployments) if the right legal frameworks can be put in place. As a baseline, ensuring that personnel have basic skill sets, meet performance standards and have women represented in their units and as part of nominations will be essential. Niche capabilities and specialisations will make countries even more competitive.

There are opportunities to do more, but that will require the region to work with partners to fulfil their peacekeeping ambitions. Several countries have interests in supporting peacekeeping and security capacity-building in the region, including China, Indonesia, France, Portugal, and the US. Partners such as Australia and New Zealand have historically been preferred partners, but that will continue to come under challenge, particularly as other partners operating in the region (such as China and Indonesia, who are both top ten troop and police contributors) have a much larger footprint in UN peacekeeping operations and offer a range of capabilities to peacekeeping missions, some of which Australia has never offered (for example, FPU).¹⁴¹ Australia needs to think through its interests, otherwise other countries will step-in. This also needs to be done in a manner that aligns with the security interests of countries in the region, so that form follows function when it comes to the military and police.

Australia should continue to work with Pacific counterparts to identify areas where they are interested in support, whether it be in the form of technical assistance to develop whole-of-government strategies on peacekeeping, facilitating engagement with UN headquarters and regional peacekeeping institutions, undertaking an audit of training and capability gaps, identifying the barriers to women's participation, or facilitating regional discussions on engagement in UN peacekeeping. There would be considerable benefits if these activities were undertaken in a coordinated manner with New Zealand. Mechanisms such as the annual Joint Heads of Pacific Security leaders' meetings could offer a valuable platform to exchange lessons and identify areas for further civil-military cooperation in this regard.

Above all else, expectations need to be carefully managed. Countries from the region will not become major troop or police contributors. There are many barriers, challenges, and limits for Pacific countries when it comes to deploying to UN peacekeeping missions. However, their experiences can also offer a lot of important lessons to other smaller countries, which seek to meaningfully contribute to the global partnership. Furthermore, cooperation to support the development of skills and further professionalise civil-military approaches as part of preparation for UN peacekeeping missions, will have longer-term benefits for the region in the event of a crisis, whether or not the UN is involved. This will remain important in the region with concerns on the horizon about potential crises in Bougainville or even New Caledonia in the future.

Here, we offer seven key areas for engagement to strengthen Pacific engagement in peacekeeping. Some of the recommendations are applicable to all countries, whereas others are country-specific, given some countries' unique interests or barriers to participation. The recommendations are primarily directed at Pacific country governments, however it's anticipated that several countries will require support and technical assistance from partners such as Australia to deliver on them, should they be of interest.

Identifying opportunities for deployments and influencing reform

There's a need to bridge the gap between New York and Pacific capitals regarding UN peacekeeping. The capitals need a better understanding of the developments that are taking place in New York, and when opportunities are on offer. That also requires a more coherent whole-of-government approach to the development of peacekeeping policy. Pacific countries could consider doing the following things:

- 1. Undertake a strategic review of peacekeeping interests.** In some countries, there were vastly different views among defence, police and foreign affairs agencies about what commitments should be made to peacekeeping. Likewise, there sometimes was no clear department or agency leading a country's approach to peacekeeping policy. In some instances, departments were blaming others for their failure to re-engage and for a lack of information sharing. This is a barrier to more substantive engagement in peacekeeping. A Pacific country with an interest in contributing to peacekeeping could usefully develop as a first step a whole-of-government strategy that identifies how peacekeeping supports its interests and what comparative advantages it can bring to missions. The strategy could incorporate plans to address the number of women in peacekeeping, training, the development of specialist capacities and contributions to peacekeeping reform debates in New York. It could also offer direction to address issues related to conduct and discipline, including domestic legislation and instruments, to ensure that those issues are managed appropriately and don't limit further peacekeeping deployments. Such strategies could complement existing efforts underway in the region to develop national security strategies.¹⁴² Technical assistance is likely to be required from partners to support these efforts. Partners such as Australia should consider offering skills and resources to support these requests.
- 2. Resource capitals and permanent missions to engage in peacekeeping.** This may include posting a military or police adviser to the country's permanent mission in New York. Such positions at post would enable the country to engage with the Military and Police Adviser Community, as well as the Strategic Policing Advisory Group in New York, which offer an informal platform for information sharing, particularly with the UN's Office of Military Affairs and Police Division. Fiji and PNG have military advisers at posts in New York. Countries such as Vanuatu and Timor-Leste have expressed interest, but also concern that the costs might be prohibitive.
- 3. Engage in UN peacekeeping policy reform debates and offer a 'Pacific' perspective.** Except for Fiji, Pacific countries don't have a significant voice when it comes to peacekeeping reform debates in New York. This is a missed opportunity, particularly when other regional groups (such as ASEAN) are actively engaged in pursuing their interests. Pacific countries could consider how they can offer a 'Pacific' perspective in these peacekeeping discussions, including those that take place in the C-34, and the Security Council (where open debates offer opportunities to deliver statements). Similarly, they should give thought to engaging in other international activities, including ministerial, chiefs-of-police and chiefs-of-defence summits. The region could collectively offer statements, if preferred, to lend more weight to the region's experience. Such engagement will require more resources and possible mentorship from partners (similar to the ADF supporting a visit by the F-FDTL to the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres and New York), but would have enormous benefits for situational awareness, developing networks and supporting institutional knowledge of UN processes, while also sharing the Pacific region's experiences in peacekeeping.
- 4. Identify opportunities for (co)-deployments and engage with partners.** This is already being explored between Australia and Fiji. Both countries are working to develop a memorandum of understanding to support their peacekeeping partnership, although it's likely to refer to potential co-deployments only briefly. Nonetheless, the model of co-deployments could be explored with other countries in the region as well. However, careful attention will need to be paid to arrangements for working together—who leads, for example. Some lessons can be drawn from past operational partnerships in peacekeeping missions to examine those modalities further.¹⁴³ This could allow for a useful means of cooperation in the region (such as between Fiji and PNG), which enables resources to be shared and pooled for particular positions. This may be particularly useful where countries have limited capabilities to stand-up a unit to deploy, but wish to gain experience serving in a

unit (e.g. as Timor-Leste did as part of the Portuguese deployment to Lebanon). Such opportunities enable the development of important working relationships and further professional development in operational contexts. But there would also need to be caution, and such partnerships should be driven by the needs and interests of Pacific countries.

Supporting professional development and leadership opportunities

There are opportunities throughout the year for countries to put forward personnel to take part in leadership training for peacekeeping missions. Countries in the Pacific have candidates with leadership experience who would be suitable to put forward for nomination, including several senior women. To support these endeavours, it will also be important that military personnel have undertaken the equivalent of staff college and that they have command experience, as this is generally a pre-requisite for selection. Similarly, there's also a need to understand where there are gaps in professional development that could benefit from further training courses, either run in the region or through the participation of individuals in external courses internationally. Pacific countries could consider doing the following things:

- 5. Identify and nominate personnel to participate in the Senior Mission Leaders Course.** Requests generally come out twice a year for nominations from the military, police and civilians to take part in the UN's flagship Senior Mission Leaders course. Pacific countries should seek to identify potential candidates, especially women, to take part in the course. This will alert the UN to potential candidates for senior leadership posts. Personnel will also return with an understanding of UN processes to support their ongoing engagement in peacekeeping and understanding of the civil-military-police cooperation that takes place in peacekeeping environments.
- 6. Undertake an audit of training and capability gaps.** The UN's Department of Peace Operations Integrated Training Service encourages member states to conduct detailed training analyses to understand gaps in training and what is required for deployment to peacekeeping missions.¹⁴⁴ It would be useful for countries to understand where they have a comparative advantage over other countries and what gaps need to be addressed with the support of partners. That might include basic skills, pre-deployment training, English-language training (or in some instances, French-language training), but also specialised training that will make individuals competitive in selection processes.
- 7. Nominate personnel for secondment to UN Headquarters.** There are dozens of positions in UN Headquarters that rely on secondees provided by member states to support the work of UN peacekeeping, particularly in the Office of Military Affairs and Police Division. Those positions are highly competitive, but the UN seeks to ensure that there's geographical representation. Pacific countries could consider putting forward candidates who have served in UN peacekeeping missions, undertaken staff college and held command positions. Positions will build up institutional knowledge and understanding of UN peacekeeping, at little to no cost (as salary costs are covered by the UN). Partners in the region such as Australia could facilitate workshops or mentoring programs to share experiences from Australian secondees working in the UN system in the Office of Military Affairs, and subsequently support personnel in the region who may be applying for these positions.

Elevating the training profile of the region

Efforts to strengthening training and performance within the UN system are currently focused on ensuring that countries have sustainable measures in place to deliver their own training, rather than being entirely reliant on partners for support. For instance, ensuring that trainers receive training (training the trainers) to deliver their own courses in country is one example of that approach. Only two countries in the region have dedicated peacekeeping training facilities—CTOAP in Timor-Leste (with a focus on the military) and the Blackrock facility in Fiji. Both training centres are looking to engage with the region and deliver training for domestic and international participants. The following opportunities could be considered:

8. Develop Blackrock as a regional and international peacekeeping training centre of excellence. The focus to date has been on the ‘bricks and mortar’ of getting Blackrock established, but it will be important to identify the curriculum or types of courses it might seek to develop before the centre is formally opened. Blackrock offers a huge opportunity for Fiji, and the region, to have a world-class peacekeeping training facility available to prepare personnel to deploy to peacekeeping missions. There will be many priorities when it’s opened, but Fiji could consider including the following:

- Survey national, regional and international stakeholders (including the UN) about expectations for Blackrock and how it can fill current peacekeeping training gaps, particularly for countries deploying from the region. Stakeholder workshops could be undertaken virtually in early 2021 to assess the interests of different partners. Fiji could engage with the UN Integrated Training Service’s Light Coordination Mechanism. There are some reservations in the region about ambitions for Blackrock, and this might offer an opportunity to engage early with neighbours and partners on opportunities to engage in future.
- Identify an opportunity to host a high-profile, UN-led activity shortly after Blackrock is open (such as the Senior Mission Leaders Course) to engage international participants at the facility. This could be undertaken with the support of key partners from the region. It would also demonstrate that Blackrock has a wider civil–military remit in supporting peacekeeping.
- Develop and seek accreditation for UN pre-deployment training courses. There could be scope to work with partners to minimise the burden of developing those courses.
- Identify flagship courses and specialisations. For example, they might include a Pacific gender advisers course, training in countering improvised explosive devices, signals, policing, maritime security, climate change, environmental practices in peace operations, the protection of civilians, civil–military coordination in humanitarian settings and so on. It could also explore opportunities to engage in the UN’s peacekeeping Triangular Partnership Program. However, this will need to be strategically prioritised, based on the needs of Fiji and the support of potential partners.
- Explore the possibility of partnering with other training centres in the region to ensure complementarity of offerings.

9. Progress the development of Timor-Leste’s Peace Operations Training Centre. Timor-Leste should ensure that the centre is positioned to host UN-accredited courses for national and international participants. This should be done in careful coordination with the multitude of partners that are supporting those efforts.

10. Establish a regular civil–military peacekeeping training exercise. This could be done bilaterally or regionally with partners, or it could be facilitated through the Melanesian Spearhead Group. It could resemble an equivalent of Khaan Quest or one of the bilateral exercises Australia undertakes on peacekeeping, but with the engagement and participation of Pacific countries. Fiji, through Blackrock, could facilitate the exercise with the support from partners in the region. Such an exercise would also enable Pacific countries to share some of the lessons learned from their peacekeeping experience.

11. Facilitate the participation of Pacific personnel in peacekeeping training courses and secondments to other training centres. This is already taking place but should be continued to build up expertise, particularly in countries that don’t have their own peacekeeping training capacity.

Advancing women, peace and security

Peacekeeping offers an important opportunity to advance the women, peace and security agenda. Many countries in the Pacific have sent women overseas to serve on UN peacekeeping operations. While some countries in the region are already achieving current targets identified in the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy, it’s clear that concerted efforts will continue to be needed to ensure that countries maintain those trajectories and increase the number of women available to deploy. This is also particularly relevant for leadership positions. Pacific countries could consider the following:

12. Identify the barriers to women’s participation in Pacific countries. For example, countries in the Pacific could put themselves forward to undertake a barrier assessment on women’s participation as part of the Elsie Initiative (which has funds available). This would also assist in identifying whether women have the same access to deployment notices. This would need to be undertaken in partnerships with a research or academic institution, which could be from Australia or elsewhere in the region. There could be opportunities for partners such as Australia to undertake the same exercise, demonstrating a mutual commitment to strengthening women’s participation in peace operations.

13. Facilitate discussion and capture lessons from Pacific women in peacekeeping. The Pacific already has some excellent women’s networks—the Pacific Women’s Military Advisory Network, and the Women’s Advisory Network as part of the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police. Those groups could convene discussions with former women peacekeepers to hear of their experiences and identify opportunities to address any barriers to women’s participation and any obstacles faced while deployed.

Enhancing regional security cooperation

There is already considerable regional cooperation on security within the Pacific. However, peacekeeping is generally a sub-field of discussion. Nonetheless, peacekeeping could offer a vehicle for regional security cooperation with the objective of supporting Pacific security interests and enhancing interoperability between military, police and civilian sectors. Such engagement would also assist in facilitating skills and mechanisms which may be applicable to future regional peacekeeping responses, whether the UN is involved or not. However, such mechanisms and processes have been largely underexplored to date, despite the extensive history of cooperation in the region as part of RAMSI. There isn’t a coordinated effort in the region, as there are no regular peacekeeping discussions that take place.¹⁴⁵ RAMSI provided a good model to build on. In this way, the contribution of the Pacific hasn’t been fully realised. There were meant to have been discussions on the lessons learned from RAMSI, but they haven’t really taken place and are a missed opportunity.¹⁴⁶

Another option that has been floated in the region is the idea of a regional contingent, although this has varying degrees of support.¹⁴⁷ Discussion of a regional deployable peacekeeping capacity remains exploratory at this stage, partly due to the challenges such as model may present in the UN system. The UN is not equipped to manage deployments by regional units and remains reliant on a lead nation to set up such arrangements. It is also more likely to select a unit from within one country, which is likely to have greater coherence in terms of training, equipment and capabilities. Nonetheless, the Melanesian Spearhead Group, at this stage, has had preliminary discussions about doing so, agreeing in 2013 to explore this concept further.¹⁴⁸ Some of the focus to date has been on developing a deployable FPU capacity.¹⁴⁹ The Pacific Islands Forum hasn’t advanced serious discussions collectively about creating a regional peacekeeping capability, but this could be a PIF discussion.

Developing mechanisms and protocols to stand-up a potential regional deployment, rather than developing a regional peacekeeping contingent, could offer Pacific nations the opportunity to continue professionalising their security forces while developing different skills as part of a larger multinational operation. Pacific countries could consider:

14. Developing mechanisms to support a regional deployment. This could be done through the hosting of a series of workshops or the establishment of an advisory group to explore options within the Melanesian Spearhead Group (or the Pacific Islands Forum, depending on the levels of interest and politics). Such discussions could focus on the different modalities of military-police-civilian cooperation to support a conversation around regional peacekeeping capabilities.

If there were strong interest in progressing the idea of a regional unit to send to a UN mission, then one option to be explored would be the idea of an FPU and how different countries in the region could contribute to that model. This might include a workshop and exchange of lessons with countries that have deployed FPUs, such as Indonesia, facilitated with other countries from the region. It would be important to involve the UN early in these conversations if there were plans to draw on the model for a UN deployment.

15. Developing a regional peacekeeping working group that furthers UN peacekeeping knowledge and regional information-sharing. For instance, this could be modelled on the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus expert working groups. Chairing responsibilities could rotate. It could be underpinned by ministerial engagement through forums such as the Pacific Islands Forum. This could include representatives from current and potential contributors as well as partners in the region.

Supporting peacekeepers on operations and upon return

While peacekeepers interviewed for this project were overwhelmingly supportive of their countries' deployments and many indicated they would take the opportunity if it were offered again, many faced considerable challenges when deployed overseas and a long way from home. In some instances, there was minimal support from their sending organisations, they felt isolated, and there was minimal support on their return home. Pacific countries could consider:

16. Establishing support for peacekeepers and their families. This may include debriefing, counselling, health and psychological support, family liaisons and welfare officers. Given that the number of personnel deployed from some Pacific countries is often small, those systems might not be well established so this also offers an opportunity for capacity building. There may also be lessons that could be drawn on and shared by other partners that have established more comprehensive veterans' affairs processes, such as Australia and New Zealand.

Sharing the Pacific's experiences and lessons

At the outset of this report, we noted that the Pacific is frequently viewed as a beneficiary of peacekeeping rather than as a substantive contributor. There's scope for the narrative to change. In the context of peacekeeping, countries have acknowledged that we haven't recorded much of our history well.¹⁵⁰ So much of the Pacific's peacekeeping experience hasn't been written down, but rather shared orally. One valuable way to further the region's UN peacekeeping interests would be to document and share those lessons. Some of that work is already underway in Fiji, where there's a project in place to document the country's history of peacekeeping, but it needs to take place across the region. Pacific countries could consider:

17. Documenting the experiences of Pacific countries deploying to peacekeeping missions. This would raise awareness with stakeholders and partners and add weight to the voice and experience of Pacific countries in UN peacekeeping. It's important that those Pacific voices are heard.

Appendix: Methodology

This report and its findings were based on a mixed-methods research approach. A combination of desktop analysis and interviews was used. This project centres around seven case-study countries: Fiji, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga and Vanuatu. The case studies were chosen based on their previous deployments to peacekeeping missions, their previous status as host countries and their maintenance of standing military forces. Palau has also deployed to UN peacekeeping missions, however was not included as a case study in the initial scope of this project.

In the initial phase of the project, desktop research and analysis were used to survey pre-existing data and literature on Pacific contributions to both UN and regional peacekeeping missions. That research guided the development of the project's approach to interviews, which were completed in the next phase.

Interviews were primarily undertaken in late 2019 and early 2020 by Lisa Sharland and Genevieve Feely. We conducted over 50 semi-structured interviews with government officials, returned peacekeeping personnel, civil society actors and academics. The interviews took place physically in Canberra, Dili, Nuku'alofa, Suva, Port Vila, Port Moresby and Honiara, as well as remotely, after Covid-19 prevented further travel in early 2020. All interviewees were asked a similar series of questions relating to previous and current deployments, governance, training and women's participation, as well as future deployment aspirations and rationales for participation. Some follow-up research and discussions were conducted where necessary to verify data collected throughout the interviews.

One of the methodological limitations on the research for this project was reliance on Australia's diplomatic posts to facilitate introductions, identify key interlocutors and engage in some interviews with key security and government officials in country, due to time constraints. While that assistance was greatly welcomed and necessary to support a project of this nature, it's important to acknowledge that this may have had an impact on some of the findings.

Pacific peacekeeping dataset

As part of this project, we relied on the dataset provided in the UN Peacekeeping Open Portal¹⁵¹, as well as the Providing for Peacekeeping Project¹⁵², which offers master files of UN data from 1990 to 2018. The lack of publicly available UN data on UN deployments prior to 1990 limited analysis regarding Fiji's deployments prior to this period. Furthermore, as part of our research, we identified several discrepancies in the presentation of UN data that didn't align with the deployment timeline of some Pacific countries. Where possible, we have made a note of those discrepancies and provided further information to clarify data. This has been challenging, as limited information is available on the public record about deployments from the region.

Notes

- 1 For the purposes of this paper, the ‘Pacific’ refers to those countries that are Pacific Small Island Developing States. We have also included Timor-Leste in our analysis because it faces many challenges similar to those of its Pacific counterparts in peacekeeping experiences and deployments (given its size, culture and geopolitical position), and it’s also combined with Australia’s strategic policy considerations in the Pacific (for instance, in the Pacific and Timor-Leste Branch in the Department of Defence). The deployments of Australia and New Zealand to UN peacekeeping missions aren’t included in the analysis of Pacific contributions in this paper.
- 2 References to peacekeeping in this paper may also refer to the deployment of military and police personnel to UN special political missions. Special political missions tend to have a lighter footprint than peacekeeping operations, but the tasks for military and police personnel may be somewhat similar (for example, the Fijian-supplied guard force in UNAMI) and they may also be authorised by the UN Security Council. Peacekeeping missions are run by the UN’s Department of Peace Operations, and special political missions are generally run by the Department of Peacebuilding and Political Affairs. The UN refers to this spectrum of mission types as ‘peace operations’. The term ‘peacekeeping’ is well understood in the region, so we have used it throughout this paper instead of the term ‘peace operations’ but noted the distinction when referring to specific missions in some instances.
- 3 For instance, Australian Civil-Military Centre, *Partnering for peace—Australia’s peacekeeping and peacebuilding experiences in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville in Papua New Guinea, and in Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste*, 2012, [online](#); J Putt, S Dinnen, M Keen, J Batley, *The RAMSI legacy for policing in the Pacific region*, Department of Pacific Affairs, Australian National University, 2018, [online](#).
- 4 The Providing for Peacekeeping Project, managed by the International Peace Institute, the Elliott School at George Washington University and the Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect at the University of Queensland, included a profile of Samoa (in addition to Australia and New Zealand) for Oceania. However, they were the only profiles developed for Oceania and the Pacific. See ‘Profiles’, [online](#).
- 5 Fiji, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste have signed the A4P Declaration.
- 6 The seven case-study countries were selected on the basis of their contributions to UN peacekeeping and coalition military operations, providing a unique mix of military and police contributors.
- 7 UN, ‘United Nations peacekeeping operations’, fact sheet, *ReliefWeb*, 31 May 2015, [online](#).
- 8 UNOCI, MINUSTAH and UNMIL have closed. UNAMID is slated for drawdown and transition to a special political mission.
- 9 UN Peacekeeping, ‘Data: peacekeeping operations’, October 2020, [online](#).
- 10 United Nations, *Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers*, 19 December 2017.
- 11 Secretary-General’s Initiative on Action for Peacekeeping, *A4P: our core agenda for peacekeeping*, UN, [online](#).
- 12 Lisa Sharland, *How peacekeeping policy gets made: navigating intergovernmental processes at the UN*, Providing for Peacekeeping no. 18, International Peace Institute, May 2018, [online](#).
- 13 Matthew Gubb, *Vanuatu’s 1980 Santo rebellion: international responses to a microstate security crisis*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence, no. 107, [online](#).
- 14 UN Political Office in Bougainville and the UN Observer Mission in Bougainville.
- 15 UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET); UN Mission of Support to East Timor (UNMISSET); UN Office in East Timor (UNOTIL); UN Integrated Mission in East Timor (UNMIT).
- 16 UN Peacekeeping, ‘Data: Troop and police contributors’, UN, 2020, [online](#).
- 17 UN Peacekeeping, ‘Data: Troop and police contributors’.
- 18 Deployed to more than 25 missions.
- 19 UNGA67 General Debate Statement, Fiji.
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Acronyms and abbreviations

A4P	Action for Peacekeeping
ADF	Australian Defence Force
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
C-34	Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations
CTOAP	Peacekeeping Training Centre (Timor-Leste)
F-FDTL	Timor-Leste Defence Force
FPU	formed police unit
MFO	Multinational Force and Observers
MINUSCA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MINUSMA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MONUSCO	UN Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PNGDF	Papua New Guinea Defence Force
PNTL	National Police of Timor-Leste
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands
RFMF	Republic of Fiji Military Forces
RPNGC	Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary
RSIPF	Royal Solomon Islands Police Force
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAMI	UN Assistance Mission for Iraq
UNAMID	UN–African Union Mission in Darfur
UNAMIR	UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda
UNAVEM	UN Angola Verification Mission
UNDOF	UN Disengagement Observer Force
UNIFIL	UN Interim Force in Lebanon
UNIKOM	UN Iraq–Kuwait Observation Mission
UNIOGBIS	UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office for Guinea-Bissau
UNISFA	UN Interim Security Force for Abyei
UNOSOM	UN Operation in Somalia
UNMHA	UN Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement
UNMIBH	UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina
UNMIK	UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
UNMIL	UN Mission in Liberia
UNMIS	UN Mission in Sudan
UNMISSET	UN Mission of Support to East Timor
UNMISS	UN Mission in South Sudan

UNMIT	UN Integrated Mission in East Timor
UNOTIL	UN Office in East Timor
UNPSG	UN Civilian Police Support Group
UNSMIS	UN Supervision Mission in Syria
UNTAC	UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia
UNTAES	UN Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium
UNTAET	UN Transitional Administration in East Timor
UNTSO	UN Truce Supervision Organization

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