

## UN Peace Operations: What needs to change?



*Submission by the United Nations Association – UK (UNA-UK) to inform the work of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (Panel)*

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UNA-UK welcomes the Panel's establishment as a new opportunity to encourage Member States to support a strategic, holistic approach to peace operations that starts and ends with prevention. This has been a recurring theme of reform initiatives, which have recognised the mismatch between traditional operations and current conflict realities. However, political obstacles have led to incremental efforts with partial results.

While these obstacles remain, recent normative and institutional developments have changed the environment for preventive approaches (e.g. R2P, Rights Up Front, Security Council (SC) 'horizon scanning', Human Rights Council fact-finding missions). High-level commitment to prevention could ease the path to better implementation of agreed reforms, greater coordination between mechanisms, more active creativity in using existing powers and higher determination to achieve results.

### Approach

Member States must confront the reality that threats to peace increasingly stem from internal troubles which risk affecting fragile neighbours. A preventive approach that is inclusive and sensitive to regional dynamics is not incompatible with Article 2(7) and should be regarded as reinforced by Article 34 and Chapter VIII.

### Institutional gaps

Broadly defined, 'prevention' could span the spectrum of the UN's work, from the SDG on peaceful societies to the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). While UNA-UK hopes the Panel will present new ideas, it should also consider ways to address gaps in institutional capacity by enhancing existing tools and processes, such as:

- Better communication between the SC, Geneva-based mechanisms and PBC, including formal referral processes
- A review of the roles and mandates of DPA, DPKO, DFS and the PBC to ensure they are complementary and do not duplicate or ignore preventive activities
- Stronger regional partnerships to support a capability-driven approach, including: greater emergency response capacity (troop, police and civilian), a regional stand-by roster and links between the SC and regional bodies
- An improved geographical spread of peacekeeping resources, including more consistent support by Member States with advanced operational capabilities

### Strategy and practice

There is scope for enhanced strategic planning – by both the Secretariat and Member States – and better, more creative use of powers under the Charter. Preventive measures can be based on state requests or consent, as well as on Articles 34 and 99. The Secretary-General's good offices are one example of where a more proactive effort in mediation and public diplomacy could have a positive preventive effect. Additionally, better implementation of agreed tools, such as more frequent and timely use of fact-finding missions or preventive deployment of peacekeepers, would further improve preventive capacity. Better follow-up on previous reforms should be a key priority for any review of peace operations.

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