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**THE UNITED NATIONS AS BEACON OF WORLD PEACE AND CONTRIBUTION OF BANGLADESH IN PEACEKEEPING** 

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ABSTRACT

*The United Nations (UN) came into being in 1945 to restore peace and dignity worldwide following the devastation of the Second World War. Within a very short period, the UN gained trust for its extraordinary contributions to recuperating peace and prosperity. The UN is considered a herald of peace due to peacekeeping missions (UNPKOs). So far, more than 3,500 peacekeepers from 120 countries have sacrificed their lives to eradicate violence and animosity since 1948. As of late, Bangladesh has regained the top position among troop senders in UNPKOs, which made Bangladesh the largest contributor. Now, Bangladesh has a rich history of UNPKOs participating in 54 missions. Currently, 6,692 personnel are working on 11 missions in 5 different countries. By participating and gaining first-hand experiences, Bangladesh would easily overcome the shortcoming and make the best possible use of opportunities lying ahead. This paper attempts to depict that there is no substitute for reconstructing a violence-free world. Now more than ever, Bangladesh could be a diligent fighter on this path, keeping hand in hand with the United Nations.*

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INTRODUCTION

United Nations (2018), a conference of peace-loving countries, was created to uphold the dignity of every human being and to ensure peace in conflicted areas of the world by mutual resolution. During its early days, the UN was supposed to alleviate growing tensions among participants of the Second World War. As it grows in breadth, the UN started to take non-traditional security aspects such as poverty, hunger, climate change, human trafficking and traded related conflicts into account. From its ethical stance, the United Nations takes necessary actions to mitigate the warmongering situation, the war between groups, and any terrorist activities in every part of the world. UN's escalated role in managing multilateral cooperation and addressing global crises with vicious effort makes it the beacon of world peace. Bangladesh, a developing country, is a forerunner of the United Nations peacekeeping efforts. Bangladesh joined UN peacekeeping missions in the early 90s', and since then, it has become a hub of peacekeepers. Bangladeshi troops showed discipline and perseverance in war-torn areas around the world. Their friendly behaviour and respect for local inhabitants ease the implementation of peacekeepers' plan to reduce conflicts among armed groups and mass people. They showed creativity in keeping peace among rival groups in different African nations. They also provided thousands of war-affected people with food, essential medical support, safe drinkable water and sanitation, and schooling. Bangladesh has become the prime contributor to service and sacrifice in the last three decades. Global communities highly value the remarkable contributions of Bangladeshi peacekeepers in global peace missions. Bangladesh is a major contributor to UN efforts to be the beacon of world peace.

United Nations commenced on October 24, 1945, shortly after the Second World War had ended, intending to make a charitable and peaceful world. Although the League of Nations, the ancestor of the United Nations, aimed to accelerate global cooperation, peace and sustainable security twisted in the perspective of the First World War had completely failed, the UN gained trust within a very short period of time for its extraordinary contributions to make a peaceful world. Though 51 founding states initiated it, United Nations (2022) consists of 193 members. United Nations has been up and running relentlessly to alleviate the relation of member countries worldwide through uniting the segments of conflict-crisis alleviation, peacekeeping, mitigating climate risks, making policies for distressed people and illustrating

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guidelines for the betterment of the world. Since its commencement, the organization has been operating through shared support on different issues corresponding to international laws, security issues, fiscal development, communal headway and human rights. The United Nations acts as the world's premier think tank. They usually scrutinize various reports and surveys on social and economic issues, prepare important periodical reports such as the Human Development Report, World Development Report and World Economic Outlook and occasionally provide recommendations for flourishing global development. The UN has mediated more than 560 treaties regarding human rights, terrorism, migration crisis, trade, ocean etc., that cover every sphere of individual, national and international lifecycle.

At the outset, the UN was formed, keeping five specific objectives in mind. Those mainstream principles are: ensuring world peace by eradicating threats to peace and aggressive actions; strengthening cooperation and friendship among the nations by establishing equal rights; developing social and cultural harmony among the nations; cultivating respect and reverence for each other's fundamental rights and freedom regardless of race, religion and colour; ensuring a peaceful solution to the international conflict by implementing International Law. The six main bodies of the UN are the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice, and the UN Secretariat, which materialize the five main objectives following a certain procedure. On the eve of the 21st century, the United Nations declared eight Millennium Development Goals which must be attained by 2015. In 2015, the United Nations declared another 17 Sustainable Development Goals as a pathway for achieving a sustainable future by 2030. These goals are intended to mould a peaceful and optimistic world.

The UN operates in many areas with the help of its different organizations. The supportive and financial programs are conducted by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to establish Sustainable Development Goals and to alleviate poverty, create good governance opportunities and address environmental risks through 4800 projects in 170 countries. The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) has been working uncompromisingly for a suitable milieu since 1972. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is working to protect children's and mothers' health. The United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-HABITAT) promotes universally sustainable human settlement, advocating that settlement is a human right. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) provides primary education to thousands of children, empowering women by providing education facilities and making emergency services available in 150 countries across the globe. The UN has some specialized agencies, largely the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Labor Organization (ILO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank etc. With the aspiration of building a safe and nuclear-weapon-free world, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has signed a treaty among 180 countries to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Landmines, responsible for thousands of deaths every year, have been successfully removed from more than 30 countries or territories covering Afghanistan, Columbia, the Republic of Congo, Libya and Sudan under the supervision of the UN. One hundred forty-six countries signed the Genocide Convention (1948) to ensure the punishment of crimes against humanity. In addition, specialized UN organs have been serving to settle international disputes in the administrative areas of legal justice. The dedicated court decided on voluminous cases comprising the delimitation of land and maritime boundaries between El Salvador and Honduras in 1992. It has also fixed the long-standing dispute between Denmark and Norway over maritime boundaries. In its judgement, the ICJ has set a delimitation line for both the continental shelf and the fishery zones of Denmark and Norway away, 200 nautical miles from the baselines.

The United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO) were initiated at a time when Cold War rivalries repeatedly paralyzed the Security Council. Since its first deployment in 1948 in the Middle East, the UN has launched 71 peace operations deploying more than one million troops from 125 member states. The lengthy evolution of UNPKO has gone through several phases, i.e., early experiences (1948-1963), Cold War peacekeeping (1964-1991), post-Cold War peacekeeping (1992-2000) and 21st-century peacekeeping (2000-continuing). Considering the deployment pattern, UNPKO were also often classified into four categories, i.e., deployment of observers, the interposition of troops between warring factions, deployment of multi-dimensional forces and installation of transitional administrations. Conceptually, UNPKO was launched to mitigate interstate conflicts. Later, they were increasingly applied to intrastate conflicts and civil wars. The UN Peacekeeping helps countries navigate the problematic path of conflict to peace. Bangladesh has unique strengths including legitimacy, burden sharing, ability to deploy troops worldwide and integrate them with civil peacekeepers to address a range of mandates set by the UN Security Council and the General Assembly.

The primary purpose of this paper is to record Bangladesh's remarkable journey in UNPKO and give general information regarding the journey of the UN. This paper also focuses on different UN peacekeeping operations following the changing nature of international conflicts and attempts to show the contribution of Bangladesh to UNPKO. It critically explores the role of Bangladesh in UN peacekeeping missions. Lastly, the paper focuses on Bangladesh's preparedness for future challenges in UN peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, this paper helps understand the implications of Bangladesh's involvement in UN peacekeeping missions. It is an issue on which little work has been conducted until now despite the fact that it has important implications for Bangladesh and its armed forces.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Major Contributions of the United Nations other than Peacekeeping Missions**

The UN has been serving in different sectors since 1945. Twenty-five years ago, thousands of children got paralyzed because of the polio virus in Africa. United Nations came forward when children from all over the world were crippled by poliomyelitis. Due to the vigilant effort of WHO, more than 5 million children in 125 countries were freed from the curse of polio. Today, the entire continent of Africa was proclaimed free from polio. It was considered a great achievement for Africa, entangled with many human-induced calamities. It was a whopping challenge for the UN and one of its parent bodies

known as the World Health Organization. Throughout the devastating world recession in 2008, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) announced making a hunger-free world whilst a substantial portion of the world's people faced a severe scarcity of food and nutrition. To achieve this goal, at least 59 million people from 50 countries were served proper food assistance by spending one billion US dollars. Moreover, the UN operates various activities annually by targeting specific goals to upgrade the standard of living of women and children.

In essence, the UN was established to make this world more livable by avoiding clash and anarchy, if needed to exert pressure on particular countries, nations or any groups elsewhere. Considering a few critical situations, the UN has taken necessary steps to mitigate agitation righteously on time and provided the right opportunity to escape devastating consequences. Immediately after the Second World War, some controversial disputed issues indulged with the superpowers, like the Berlin crisis (1948-49). Berlin was parted between West and East Germany. It drew an unravelling divide between Socialism and Capitalism, considered the first international crisis amid Cold War. It posed not only a certain line of aggression but also impacted a bipolar world. During the Cold War period in 1962, the escalated deployment of nuclear weapons created an unimaginable scenario after Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings which were generally called the Cuban missile crisis. With an intervention by the UN, the world could avoid a severe catastrophic situation led by nuclear superpowers, the USA and the former USSR (UN CHRONICLE, 2022). The UN played a tremendous role in stopping the Congo civil war in 1964. The crisis started right after Belgium granted Congolese independence in 1960, claiming more than 100,000 people faced to die in 4 years. It could further deteriorate in absence of the UN endeavour. Similar peacekeeping processes instituted tranquillity in the Iraq-Iran war in 1988 and the Afghan war in 1989.

### **Bangladesh and the UN: Membership, Participation and Pathway to Peacekeeping**

The UN and its agencies brought relief to Bangladesh in 1971 during the Bangladesh Liberation war. The UN provided aid to Bangladeshi refugees of the war in West Bengal. During the 26th session of the General Assembly of the UN in 1971, the Provincial Government of Bangladesh (1972) sent an envoy to the UN on 21 September 1971. In October 1971, a Bangladeshi representative spoke at the UN Plaza and declared that the "point of no return" had been reached in the Bangladesh Liberation war. Bangladesh had the first official delegate to the UN on 4 December 1971. The UN established the United Nations East Pakistan Relief Operation (UNEPRO) on 17 July 1971. On 16 November 1971, the operation was completely taken over by the UN from the civil administration of East Pakistan due to mismanagement. It impacted the morale of civil servants in the East Pakistan administration. After the Independence of Bangladesh on 16 December 1971, the UN created United Nations Relief Operations in Dhaka (UNROD) on 21 December 1971 which was later upgraded to United Nations Relief Operations in Bangladesh (UNROB). The operation ended on 31 December 1973. Bangladesh failed to become a member of the United Nations in 1972 and 1973 because China used its veto on behalf of Pakistan to prevent full membership from being granted to Bangladesh. Though the developing country had faced allegations from a pair of superpowers, she was given full membership approved by Security Council on 17th September 1974. Since then, Bangladesh has played an important role as a member country of the UN.

In 1975, Bangladesh was elected vice-president of the UN General Assembly. From 1976 to 1978, it also, on several terms, served as an elected member of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). In 1979, Bangladesh was temporarily elected to the United Nations Security Council. As a member of the Security Council, Bangladesh voted against the Soviet Union invasion of Afghanistan, criticized Israeli settlements, and called for the return of American hostages from Iran. From 1980 to 1982, Osman Ghani Khan, the then CAG of Bangladesh, was elected as Chairman of the UN Board of Auditors for two successive terms. In 1980, Bangladesh served as the Coordinator of the Least Developed Countries. Bangladesh served another time in ECOSOC from 1981 to 1983. From 1982 to 1983, Bangladesh was the Chairman of the G-77. In 1985, for the first time, Bangladesh was elected to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. From 1983 to 2000, Bangladesh served as a member of the Human Rights Commission. In 1985, Abu Sayeed Chowdhury, former President of Bangladesh, was made the head of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. Humayun Rashid Choudhury, a former Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, was elected President of the United Nations General Assembly during its 41st session between 1986 and 1987. Bangladesh was elected to the Security Council again in 2000 and, from March 2000 to June 2001, served as the President of the Security Council. Bangladesh was the Chairman of the Committee Concerning Sierra Leone during its tenure at the Security Council. During the same period, Bangladesh was also the Chairman of the Working Committee on the Role of Sanctions. From 2006 to 2008, Bangladesh served in the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. Bangladesh joined the Peace Building Commission as a founding member.

In 1988, Bangladesh made an important stride through participation in UN peacekeeping operations which was one of the significant achievements of Bangladesh in contributing to global peace. The UN had crossed 40 years of its peacekeeping efforts with 14 ongoing missions when Bangladesh first joined UNPKO. Bangladesh has relentlessly been involved in various UNPKO actions through its persistent contribution. It has been nearly three decades since the armed forces of Bangladesh first embarked on peacekeeping missions. Since then, Bangladesh, a country usually known for natural disasters, political instability and economic woes, has played a consistent and significant role in maintaining international peace and stability under the auspices of the United Nations. Indeed, today Bangladesh is identified as one of the top troop-contributing countries.

### **Missions of The UN Peacekeeping: From beginning to till date**

Peacekeeping in a hostile area is not a blatant matter of fact, considering modern technological weapons readily available to terrorist and militant groups. In addition, 3,500 peacekeepers from 120 countries sacrificed their lives to uproot terrorism and animosity. Peacekeepers belonging to multilingual communities and different cultures had the only goal of maintaining

peace in hostile areas (UNPKO, 2022). The UN Peacekeeping Operation started in 1948 by deploying UN troops in Middle Eastern countries, commonly known as the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) to monitor the armistice between Arab and Israel. However, the UN mainstream peacekeeping operation with armed forces was initiated with UNEFI to mollify the Suez Crisis in 1956. After that, the large-scale deployment started from the UN operation in the Congo (ONUC) in 1960 with 20 thousand army personnel aiming to boost the security agenda. From 1960 to the 1970s, peacekeeping operations of the UN reached the zenith with so many operations such as; the Mission of the Representative of the Secretary-General in the Dominican Republic (DOMREP), UN Security Force in West New Guinea (UNSF), UN Yemen Observation Mission (UNYOM), UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), UN Emergency Force II (UNEF II), UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The UN peacekeeping operation came to a new era at the end of the Cold War when the number of troops jumped from 11,000 to 75,000 in another 20 new operations. A large number of armed personnel were deployed, particularly in UN Angola Verification Mission I and II (UNAVEM I, UNAVEM II), UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), UN Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL), UN Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) and UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) between 1989 and 1994 by the approbation of the security council amid the rising tension over the post-cold war regimen (UNPKO, 2022). In general, the UN security forces are deployed to mitigate suffering from violence in particular regions or communities as a part of the peacekeeping procedure of dedicated missions. It is to be noted that the UN does not have any police or armed forces. Instead, the security personnel of the UN peacekeeping mission are supplied by the member states in the scheduled process, which the Security Council and General Assembly directly observe. The required weapons and other necessary equipment used in operation are generally supplied by the member states that amalgamate the manpower to the dauntless job.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Extensive reviews of the literature were conducted to collect secondary data. The researcher collected data from books, local and international printed journals, electronic newspapers and websites.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### Contributions to UN Operations by different countries around the world to assuage the violence and animosity (Report Date: 31 March 2022)

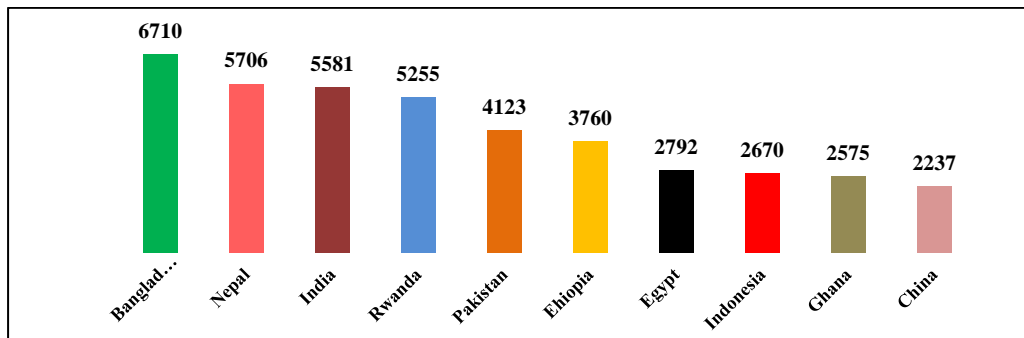


Figure 1. Contributions to UN Operations by different countries

Source: Armed Forces Division (2020)

Above and beyond, 125,000 armed personnel from 120 countries are working in UN peacekeeping actions. Most of them are deployed in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Burundi, Sudan and Nepal, reducing violence to 40 per cent in the 1990s.

It is noteworthy that the UN was awarded the Nobel peace prize in 1988 for exemplary contribution to peacekeeping. This is not just perilous conduct; the volunteer peacekeepers concerned about the risk to their lives are working in very difficult conditions. They reduce anxiety and manage armistice by negotiating with the rivals to form a peace treaty combating hundreds of impediments. This is why they achieved the most prestigious prize in the world, which is entitled to their sacrifice.

#### Bangladesh's Contribution to UN Peacekeeping Operations

Like many other countries, Bangladesh has participated in UNPKO, sending UN peacekeeping troops amid increased tension in the African nations where several groups violated the peace and human rights. Bangladesh first contributed to United Nations Peacekeeping Operation (UNPKO) in 1988 with two operations in Iraq and Namibia. Upon Succession's early endeavours, Bangladesh has participated in 54 missions in 40 different countries over 5 continents. In 2021 and 2022, it sent more than 6 thousand peacekeepers to the UN. During the gross period of UN Peacekeeping, Bangladesh contributed approximately 175 thousand troops to UNPKO, including 18 hundred female troopers (AFD, 2022). Bangladeshi peacekeepers served in many of the world's most hostile places, including Iraq, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Bosnia, Liberia, Lebanon and Congo. During these harsh times abroad, Bangladeshi peacekeepers suffered from casualties and sacrificed to restore and uphold global peace. Bangladesh is one of the significant contributors to the UN peacekeeping mission. Throughout these three decades, 183,378 Bangladeshi Peacekeepers have completed their missions till May 2022 in different countries worldwide.

Table 1. Completed peacekeeping missions by Bangladeshi peacekeepers around the world

S.L.	Country	Name of Mission	Number of Peacekeeper
1.	Afghanistan, Afghanistan-Pakistan	UNAMA UNSMA/UNGOMP	11
2.	Angola	UNAVEM & UNAVEM III	635
3.	Bosnia	UNMIBH	177
4.	Burundi	BINUB	177
5.	Cambodia	UNAMI/UNTAC/UNMLT	1,301
6.	Congo	MONUC, MONUSCO	36,919
7.	Croatia/East Slovenia	UNTIES	76
8.	East Timor	UNAMET/ UNTAET/ UNMISSET	2,718
9.	Ethiopia/ Eritrea	UNMET	1,108
10.	Georgia	UNIMOG	131
11.	Haiti	UNMIH/MNF/MINUSTAH	5,382
12.	Iraq	UNGCI/UNMOVIC	124
13.	Iran	UNIMOG	31
14.	Ivory Coast	MINUCI/ONUCI/UNOCI	32,850
15.	Kosovo	UNMIK	539
16.	Kuwait	UNICOM	8,239
17.	Liberia	UNOMIL/UNMIL	23,793
18.	Macedonia	UNPREDEP	07
19.	Mozambique	ONUMOZ	2,622
20.	Namibia	UNTAG	85
21.	Rwanda	UNAMIR	1,022
22.	Sierra Leone	UNAMSIL/ UNIOSIL	11,981
23.	Somalia	UNOSOM-I-II/ AMISOM	1,973
24.	Sudan	UNIS	9,023
25.	South Sudan	UNMISS	9,603
26.	Tajikistan	UNMET	40
27.	Uganda	UNOMUR	20
28.	West Sahara	MINURSO	387
29.	Yugoslavia	UNPROFOR/ UNMOP	1,584
30.	CAR & Chad	MINURCAT	59
31.	Darfur	UNAMID	8,989
32.	Lebanon	UNTIL	2,724
33.	West Africa	UNOWA	02
34.	Nairobi	UNION	01
35.	Syria	UNSMIS	18
36.	Mali	MINUSMA	11,638
37.	CAR	MINUSCA	7,490
38.	Somalia	CUSTOM	07
39.	Office of the African Union	UNRAU	01
40.	Sudan	UNISA	04
41.	UNIQUE	UNDPKO	50
42.	Cyprus	UNFICYP	04
43.	Yemen	UNMHA	04
Grand Total			183,378

Source: Armed Forces Division (2021)

Earlier this year, according to a UN report, Bangladesh stood first among the highest troop-sending countries outscoring Nepal and India, while Rwanda, Pakistan and Egypt secured 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> place (UNPKO, 2022).

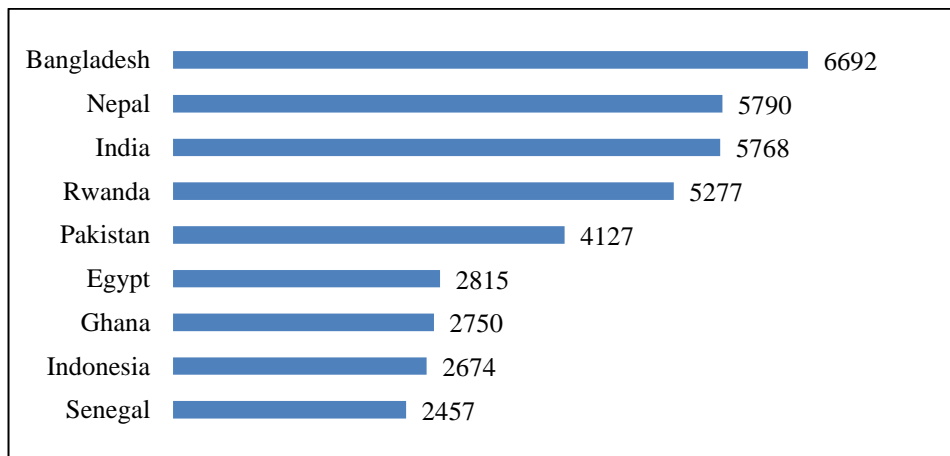


Figure 2. Ranking of Contributions by country (as of 31 May 2022)

Source: UNPKO (2022)

Currently, 6692 Bangladeshi peacekeepers are serving in 11 different missions in five countries. Since the last decade, Bangladesh was always among the largest contributors (AFD, 2022). According to the UN, Bangladesh again

became the largest troop contributor since 2015, having 6692 (As of 22 July 2022) personnel currently working for UNPKO (AFD, 2022).

Table 2. Participation of Bangladeshi Peacekeepers in Different UN Missions

SL.	Services	Number of Soldiers Completed	Number of Soldiers Serving in the Ongoing Mission	Total
1	Army	144846	5166	150012
2	Navy	5989	343	6332
3	Air Force	7115	583	7698
4	Police	19862	651	20513
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>177812</b>	<b>6743</b>	<b>184555</b>

Source: Armed Forces Division (2022)

Apart from personnel, Bangladesh has also contributed to the maritime arena. As part of the Maritime Task Force, Bangladesh has sent its warship 'BANS Sangram' to Lebanon (AFD, 2022). 'BANS Sangram' replaces 'BANS Bijoy', which was previously working on that mission before being damaged in the Beirut port explosion. 21 Bangladesh Navy personnel were injured in this incident. In this regard, Bangladesh Navy is relentlessly serving to maintain peace and security and conducting regular patrols in the Lebanese sea area. Other south Asian states such as Nepal, India, and Pakistan are currently ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup>, respectively. However, by dint of capacity building and experience, a handful of Bangladeshi personnel are now working for the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO) at the planning and management level of the peacekeeping missions.

Table 3. United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations: Position of Bangladesh

Year	Position of Bangladesh
2022	1 <sup>st</sup>
2021	1 <sup>st</sup>
2020	2 <sup>nd</sup>
2019	3 <sup>rd</sup>
2018	2 <sup>nd</sup>
2017	2 <sup>nd</sup>
2016	4 <sup>th</sup>
2015	1 <sup>st</sup>

Source: AFD, 2022

During the last 34 years, Bangladesh has also worked to build its capability and capacity in peacekeeping. Bangladesh established Bangladesh Institute for Peace Support Operations Training (BIPSOT) in 1999 to train peacekeepers (BIPSOT). BIPSOT provides all training required to serve as the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPO) troops. To promote international peace with Excellency, BIPSOT arranges comprehensive in-mission training modules, coordinates training packages, and conducts practical exercises, leadership training and effective motivational training to become a significant organization of Bangladesh. Another Bangladeshi initiative to train peacekeepers is Peace Building Centre (BPC), established in 2016 to facilitate peacekeepers with proper and modern training. The premier purposes of the institute jointly are developing skills, directing research, involving national and international participants in peacebuilding etc. Despite state-of-the-art training, Bangladeshi peacekeepers face a serious hostile situation in combating terrorists and separatists. According to the Armed Forces Division, 142 personnel sacrificed their lives, and 238 personnel suffered significant casualties.

Table 4. Supreme Sacrifices & Injured Peacekeepers for World Peace (From April 1989 to October 2022)

Subject	Bangladesh Army	Bangladesh Navy	Bangladesh Air Force	Bangladesh Police	Total
Supreme Sacrifices	129	04	09	22	164
Injured Peacekeeper	226	06	06	12	238

Source: AFD, 2022

Table 5. Supreme sacrifice by Bangladeshi peacekeepers in comparison with some other countries

Name of the country with duration	Number of Deceased	Started Contributing to UNPKOs
Bangladesh (In 34 years)	164	1988
India (in 62 years)	175	1960
Nigeria (in 62 years)	157	1960
Pakistan (in 62 years)	150	1960

Source: United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO), 2022.

### Branding Bangladesh through Peacekeeping Mission

Other than portraying Bangladeshi culture, our contingents directly enhance the national image and reputation on foreign soil through various achievements. According to the Dhaka Tribune report, on September 17th 2021, the UN awarded 110 Bangladesh Navy members working in Lebanon for extraordinary service. On 21st September, 140 Bangladeshi Police members working in the UN mission in Mali also received the medal for their extraordinary service (UNB, 2020). However, this is not the first time Bangladeshi peacemakers have been acknowledged and appreciated globally. From the very

beginning, many Bangladeshi peacemakers received medals as a token of appreciation for their dedication and sacrifice in maintaining global peace, minimizing violence and upholding fraternity beyond borders.

Undoubtedly peacekeepers who are assiduously working abroad add value to our national security. Besides gaining highly valuable experiences in the world's worst conflict-prone areas, our personnel are developing special capabilities in mediating and mitigating conflict among parties. Establishing institutions such as BIPSOT and BPC are also crucial for introducing modern training. Moreover, Bangladesh is gaining economic and institutional benefits through peacekeeping operations. Nonetheless, due to massive contributions in various countries of different continents, it also sprouted soft powers for Bangladesh that helped the government ensure better diplomacy and build good nations.

Moreover last but not least, participation contributes to the country's civil-military relations, an essential aspect of National Security. However, Participation in UNPKO also has some influence on regional security. As most South Asian states are on the list of top troop senders, with Bangladesh at the top and Nepal, India holds 2nd and 3rd place; respectively, it can serve as a good platform for inter-organization through facilitating training and mobilizing interpersonal communications.

Enhanced national image and reputation are the remarkable outcomes of Bangladesh's contribution to the UN department of peacekeeping operations. Since Bangladeshi troopers are being deployed worldwide, they are uplifting and branding the values of Bangladesh throughout the world. Besides abating antagonism and restoring peace, they promote Bangladesh's firm belief in Peace. Taking part in the Gulf war under UNIKOM, Bangladesh helped monitor the Iraq-Iran armistice. It also brought stability to many States and societies through participation in other missions. Our troopers also promote our culture and fraternity to foreign people with their praiseworthy work. Because of their diligent work in reducing violence and upholding society, citizens of Sierra Leone and Congo have founded fraternity with Bangladesh. Many Congolese now can talk in Bengali and are grateful to Bangladesh as our peacemakers contribute to upholding their peace, stability and society. Another tremendous accomplishment for Bangladesh is that Sierra Leone has acknowledged Bangla as their second language. Apart from such brandings and fraternity, Bangladesh is also being acknowledged by the great powers and various non-state actors for its significant contribution and stake in peacekeeping. As a result, it is also increasing our credibility and national reputation. These recognitions and contributions dispatch a clear message to the world about how firmly Bangladesh is committed to global peace.

### **The Multifarious Challenges for Bangladeshi Peacekeepers**

Despite the emergence of terrorist threats with global reach in the form of Al Qaeda and Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the first decade of the 21st

Century is marked as a century of severe armed conflicts. This trend was epitomized by the decline in inter-state conflict, once the dominant pattern of war, as only three such conflicts occurred during the decade. The traditional means of waging such warfare appear increasingly alien from modern battlefield realities. Today's wars have occurred in a way that tends to elude mediators and military and peace operations to terminate conflict, bypass the traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution and result in new patterns of human rights abuses and humanitarian concerns.

As conflicts tend to become intractable and spiral into a vortex of unending brutality, the idea of peacekeeping itself is expanding with more robust mandates. Setbacks suffered by UN peacekeepers in Rwanda and Bosnia led to a solid anti-peacekeeping sentiment. It urges a commitment to use lessons learned to bolster the UN's capacity for peacekeeping. Under such circumstances, how Bangladesh will deal with the exigencies of 'robust missions.' The debate touches upon Bangladesh's capacities in key areas of complex operations such as rapid reactions, logistics, communication, and intelligence, and also upon its conception of the use of force. Most missions could not get cash support from abroad, which hampers fulfilling the target. Another threat for Bangladeshi Peacekeepers is the absence of support from the host country of UNPKO. Suppose the country's government do not help them. In that case, it will be tough to cope with the peace operation as the roads and communication system is unfamiliar to the foreign personnel. The Challenges for the Bangladeshi peacekeepers are also highly threatening. In many African countries, terrorist groups occasionally engrave Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) on the streets and routes of peacekeepers, which cost lives and wounds (Biswas, 2021). In a recent incident, three Bangladeshi peacekeepers were killed, and one got injured in the Central African Republic by exploding such IEDs. Mainly in Africa, the heavy heat wave, around 100 km/hour dust and sandstorms and a maximum 50-degree high temperature (Biswas, 2021) make it impossible for our peacekeepers to go out because of high risk. Female peacekeepers usually face significant problems due to male-dominated peacekeeping missions. As of December 2021, only 7.8 % of women were deployed in peacekeeping operations, where Bangladesh staged a good number of female troops officers.

Table 6. Participation of Female Peacekeepers in UN Mission

Sl	Forces	Participated	Currently Deployed
1	Army	553	348
2	Navy	28	10
3	Air Force	120	13
4	Police	1621	148
	Grand Total	2322	519

Source: Armed Forces Division (2022)

Table 7. Participation of uniformed women of Bangladesh Armed Forces and Police in UN Peace Operation

Year	Bangladesh Armed Forces	Bangladesh Police
	Female Members	Female Members
2009	32	22
2010	26	139
2011	32	216
2012	24	191
2013	22	288
2014	50	165
2015	30	167
2016	38	161
2017	35	161
2018	40	123
2019	83	156
2020	89	181
2021	121	177

Source: Armed Forces Division & Global Peacekeeping Data

### Plausible Opportunities of Bangladesh

Being a developing country with a huge population of 168.4 million, Bangladesh has set an outstanding example by sheltering more than 1.1 million Rohingya people who fled from Myanmar to escape a brutal genocide. The UN Human rights agenda is reflected in the constitution of Bangladesh. The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh depicts the promotion of international peace, security and stability. The State bases its international relations on the principles of respect for national sovereignty and equality, noninterference in the internal affairs of other countries, peaceful settlement of international disputes, and respect for international law and the principles enunciated in the United Nations Charter. Bangladesh may face copious challenges besides the Rohingya crisis. Regarding challenges, Bangladesh may strengthen the current national policy on peacekeeping. Moreover, Bangladesh needs to broaden its peacekeeping forces by incorporating experts in various fields owing to the nature of modern peacekeeping. Furthermore, academic research regarding peacekeeping is still at a minimum in our country; additional research should be facilitated. Ultimately, proper documentation, record and promotion should be ensured in Bangladesh's peacekeeping so that the glorious achievements do not phase out in future.

Bangladesh will be entitled to many opportunities awaiting ahead in peacekeeping missions. Peacekeeping missions offer first-hand military gains, including experiences and modern training. Besides, a very fruitful phase to work in modern peacekeeping involves the rebuilding process and development phase following the conflict. Straight away, Bangladesh can take part in the rebuilding phases of PKO. In addition, due to the demand for a wide range of experts, Bangladesh has good scope to incorporate experts such as economists, development experts, legal experts, etc. Civil-military relations will further be flourished to a great extent.

Furthermore, Bangladesh can now contribute to UNDPKO, the decision-making authority of PKOs. Bangladesh should send more personnel to UNPKO because it provides first-hand experiences of decision making, planning and management of global conflicts- a unique office to work for. Moreover, lastly, UNPKO is an excellent opportunity to increase credibility, reputation, and national image while radically growing soft power in the global arena.

Personnel working in UN peacekeeping missions are the 'Brand Ambassador' or 'Spokesperson' for Bangladesh. Along with contributing to global peace, participation in UNPKOS nourishes our national security by increasing capacity and capability whilst bringing other politico-economic benefits. Though there are still some challenges, a stronger national policy on peacekeeping will indeed allow Bangladesh to address and overcome obstacles. Moreover, Bangladesh should concentrate on increasing its participation in UNDPKO. Since the opportunities are very much possible and are highly beneficial, Bangladesh must ensure proper utilization and make the best of these opportunities to ensure maximum output. From this perspective, participation in rebuilding and development phases should be prioritized as it brings more significant benefits for Bangladesh in almost every aspect. In the end, the sacrifices made by Bangladeshi peacekeepers every day working abroad are prime examples of their love for their motherland and firm belief in ideas of global peace. They delegate Bangladesh's belief in global peace to the world community. The consequences of this contribution are necessarily improving national image, ensuring national security and upholding regional and global security. It will undoubtedly inspire and acknowledge many Bangladeshi young peacekeepers between the ages of 18-29 working to establish global peace. The peacekeepers of Bangladesh are branding themselves globally as a peace-loving nation by the symbol of the 'men in Blue Helmets' helping develop our relationship with the host countries. So, they are rightly praised as 'The Ambassador of peace'. There are still a lot of prospects and opportunities waiting for Bangladesh. However, the country's success in seizing these opportunities will depend on how promptly and skillfully Bangladesh can prepare itself best to combat all the existing challenges to contribute to UNPKO and uphold its prevailing status as a peace-loving nation. Bangladesh must ensure bold diplomacy in the UN to have more peacekeepers in upcoming UN peacekeeping operations.

### CONCLUSIONS

In the wake of the Second World War, the UN was founded as a successor of the League of Nations to restore peace and dignity worldwide. Within a very short period, the UN gained trust for its extraordinary contribution to cultivating peace and prosperity. A gradual increase of expectations headed for the UN resulted in most member states wanting the UN to maintain greater accountability in its activities and prioritize its principles, which is a crying need for the unrest world. Currently, the number of peacekeepers in 16 missions worldwide holds around 125,000 troops. These figures need to be



increased, and the number of missions needs to be increased. Among the UN member states, Bangladesh has regained the top position among troop senders in UN Peacekeeping (UNPKOs). Bangladesh as a top contributor is not only upholding global peace and security. Instead, it is also a source of our national image, credibility and reputation. Bangladesh has a rich history of UNPKOs participating in 54 missions in 40 countries. More than six thousand personnel are working in 11 missions in 5 countries. By participating and gaining first-hand experiences, Bangladesh also benefits in military, economic, industrial and regional security. In addition, peacekeepers are contributing to our soft power and diplomacy. Congo and Sierra Leone are examples of such claims. With long-term planning on peacekeeping, Bangladesh would easily overcome the challenges and make the best out of the possible opportunities. Lastly, powerful nations must function above their self-interests to ensure that the UN's purpose is effectively rendered. The purpose of establishing the UN will reach its goal if Bangladesh clearly states flourishing cooperation, strengthening security and accelerating development. Beyond discussing the success or failure of either criticism, we all realize that there is no alternative to the UN, and the contribution of Bangladesh to peacekeeping is playing a pivotal role in making the UN a beacon of peace.

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