

**Department of Peacekeeping Operations**

**Agenda Item: Evaluating UN Peacekeeping Missions In Hybrid Warfare**

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## **Letter from the Under Secretary General**

Honored Delegates,

It's my pleasure to serve as Under Secretary General of the DPO committee in ARENAMUN'26. My name is Mustafa Baran Topcu. I'm studying at Ankara Atatürk High School, and it's my honor to come from Ankara to make this committee possible.

Over the next three days, we will be focusing on "Evaluating UN Peacekeeping Missions In Hybrid Warfare." Since this is one of the current global topics, I expect that this committee will present many creative solutions. We have worked to make this guide as encouraging as possible. I hope you get as much benefit as possible from this guide.

Finally, I would like to thank the Executive and Organization Team for their effort in making such a great conference like that. Also, I shouldn't write this letter without thanking my Under Secretary General Emre Erkin and Academic Assistant Ali Bakım; this committee would be impossible without their help.

Last but not least, I wish all of you three remarkable days and a committee with lots of debates, lots of fun, and new friends. Please feel free to ask if you have questions.

Best Regards,

Mustafa Baran Topcu

Under Secretary General of DPO

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## **Letter from the Under Secretary General**

Highly Distinguished Delegates,

As the Under Secretary General of this committee, it is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to ARENAMUN'26 and the DPO committee. My name is Emre Erkin, I live in Ankara and I am a first year Electrical-Electronics Engineering student at TOBB ETU. In ARENAMUN'26, our committee will focus on the critical matters surrounding "Evaluating UN Peacekeeping Missions in Hybrid Warfare" Given the complexity of this topic, it is essential for delegates to comprehend the agenda item thoroughly and prepare their positions with precision. Within this study guide, you will find comprehensive information regarding the United Nations, the functions of DPO, and the nuances of our specific agenda. Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to the Executive and Organization teams for making such a wonderful conference possible. Additionally, I would like to thank my Under Secretary-General and dear friend, Mustafa Baran Topcu, for his tireless efforts and for guiding me throughout this process. I would like to also thank Kuzey Erari, our dear academic assistant, for his great help and friendship. Without further ado, I wish you all an amazing and intellectually fruitful conference. If you have any inquiries, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Emre Erkin

Academic Assistant of DPO

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## **Letter from the Academic Assistant**

Greetings, esteemed delegates to this wonderful upcoming conference. As the Academic Assistant of the committee of DPO, I am honored and proud to stand with you in this committee.

I am looking forward to seeing heaps of actions, agreements, controversies, and most importantly, resolutions to issues you will be facing during the committee with your detailed directives. My Mun journey began when I was a freshman in high school, and it really got me hooked starting from that day. I always perceive Mun as not just an English event, furthermore, not a place to just have fun, I think Mun is something that assists people to gain new skills and new knowledge.

I highly suggest you read the guide carefully and understand it, cause we will be taking off rapidly, and we expect you to keep up with that pace. Other than that, please do not omit searching for your characters and block stance on the topic. If there is a situation that crosses the strict line of respect, there will be consequences. I will be solemn and aiming to help you to have a wonderful experience, so please do not lower the expectations.

Kuzey Erari

Academic Assistant of DPO

## 1.1 Introduction to the Topic

From the foundation of the United Nations after the Second World War, the maintenance of international peace and security was recognized as the ontological objective of the An international organization and the base of multilateralism. Soon, states understood that ensuring peace and security in areas of tension needed more drastic measures, and thus, in In 1948, the UN Security Council authorized the deployment of UN military observers to the Middle East<sup>8</sup>. The peacekeeping operations (PKOs) have evolved dramatically over the years, as the shift in state dynamics, the collapse of the bipolar system, and the experiences from past peacekeeping efforts shaped them in a way that allows us to identify four generations of peacekeeping operations<sup>9</sup> :

**1. First Generation:** We refer to PKO during the Cold War era, which had a limited mandate focusing on maintaining ceasefires and consisted of unarmed military observers and lightly armed troops that supported the resolution of the conflict with peaceful means<sup>10</sup>. An example of such a peacekeeping operation is the United Nations Emergency Force. (1956-1967) located in the Sinai Peninsula.

**2. Second Generation:** The end of the Cold War affected the nature of PKOs that presented an integrated mandate with a multidimensional mission capable of implementing more sophisticated peace agreements<sup>11</sup>. Such examples are: UNTAG in Namibia (1988-1990) and UNTAC in Cambodia (1991-1993).

**3. Third Generation:** This generation has been the most promising evolution of peacekeeping operations (UNMIK in Kosovo (1999)) until that time, as it mandated the UN to obtain a more active role in the peacebuilding processes and the administrative and the political organization of the area under conflict.

**4. Fourth Generation:** The fourth generation is referred to as hybrid operations, as they combine the work of the UN with a regional organization that is active in the area under discussion. UNAMID in Darfur is a textbook example that showcases the joint mandate of the UN with the African Union in Sudan. It is evident that over the years, from the establishment of the UN until today, the nature of conflicts has been altering rapidly. It is

increasing the need for reform of the Peacekeeping Operations with a more comprehensive mandate that can address the emerging threats.

However, the basic principles of the PKOs remain stable, underlining the values of consent of the parties, impartiality of the mission, and non-use of force, except in self-defence of the mandate<sup>12</sup>. In the present, the challenges that the peacekeeping mission has to address do not only include the traditional objectives of protection of civilians, disarmament, and restoration of the rule of law with the protection of human rights, but also responses to emerging hybrid threats that alter the law of war as we know it.

## **1.2 KEY TERMS**

### **Hybrid threats:**

Modern-day threats that combine complexity and multiple dimensions, in multiple issue areas that aim at reinforcing one another<sup>13</sup>.

### **Hybrid Warfare:**

A particular type of war, that is a combination of conventional and unconventional capabilities and tactics in a centrally organised and orchestrated way<sup>14</sup>.

### **Hybrid war:**

A type of violent conflict that involves state and non-state actors at the same time, they utilize conventional and unconventional capabilities without being limited to a particular physical territory<sup>15</sup>.

**Multi-domain operations:** Multi-Domain Operations refers to the orchestration of military activities across all operating domains and environments: Maritime, Land, Air, Space and Cyberspace<sup>16</sup>

### **Non-linear warfare:**

It refers to a strategy where the limits between war and peace, soldiers and civilians, and military and non-military actions cannot be distinguished. Such strategies prevail in recent days, as state and non-state actors seek to weaken

their opponents and achieve strategic goals without engaging in an open territorial war<sup>17</sup>.

**Disinformation:**

A piece of information that is false and is deliberately created to harm a person, social group, organisation, or country<sup>18</sup>.

UN: United Nations

UNGA: United Nations General Assembly

PKO: Peacekeeping Operations

MINUSCA: United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

MINUSMA: United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

NSA: Non-State Actor

PMC: Private Military Companies

ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States

DDR: Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration

**USEFUL ABBREVIATIONS**

**1.3 TOPIC IN DEPTH**

**1.3.1 The changing nature of conflict**

The evolution of warfare has been notable over the years, and it has been evident that it is moving away from the traditional notion of state-on-state conflict, where states engage in direct invasions towards one another to extract territorial gains, and thus, allowing more complex forms of warfare to emerge. The concept of hybrid warfare was initially studied by Frank Hoffman, who defines it as the convergence of all modes of conflict into a single battlespace, operating to impart both a psychological and a physical dimension to war<sup>19</sup>. Key term when analyzing hybrid warfare is ambiguity, as the tactics and

methods utilized in the attack blur the lines between “war” and “peace” since there is no direct invasion of another state's territory. In fact, hybrid warfare combines conventional and unconventional methods, including military operations, cyber warfare, and disinformation campaigns, and economic pressure<sup>20</sup>. This form of warfare is intertwined in multiple shapes or dimensions and can involve a mix of regular and irregular tactics across all dimensions of war. Such examples are:

- Conventional methods and tactics
- Irregular tactics (e.g., guerrilla warfare and terrorism)
- A diverse range of actors (state and non-state)
- Diplomatic means: engagement within international/regional organizations or diplomatic isolation of adversaries
- Economic instruments: economic sanctions, strategic use of energy policy
- Cyber domain: espionage, influence operations, cyberattacks, sabotage
- Information and Propaganda Operations

Hybrid Warfare remains an attractive choice for the actors of the international system as it imposes a significantly lower economic burden than large-scale kinetic operations, while at the same time, the impact of a hybrid threat can result in consequences comparable in severity to those of conventional tactics<sup>21</sup>. Moreover, factors- including technological advancement, the increasing global interconnectedness, and the evolving nature of threats have driven the rise of hybrid and non-linear warfare, which have become tools for the various actors to pursue their strategic objectives, limiting the disastrous consequences of a full-scale conventional war<sup>22</sup>. To remain up to date with the emerging threats and The rise in hybrid attacks means we ought to modernise the legal framework surrounding this domain with the recognition of the role of non-state actors and their accountability, while incorporating the impact of technological developments on warfare.

This includes using cyber capabilities, artificial intelligence, and other emerging technologies. The changing nature of war is affected gravely by the climate crisis in the security field as well. Scholars do not recognize it as a hybrid threat per se, but it has been acknowledged as a “threat multiplier”. This means that the climate crisis aggravates the already existing security challenges and tensions, exposing vulnerabilities of the states that prove the multidimensional meaning of “security”.

Many states have recognized the risk of destruction of food systems and information networks by climate-driven hazards, and thus, demonstrating vulnerabilities that are

exploited discursively or tactically by the adversaries to damage the trust of a nation in its state<sup>23</sup>. For UN peacekeeping operations, the consequences of the climate crisis increase the complexity of maintaining international peace and security, particularly in fragile settings. The environmental degradation exacerbates competition over resources such as water and materials, which fuel tensions complicating the security landscape.

### **1.3.2 Challenges for peacekeeping operations**

The changing nature of conflict is becoming an additional menace to the function of preexisting and newly formed UN peacekeeping operations. The evolving sense of security and the threats towards it pose challenges regarding the ability of the mandate of the UN Peacekeeping operations to deliver efficient results in the multiple security threats that arise. We will examine those two aspects to identify some of the roots of the insufficiency of the current model of peacekeeping operations.

#### **Mandate limitations**

Firstly, the UN peace operations frequently struggle with a lack of strong political support from the UN Security Council that forms the mandate around the upcoming operations. The divisions in the Security Council have led to an increase in non-unanimous resolutions, which affect their contribution and consequently the willingness of the Council to renew their mandate<sup>24</sup>. Moreover, the role of regional intergovernmental organizations is frequently integral to the success of a mission that has specialized knowledge in the necessities of the regional population and the political scene. However, it is often viewed that states within regional organizations advance national interests, prolonging or blocking comprehensive plans of action that complement the mandate of a PKO. Lastly, neighbouring countries and Host nations impede the effectiveness of the operation by limiting its access to resources and infrastructure, which are crucial for its function<sup>25</sup>. Therefore, the declining political support, combined with performance-related challenges, often undermines the credibility and the legitimacy of UN peace operations.

In addition to the above, mandates are the most central aspect of peace operations, as they define their scope and capabilities. Three factors stand out when analyzing their reform: legitimacy, credibility, and local ownership. Most mandates are driven by the existing supply of resources rather than local demand and are thereby shaped by political deliberation and

compromises among the UNSC Member States rather than formulated according to what is required by the conflict environment<sup>26</sup>. To ensure legitimacy, we ought to examine the existence of sufficient political will and commitment, as well as public support, to make the peace operation a viable mission. Secondly, the extent to which the peace operation is perceived to be capable of credibly carrying out the tasks entrusted to it will largely influence both compliance and trust<sup>27</sup>. Lastly, since most missions have ambitious mandates and a wide range of activities, but are endowed with limited and mismatched resources regarding human capital, logistics, and funding, they result in a lack of ownership. Experience indicates that the legitimacy and credibility of peace operations go beyond state consent. Local communities' perceptions of a peace operation, particularly its responsiveness to their protection needs and priorities, are central. Thus, legitimacy is earned and sustained not only through institutional coherence but also through consistent community engagement and the protection of civilians. Given the central role of information and public opinion, the image and reputation of the operations often become primary targets when seeking to erode the trust of the community in their overall value and usefulness.

### **1.3.3 Security threats**

#### Non-state actors

When analyzing the hybrid security threats to Peacekeeping Missions, we ought to separate the disruptive role of military and security companies, armed groups, and terrorist organizations. More in depth, it is common for states like the Russian Federation and China to deploy actors from the private sector, such as the Russian Wagner Group and its successor organisation, Africa Corps, or Chinese security companies. These groups have been present in operations in countries such as the CAR and South Sudan in parallel with peace operations, influencing conflict dynamics with covert activities and hindering peace operations in the implementation of their mandates. In addition to that, armed and unarmed non-state actors (NSAs) play an important role in the outcome of the PKO. They act independently or on behalf of third parties. In the modern landscape of warfare, where intra-state conflicts prevail and the participation of unconventional actors dominates the battlefield, the mandate and function of PKOs remain outdated. The use of NSAs as proxies is frequent, as it is a cost-effective option that falls under a gray zone in terms of accountability in International Law. Organized crime structures, hackers-for-hire, cyber

mercenaries, state-affiliated companies, or nongovernmental cultural institutions are utilized to influence the work of the peacekeeping operation, thereby compromising its effectiveness by undermining its access to resources and its reputation with the public<sup>28</sup>.

#### **1.3.4 Disinformation**

Over the past few years, a growing number of disinformation campaigns have targeted UN peacekeeping operations that take the form of false allegations that accuse the UN peacekeeping personnel of illicit activities, such as arms trafficking to armed groups, support to terrorists, and exploitation of natural resources. Malicious actors use such information to promote broader strategic goals in regions where they seek to expand their influence. In Africa, for example, the number of disinformation campaigns has almost quadrupled from 50 (2022) to 189 (2024)<sup>29</sup>. This spread of fake news erodes public trust in the missions, making it harder to implement their mandates and posing security risks for the peacekeepers. Furthermore, disinformation may be the product of domestic and external actors with a specific agenda. The effectiveness of such disinformation campaigns lies in their popularity and widespread in the general public for many reasons: firstly, the lack of sufficient information resources in the face of uncertainty helps disinformation spread across the country. Negative emotions, such as frustration and anger, are linked with the perceived failure of foreign intervention, which leads to the spread of fake news against UN peacekeepers. Finally, the means available to facilitate disinformation, such as social media and messaging applications, are widely accessible, enabling anyone to contribute to the dissemination of fake news. To mitigate the erosion of the pro-UN narrative, PKOs have frequently integrated a strategic communications branch that monitors disinformation as part of their broader efforts to monitor the political and security environment.

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They focus on traditional media and on social media, which can provide daily reports on content mentioning the mission or other issues relevant to the mission mandate<sup>30</sup>

### **1.4 PERTINENT FEATURES: CASE STUDIES**

#### **1.4.1 MINUSMA in Mali**

The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)

was launched to tackle the 2012 conflict in the north of Mali. The mission was established by the Security Council in 2013, ordering the deployment of more than 15 000 peacekeepers, including 12 877 military, 1 718 police, and 1 180 civilians. The main goal of MINUSMA was to support the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. At the same time, it focused on Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR), a comprehensive UN-supported strategy that is used in post-conflict settings to remove weapons (disarmament), dissolve armed structures (demobilization), and assist combatants in returning to society (reintegration) to foster long-term peace<sup>31</sup>. Primarily, the focus of its mandate was on national insecurity, but given the fact that the mission was situated in a context of transnational threats, namely organized crime and jihadism, the security landscape posed grave complexities for the function of the UN Peacekeeping Mission. In 2020, the renewal of MINUSMA was accompanied by the broadening of its mandate, and thus, MINUSMA supported the Government of Mali and different parties working toward peace and the development of a liberal democratic Malian state while also participating in regional counterterrorist activities<sup>32</sup>. In 2023, Malian authorities argued that after ten years of deployment, the security situation had not improved, and in some areas had worsened; thus, they requested the immediate termination of MINUSMA<sup>33</sup>. Diving into the hybrid threats toward the PKO, we acknowledge that in modern battlefields, the presence of Non-State Actors is becoming increasingly popular, particularly when they maintain direct or indirect ties with states, thereby acting as proxies to state interests in the given area. More specifically, the UN and the African Union have repeatedly warned about the growing use of mercenaries and Private Military Companies in the Malian conflict zone.

They highlighted their role in transnational organized crime, namely, the rerouting of weapons from state military stockpiles to mercenary groups. This diversion undermined the efforts of the peacekeeping forces for arms control<sup>34</sup>. Since the military junta came to power in 2021, Mali's security landscape has shifted dramatically. In this new environment, Wagner emerged as the ally of the junta, playing a central role in combat operations. Wagner's presence in Mali was characterized by grave human rights abuses and war crimes, including massacres, torture, rape, and looting<sup>35</sup>. Lastly, it greatly shaped the perception of MINUSMA in the local community.<sup>3</sup>

In conclusion, it becomes evident that, taking into consideration lessons from past

experiences, the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) ought to take a comprehensive approach to help missions mitigate hybrid threats that aim to target their missions, through recognizing the role of the non-state actors that have become central to peacekeeping operations. Moreover, the awareness of the conflict situation and the allocation of appropriate resources to address the risks are crucial. Lastly, the strategic communication of the PKOs remains vital for building support among target audiences, while monitoring the narratives around their roles, responsibilities, and impacts.

#### **1.4.2 MINUSCA in the Central African Republic**

In 2014, the Security Council voted on its Resolution 2149 (2014), establishing the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). Ten years have passed since its launch, and the mandate of this mission has expanded to include various pillars: civilian protection, ceasefire monitoring, DDR program support and human rights safeguarding. More specifically, the mission works on the implementation of the 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation (APPR)<sup>38</sup>.

Furthermore, MINUSCA had, among its priorities, the creation of a secure environment for the immediate delivery of humanitarian assistance. After the recent renewal of its mandate, the mission monitors arms embargo implementation and tracks illicit exploitation of natural resources by armed groups<sup>39</sup>.

The presence of Russia in the African continent aims at providing security guarantees that often bypass the international efforts and active PKOs in the region. Similar to Mali, President Faustin-Archange Touadéra signed a defense cooperation agreement with the government of Russia in late 2017 to strengthen his government's control. The activity of the Wagner Group impaired the capacity of the mission to monitor, investigate, and report human rights violations, including from sites of alleged atrocities. Until recently, the Kremlin had formally denied any association with the group, making it difficult to establish command responsibility and thereby deflecting political accountability. Moreover, the operations of the Wagner Group in CAR and Mali have raised serious new risks for the safety and security of peacekeepers. The aggressive posture adopted by these forces, their apparent disregard for the inviolability of UN personnel, and their frequent imposition of limitations on freedom of movement place UN peacekeepers and Wagner forces in

regular tension with one another<sup>40</sup>. Moreover, the deployment of the private military company was accompanied by a comprehensive strategy aimed at augmenting Russian influence across the African continent. Namely, they extended their sponsorship of Radio Lengo Songo, which airs content in CAR's second official language, and establishes a solid communication channel to disseminate pro-Russian narratives<sup>41</sup>

In the CAR, media outlets affiliated with Russia and Wagner, in collaboration with local networks of journalists and influencers, spread rumors about links between peacekeeping forces and non-state armed groups and terrorists. First, an example is the event of a shooting near the president's residence and a seizure of military equipment in transit that resulted in the diffusion of rumors accusing MINUSCA of orchestrating a coup d'état, plotting an assassination attempt, and colluding with armed groups that spread widely across francophone-African Facebook groups and pages. Building upon mistrust of MINUSCA and enabled by the online environment, this "participatory" strategic information operation created an alternative account of MINUSCA that undermined the mission's credibility and challenged the legitimacy of UN peacekeeping more broadly. Moreover, the spread of fake news and disinformation lay at the center of Wagner's strategy in the region, as the undermining of the capabilities of MINUSCA consequently resulted in the expansion of its activity and credibility in CAR. More specifically, the allegation that MINUSCA surveillance drones were being used to drop bombs on Russian camps led the government to ban the use of drones, which severely limited the mission's observation capabilities. As a result, the Wagner Group could operate more freely, without great oversight or accountability for potential illicit activities. Lastly, among the priorities in MINUSCA's mandate was support for the preparation and delivery of elections<sup>42</sup>. Generally, elections are an area of high vulnerability to disinformation and manipulation of public opinion, demanding a strong response capability from the UN. In this case, the anti-UN narrative focused on the dissemination of accusations that undermined MINUSCA's role, underlining the alleged "double game of MINUSCA." Therefore, this erosion of trust toward the presence of the UN and its mission allowed the armed groups to advance in To prevent the 2020 elections from being held, depriving the region of a nationally appointed democratic government.

## **1.5 GLOBAL EFFORTS ON THE MATTER**

### **1.5.1 Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) Initiative**

Peacekeeping is the principal tool utilized by the United Nations to promote and ensure international peace and security. However, peacekeeping operations are facing grave challenges that impede them from successfully delivering their purpose and mandate. On 28 March 2018, the Secretary-General launched Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) to renew the mutual political commitment to peacekeeping operations. Namely, the requested Member States to develop a set of principles and commitments to be respected by all parties for future reform PKOs. Through this initiative, the Security Council, host countries, and troop and police- contributing countries, regional partners, and financial contributors reconfirmed their commitment to the UN Peacekeeping. As of June 2020, 155 states have endorsed this initiative, underlining their shared interest in collective action. The implementation goals are focused on eight priority commitment areas<sup>43</sup>:

- Politics
- Women, Peace and Security (WPS)
- Protection
- Safety and security
- Performance and accountability

- Peacebuilding and sustaining peace
- Partnerships
- Conduct of peacekeepers and PKO

These eight priority commitment areas are anchored in ongoing areas of work, for example, the WPS Agenda and Santos Cruz Action Plan. In the year following its launch, The UN Department of Peace Operations carried out a survey to mark progress in A4P implementation and note concrete actions taken by UN Peacekeeping stakeholders to ensure the implementation of the 45 commitments in the A4P Declaration.

In the High-Level Week consultation that led to the establishment of the A4P Initiative, various thematic areas were emphasized. Performance was framed as a crucial responsibility involving all stakeholders, from field personnel to the Security Council and troop contributors.

This entails training, equipment, leadership, and clarity of mandates, with a focus on real impact to address existing gaps. A people-oriented approach was particularly underlined regarding civilian protection. While states hold primary responsibility, national institutions must be strengthened and held accountable. Stronger partnerships were highlighted at both strategic and operational levels, especially between the UN and regional organizations, such as the African Union. The importance of sustainable financing, transparency, and accountability in joint operations is key to their success, and the specialization of regional organizations can become a comparative advantage. Lastly, a more strategic and unified role for the Security Council in supporting political processes, with clearer, better-prioritized mandates linked to resources, was highlighted as the key to the ultimate success of PKOs in the future.

### **1.5.2 Action for peacekeeping+ (A4P+) initiative**

In March 2021, Action for Peacekeeping+ (A4P+) was launched by the Secretary-General António Guterres. Its goals include the addition of seven A4P+ priorities that aim to accelerate the integration of more states into the shared commitments on peacekeeping.

Their addition was the result of an analysis of the gaps and challenges that A4P faced. The two core themes were the WPS Agenda and the Digital Transformation of UN Peacekeeping.

More specifically, the 7 priorities are:

- i) Collective coherence behind a political strategy, this

underlining the necessity for coordination between the UN and the key partners,

- ii) Strategic and operational integration,
- iii) Capabilities and mindsets, emphasizing the right resources to implement their mandate,
- iv) Accountability, aiming at improving the safety and well-being of peacekeepers,
- v) Accountability of peacekeepers to the Code of Conduct - preventing, enforcing and remedying misbehaviour,
- vi) Strategic communications, this priority emphasizes the impact of disinformation and It's the public dissemination of success and
- vii) Cooperation with host countries<sup>45</sup>

### **1.5.3 Future of peacekeeping operations (FOPO)**

In the following decades, the world landscape will be radically altered as the consequences of the climate crisis, cutting-edge technologies, and non-state actors thoroughly reshape conflict and the battlespace. The Future of Peacekeeping Operations (FOPO) is a project that aims to conceptualize this uncertain future, by inviting experts such as representatives of Member States, academia, civil society, and regional organizations to provide their expertise to help understand this rapid change. Some of the thematic areas explored include the geostrategic environment, the changing conflict environment, and the responses to conflict, considering all peacekeeping policy approaches. Through these consultations, key trends that affect conflict were identified, such as<sup>46</sup>:

- Increasing competition
- Internationalized armed conflicts
- Ambiguity between war and peace
- Weakening of international governance norms
- Climate crisis
- Growing socio-economic inequality between people and states

What becomes evident is that one of the gravest challenges PKOs face lies in the complexity of the conflicts around them. The trends show that we are moving towards a deepening of this phenomenon, while the UN is adopting a tendency to intervene in such conflicts without adequate tools to generate change. As time passes, the UN must embrace

this interrelated nature of conflicts by providing peace operations with appropriate complex means to address them. That entails including multidisciplinary experts- climate scientists, economists, urban planners, and social media analysts- who can understand and shape the trajectories of violent conflict<sup>47</sup>

## **1.6 Questions to be Addressed**

1. How can the Peacekeeping Operations adapt their mandate to address the effectively emerging hybrid threats such as disinformation, advanced technological weapons, and non-state actors?
2. Which measures should the international community implement to regulate and hold accountable non-state actors, namely armed groups and terrorist organizations?
3. What roles do Private Military Companies, such as the Wagner Group, now operating As the Africa Corps plays a role in shaping conflict dynamics in Africa and affecting the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions?
4. How can the PKOs strengthen their strategic communication within peacekeeping operations to be able to tackle disinformation and anti-UN narratives?
- 5 . What lessons can be drawn from the withdrawal of MINUSMA in Mali regarding the long-term sustainability of PKOs operating in hybrid environments?
6. How can the initiatives A4P and A4P+ be strengthened to lead to better-equipped missions technologically, politically, operationally?

7. How can the UN ensure the protection of civilians in environments where hybrid warfare tactics deliberately target civilian infrastructure and public trust?

8. Should peacekeeping missions adopt more proactive or robust rules of engagement in response to hybrid warfare?

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