



General Assembly

Seventy-second session

Official Records

Distr.: General
22 November 2017

Original: English

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record (partial)* of the 20th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 30 October 2017, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Halfaoui (Vice-Chair)..... (Morocco)

Contents

Agenda item 55: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (*continued*)

* No summary record was prepared for the informal part of the meeting.

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be sent as soon as possible, under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, to the Chief of the Documents Management Section (dms@un.org), and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org/>).



In the absence of Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), Mr. Halfaoui (Morocco), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 55: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (*continued*)

1. **The Chair** said that there would be a suspension for an informal dialogue between members of the Committee and the Under-Secretaries-General for Peacekeeping Operations and for Field Support.

The discussion covered in the summary record was suspended at 3.05 p.m. and resumed at 4.20 p.m.

2. **Ms. Yee** (Myanmar) said that the United Nations, as it played the key role in the maintenance of international peace and security, needed to shift away from a sequential approach to a continuum of peacekeeping responses. Welcoming the peacekeeping reforms undertaken by the Secretary-General, her Government itself had after the transfer of power placed peace and national reconciliation at the centre of its own nation-building efforts. It was encouraging all national organizations that had not already signed the nationwide ceasefire agreement to do so and two union peace conferences had produced agreements on the key principles that would form the foundation of the nation's future democratic federal union, giving new impetus to dialogue and to finding political solutions to the challenges facing the country.

3. Notwithstanding the complex and ever-changing environment in which peacekeeping operations took place, the basic principles of United Nations peacekeeping — the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate — must remain bedrock values if missions were to preserve their credibility. There was no one-size-fits-all approach: peacekeeping mandates and operations needed to respond to the host country's needs and emerging challenges. The voices of actors on the ground must be taken fully into account in designing clearly defined and achievable mission mandates and ensuring the effective protection of civilians. Since the host Government bore primary responsibility for the protection of civilians, peacekeeping troops should be supportive of the national authorities in that connection.

4. Peacekeeping missions should be only an interim solution and should not be used as a substitute for the negotiated political settlements that were their basic objective. Because sexual exploitation and abuse had

the effect of undermining peacekeeping operations, the United Nations had done well to adopt a zero-tolerance policy in that regard, and the Secretary-General had announced a promising new preventive approach at the opening of the current session of the General Assembly.

5. As women were underrepresented in United Nations peace and security activities, increasing the ratio of female deployments would make peacekeeping operations more effective and inclusive. Decisions on whether to accept peacekeepers should be based on the past conduct of the individuals concerned and not on their country of origin. All Member States wishing to contribute troops to peacekeeping missions should be given an equal opportunity to do so.

6. Although a developing country, Myanmar had honoured its financial peacekeeping commitments without fail. Moreover, it had once again become a troop-contributing country in 2015. It looked forward to contributing more military observers to peacekeeping operations and to sharing its best practices and taking advantage of more training opportunities in the future.

7. **Mr. Bhattarai** (Nepal) said that peacekeeping had long been the flagship activity of the United Nations and the tool with which it endeavoured to maintain international peace and security. However, no matter how multifaceted, the missions were no substitute for a peacefully negotiated political settlement addressing the root causes of a conflict.

8. The emergence of new conflicts, the escalation of existing conflicts, relapse into war and the rise in violent transnational extremism and organized crime had all created an unprecedented demand for United Nations intervention. Although peacekeeping operations had successfully adjusted to evolving situations and new demands, reform was a continuous process and required the support of all Member States. Nepal endorsed the stated goals of the latest reforms proposed by the Secretary-General in his report on restructuring of the United Nations peace and security pillar ([A/72/525](#)).

9. Nepal was proud of its continuous and significant participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations since 1958, with over 5,000 peacekeepers in 14 missions, making it the sixth largest troop-contributing country. Because of its commitment to the maintenance of international peace and security, Nepal had always responded to calls for assistance from the United Nations, even at short notice, and had deployed troops, police and civilian personnel, without national caveats, even in dangerous environments, and it would continue to do so. Clearly defined mandates accompanied by exit strategies and reliable command-and-control structures were crucial for success.

Peacekeepers should be adequately equipped to fulfil their mandate and should therefore be given training on how to operate safely and effectively amidst multidimensional threats. Nepal itself conducted regional seminars and hosted a modern peacekeeping training centre that could be developed into an excellent regional centre.

10. The protection of civilians in armed conflict, particularly vulnerable women and children, was a priority. There was a close link between peacekeeping and protecting human rights by rebuilding institutions and strengthening democracy and the rule of law in conflict-affected countries. While technology was a crucial component of early warning systems, intelligent public relations and engagement with the communities which peacekeepers were mandated to protect remained the key to pre-empting threats to civilians.

11. Women were indispensable in United Nations peacekeeping operations and in all peace and security efforts, including conflict resolution. With the achievement of gender parity, peacekeeping missions would become more compassionate and afford civilians better protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. Nepal was committed to reaching the United Nations goal of a 15-per-cent female participation rate in its peacekeeping operations and was actively encouraging more women to join the national security forces. It had also endorsed the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians and had signed the Secretary-General's Voluntary Compact on Preventing and Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

12. Sustained, focused and meaningful dialogue between the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop- and police-contributing countries was a prerequisite for the success of peacekeeping operations, while fostering a spirit of partnership, cooperation and mutual trust that would further international peace and security. Especially essential was unity of purpose among the members of the Security Council in the design and fulfilment of mandates and in the mobilization of its full political capital.

13. A mechanism for the timely delivery of additional human and material support during peacekeeping missions was needed to guarantee the safety and dignity of peacekeepers on the ground. Furthermore, inter-mission cooperation should be made mandatory. Opportunities for troop- and police-contributing countries to serve in senior leadership positions in the Secretariat and in the field, commensurate with their contribution of peacekeepers, would be equitable and would boost the morale of peacekeepers.

14. He paid tribute to the thousands of men and women who had served as United Nations peacekeepers with distinction in the past, particularly those who had laid down their lives, and pledged his country's full support to efforts to improve the operational capabilities of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

15. **Mr. Mero** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the ever-changing nature of contemporary peacekeeping continued to complicate the mandates and operational landscapes of peacekeeping missions, necessitating greater flexibility and resilience. While conflict situations were best resolved by simultaneously applying military and political solutions, the majority of peacekeeping missions were facing non-traditional security threats, such as terrorism and transnational crime, which demanded a change in approach to guarantee the protection of civilians and the safety and security of United Nations personnel. Other challenges were the porosity of mission areas owing to insufficient troops and the lack of an appropriate situational awareness mechanism in mission areas.

16. While a timely exit strategy must be in place for all peacekeeping missions, it was regrettable that the process of downsizing various United Nations forces, necessitated by budgetary constraints, was not informed by the situation on the ground. The downsizing left remaining peacekeeping forces overstretched and vulnerable and put their lives in jeopardy. The United Nations, particularly the Security Council, should consult with contributing countries on a regular basis to ensure that peacekeeping mandates addressed the actual reality. The United Nations should also ensure the full participation of contributing countries in policy formulation and decision-making at all levels, including the review and change of mandates. Effective triangular cooperation among troop-contributing countries, the Secretariat and the Security Council was the key to revitalizing existing partnerships in contemporary peacekeeping operations.

17. While the outcome of the latest meeting of the Working Group on Contingent-Owned Equipment had been satisfactory, the meeting had not addressed all the concerns raised by contributing countries. The ongoing troop cost survey should continue, and the Secretariat should be given policy guidance and recommendations on how to proceed on a number of pertinent issues, especially the concerns of contributing countries related to the payment of troops, which required urgent attention. The United Nations was to be commended on its decision to hold significant global peacekeeping meetings in locations such as New York, London and Paris. The Defence Ministerial Meeting to be held in Vancouver in November 2017 would doubtless provide

policy guidance on making United Nations peacekeeping operations more effective.

18. The United Republic of Tanzania, as a major troop-contributing country, was fully committed to conducting capacity-building initiatives under the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System and continuing to deploy well-trained, well-equipped and well-disciplined peacekeepers. The Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and of Field Support were doing crucial work, and all Member States should do their part to support existing United Nations peacekeeping initiatives. At the same time, the United Nations and the international community should enhance cooperation with regional organizations, such as the African Union, to promote world peace.

19. All acts of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by peacekeepers against the civilians under their protection merited strong condemnation, and his Government had established a mechanism in cooperation with the United Nations to address allegations of such misconduct promptly and to severely discipline perpetrators. It was fully committed to implementing the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (A/71/818), which offered an improved Organization-wide strategy for preventing and combating the problem, and fully supported the United Nations zero-tolerance policy and the Voluntary Compact on Preventing and Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

20. His country was proud of its Blue Helmets who had continued to serve with distinction, and paid tribute to those who had sacrificed their lives to secure a better future for those under their protection. All must ensure that their sacrifice had not been in vain.

21. **Ms. Ighil** (Algeria) said that peacekeeping operations were a vital tool of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace and security and that they must strictly observe the basic principles of the Charter. The recommendations made by the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations remained pertinent in the light of the mounting challenges to peacekeeping operations. In that regard, Algeria welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General to reform the peace and security architecture and shared his vision of the primacy of politics and the need to focus on prevention, mediation and peacebuilding. To be efficient, all reforms must be intergovernmental and developed in consultation with Member States.

22. Political solutions were necessary to address the root causes of conflict. Peacekeeping operations must be endowed with clear exit strategies, as well as realistic

mandates that included human rights components. In the course of the ongoing strategic review of peacekeeping operations, it was necessary to assess whether missions had fulfilled their mandates or not.

23. Acts of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by peacekeepers remained a major concern, for such a scourge undermined not only the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions but also the credibility of the Organization as a whole. There must be a zero-tolerance policy on sexual abuse, with a focus on prevention, enforcement, reporting and remedial actions to ensure greater accountability. In order to reduce sexual misconduct, measures had been taken to ensure a greater presence of female peacekeepers.

24. The United Nations should strengthen its cooperation with subregional and regional partners, including the African Union. Collaborative efforts such as the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security should be the product of mutual consultations, respective comparative advantages, burden-sharing, consultative decision-making, joint analysis and mission planning, transparency, accountability and assessment visits by both parties.

25. It was a matter of concern that peacekeepers continued to be targeted by spoilers, armed groups and terrorists; it had been another deadly year in Mali, the Central African Republic and South Sudan. Her delegation therefore looked forward to the presentation by the Department of Field Support of its review of all peacekeeping fatalities with a view to identifying pertinent trends.

26. **Mr. Tangara** (Gambia) said that the evolving threats to international peace and security required smarter and more sustainable United Nations peacekeeping operations. As a troop- and police-contributing country, Gambia had been involved in more than 10 different peacekeeping missions and had contributed over 4,000 personnel. While immense progress as well as sacrifices had been made, there was a need to review and improve peacekeeping operations by placing greater emphasis on prevention, mediation and peacebuilding, as argued by the Secretary-General in his peacekeeping reform agenda.

27. Long-term peace strategies must be cross-cutting and involve active political dialogue, economic recovery, security sector reform and reconciliation programmes in order to address the root causes of conflict and lay the foundations for sustainable development. Field missions must be strengthened by improving their performance capabilities through the provision of adequate funding, logistical support, and

sufficient troops and equipment, as well as by taking decisive action following early warning signs. It was important to enhance triangular cooperation between the Secretariat, the Security Council and troop- and police-contributing countries when developing policies and taking decisions, particularly within the framework of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

28. The deliberate targeting of peacekeepers by armed groups whose primary motive was to thwart peacekeeping missions and attack vulnerable populations was reprehensible. Host countries must create enabling environments where peacekeeping personnel were safe enough to carry out their mandates, including the protection of civilians. The perpetrators of such crimes must be brought swiftly to justice. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations was in fact addressing the unacceptable security situation by developing a policy framework on intelligence in peacekeeping operations. The new protection tools and surveillance equipment being provided to improve the situational awareness of field missions should, however, be used solely in the context of protecting the safety of peacekeepers and civilians as necessary.

29. Acts of sexual exploitation and abuse, which appallingly continued to surface in missions, compromised the credibility and integrity of all United Nations peacekeeping operations and generated mistrust between peacekeepers and the communities they sought to protect. Troop- and police-contributing countries must therefore hold any accused officers accountable within their national jurisdictions without delay. His Government had ensured that all officers nominated for deployment to peacekeeping missions received gender-sensitive pre-deployment training.

30. While the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security resided with the Security Council, partnerships should still be encouraged with regional organizations such as the African Union in the interest of improving peacekeeping operations. Regional organizations often had a better understanding of the geopolitical context and could respond more effectively to emergency situations on the ground. Gambia looked forward to the implementation of the recent Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security.

31. His Government had recently pledged to contribute both troops and police to the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System for the fiscal year 2018, but its ability to participate in peacekeeping missions, like that of many other developing countries, had often been limited by a lack of major equipment; those

capability gaps could be remedied by the equipment contributions proposed by the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support.

32. **Ms. Andrianantoandro** (Madagascar) said that her delegation supported the Secretary-General in his efforts to implement the recommendations of the High-level Panel, and applauded his vision for a comprehensive overhaul of the peace and security architecture, especially his proposed reforms in mission planning, management and support, and the institution of a unified regional approach to strategy. Member States, the General Assembly, the Security Council and the contributing countries must all support the Secretary-General as he realized those initiatives.

33. Drawing on its experience in contributing officers to five different peacekeeping missions; Madagascar emphasized the importance of strengthening strategic partnerships with regional organizations for greater effectiveness and agility on the ground. The new Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security was particularly important given that 60 per cent of all peacekeeping operations took place in Africa. The international community must support the African Union and its missions as well. All peacekeeping missions depended on sufficient and predictable funding and human resources. Member States had made welcome pledges to provide scholarships for human resources training, and the Secretariat as well had expressed its intention to expand its support for developing countries wishing to contribute troops but needing help in training them. There should be a more equitable gender balance within the troops and police deployed, as the presence of female officers could be crucial in contacts with the local population. Language competence was also a factor to be considered when deploying mission personnel.

34. Since sustainable development could be achieved only in peacetime, the focus must be on conflict prevention through preventive diplomacy, political solutions, constructive dialogue and mediation. Peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction and national ownership of peace processes must likewise be emphasized.

35. Madagascar condemned all acts of violence against United Nations personnel, which had regrettably more than doubled over the course of the previous few years. At the same time it firmly denounced the sexual exploitation and abuse of civilians by some soldiers, which undermined the exceptional work, courage and devotion of thousands of United Nations peacekeepers.

The only option was the Organization's zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation and abuse.

36. **Mr. Kapambwe** (Zambia) said that the nature of conflict, its causes and protagonists, and the threats it posed to peace and security, had changed since the inception of the United Nations and the creation of its current peace and security architecture: even the very definition of peace and security had changed. Thus, the international community's tools, mechanisms and rules of engagement must also change. Any approach to peace and security that did not address the root causes of instability and conflict would be unsustainable at best. So long as social and economic underdevelopment were not addressed, and the chasm between the rich and the poor persisted, there would never be sustainable peace and security in the world. Inequality did not merely exist between nations: it was equally stark within developing and developed countries alike. The majority of the world's citizens had no jobs, no opportunities and no hope; they were marginalized and had no stake in their own societies. It was no wonder, therefore, that so many individuals were drawn to crime, violence or extremism.

37. Although the international community was compelled to find new sources of funding and ways of reducing the budgets of various United Nations bodies and programmes, it should not be financially short-sighted: the resources spent on peace and security or development programmes were not mere expenditures but an invaluable investment. The world was wealthier than it had ever been before: what was in short supply at the moment were not resources, but a sense of humanity and solidarity.

38. **Ms. Hassan** (Djibouti) said that security challenges continued to evolve in unconventional ways, with violent conflicts, terrorism and piracy ranking among the gravest threats facing the modern world in general and Africa in particular. The Horn of Africa faced significant peril, as illustrated by the large joint United Nations-African Union peacekeeping operations deployed in the region. The changing nature of threats would require a greater understanding of the operational environment and improved cooperation among organizations. In that regard, the restructuring of the United Nations peace and security pillar initiated by the Secretary-General would enable the Organization to address those challenges more effectively, in cooperation with regional and subregional organizations. In that connection, her country welcomed the signing in April 2017 of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and the adoption of Security Council resolution [2378 \(2017\)](#).

39. The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) served as an example of a strong partnership that had placed that country on the road to peace and enabled it to hold two democratic elections. However, the recent attack in Mogadishu was a sobering reminder of how fragile the security situation remained and of the danger that terrorist groups like Al-Shabab posed to both Somalia and the region as a whole. Djibouti had therefore decided to contribute up to 2,000 troops to that peacekeeping operation.

40. The international community must continue to provide assistance to Africa with a view to improving its peace, security and development capacities. There must be more triangular cooperation in addressing the challenges of peacekeeping operations and implementing their mandates. As a signatory to the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians, her Government supported all United Nations efforts to fulfil that vital duty. Given the important contributions that women could make to peacekeeping, all aspects of the missions should include a gender perspective. Moreover, in the light of the disturbing recurrence of sexual misconduct by peacekeepers, her Government would sign the Secretary-General's Voluntary Compact on Preventing and Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. Djibouti would remain committed to maintaining international peace and security through its contribution of forces to peacekeeping operations around the world.

41. **Archbishop Auza** (Observer for the Holy See) said that the comprehensive review of peacekeeping operations was particularly timely, coming as it did in the midst of numerous challenges to peacekeeping. Policies were being adopted to ensure that the operations reflected the Organization's ideals and principles.

42. Protecting the civilian population should be one of the central elements of peacekeeping mandates, as it often determined the success and legitimacy of United Nations peacekeeping operations. The preventive strategy of arms control was one sure way to protect civilians during armed conflict. The Holy See renewed its call to arms manufacturers and States to limit strictly the manufacture, sale and gifting of weapons that were later used to terrorize civilian populations or destroy civilian infrastructure.

43. Given the vital role of women in preventing the outbreak of war through mediation and preventive diplomacy, they must participate fully as active agents in peace and security efforts. Their contribution to United Nations peacekeeping operations was commendable. Noting the new policies put in place to

strengthen the rules that governed the conduct and discipline of United Nations personnel, he called on the Organization to ensure that the prevention of sexual abuse against women and children was fully integrated into the planning of peacekeeping operations. He hoped that certain post-conflict situations too precarious for weak national authorities to keep under control would be carefully evaluated when the decision to bring a peacekeeping operation to a close was being made.

44. The relationship between the Security Council, the Secretariat, troop-contributing countries, regional bodies and host countries remained instrumental to the successful implementation of mandates and, as such, should be strengthened through regular and genuine interactions to build confidence and consensus. In the light of the worsening security situation of many missions, with attacks on United Nations personnel becoming ever more frequent, their safety and security should be considered paramount. The role of peacekeepers in conflict prevention and conflict resolution and in the early phases of post-conflict peacebuilding should be made abundantly clear, and peacekeepers should receive mission-specific training and be adequately equipped to protect themselves from aggressors. Perpetrators of attacks against United Nations peacekeepers must be brought to justice in conformity with international humanitarian law.

45. **Mr. Murray** (Australia), speaking also on behalf of Canada and New Zealand in exercise of the right of reply, said that United Nations peacekeeping operations must strictly observe the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the basic principles of peacekeeping. Noting with alarm the failure by several delegations to refer to the principle of the permissible use of force in defence of the mandate, he stressed that any reference to the basic principles of peacekeeping that did not include that particular exception to the non-use of force was inaccurate and risked undermining peacekeepers serving in the field. The basic principles of peacekeeping in their entirety enabled peacekeepers to carry out the mandates given them by the Security Council. Anything less would leave peacekeeping operations and forces open to failure.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.