United States Government Accountability Office

Report to the Subcommittee on Multilateral International Development, Multilateral Institutions, and International Economic, Energy, and Environmental Policy, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate

March 2019

UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

State Should Take Additional Steps to Work with the UN to Improve Effectiveness and Performance Information

Accessible Version

GAO-19-224

GAO Highlights

Highlights of GAO-19-224, a report to the Subcommittee on Multilateral International Development, Multilateral Institutions, and International Economic, Energy, and Environmental Policy, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate

Why GAO Did This Study

As of December 2018, the UN had 14 ongoing peacekeeping operations with approximately 103,000 personnel. The United States is the single largest financial contributor to these operations, assessed by the UN to contribute an estimated $1.7 billion in fiscal year 2018, according to State. It is also a member of the Security Council, the UN body tasked with maintaining international peace and security.

GAO was asked to review UN peacekeeping operations. In this report, GAO examines (1) the UN's process to establish and renew peacekeeping operations, including the tasks these operations perform; (2) State's assessment of the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations; (3) how the United States works within the UN to adjust peacekeeping mandates and associated resources; and (4) member states' concerns regarding the UN's performance information. To address these objectives, GAO analyzed UN and U.S. documents and interviewed UN and U.S. officials. GAO also interviewed officials at peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Kosovo, and Lebanon. GAO selected these operations because they represent those that perform a variety of tasks and are located in diverse regions.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that State take additional steps to ensure that the UN (1) peacekeeping operations meet principles of effectiveness, (2) provides information on the estimated costs of mandated tasks, and (3) addresses member states' concerns about the quality of performance information. State agreed with GAO's recommendations.

View GAO-19-224. For more information, contact Jennifer Grover at (202) 512-7141 or groverj@gao.gov.

March 2019

UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

State Should Take Additional Steps to Work with the UN to Improve Effectiveness and Performance Information

What GAO Found

The United Nations (UN) Security Council establishes and renews peacekeeping operations by issuing resolutions, generally referred to as mandates, which can include a range of tasks, such as monitoring ceasefires and protecting civilians. Generally once or twice a year, the Security Council renews an operation's mandate and makes adjustments as needed.

UN Peacekeepers Patrolling in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Source: United Nations photo by Michael Ali. | GAO-19-224

GAO's review of the Department of State's (State) assessments as of December 2018 and discussions with State officials found that UN peacekeeping operations generally do not fully meet U.S. principles for effective peacekeeping, which include host country consent and an exit strategy, among others. GAO's review of 11 operations found that all 11 met or partially met the principle of host country consent, while five included or partially included an exit strategy. State officials stated that they must continue to work with the UN to ensure peacekeeping operations meet principles of effectiveness, which they noted are key to success.

The United States works with the UN Security Council and member states to adjust peacekeeping mandates, but it lacks sufficient information to determine if associated resources accurately reflect these adjustments. State officials noted that they do not have this information because UN peacekeeping budgets do not estimate costs by mandated task. UN peacekeeping guidance states that when the UN changes a peacekeeping mandate, it should make commensurate changes to that operation's resources. Without information on estimated costs by task, member states have difficulty determining that resources for UN peacekeeping operations accurately reflect mandate changes.

The UN has taken steps to improve peacekeeping performance data, but member states have raised concerns about that information's quality, including its completeness and timeliness. Among other concerns, member states note that the UN does not have complete information to assess the performance of civilians, who comprised about 14 percent of peacekeeping personnel, as of December 2018. In March 2018 the UN began peacekeeping reforms, including those to improve performance data. However, according to State officials, these efforts are in the early stages and more work is needed. Without fully addressing member states' concerns about the quality of information, the UN is limited in its ability to improve the performance of peacekeeping operations.

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Abbreviations

ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
COSO	Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission
IO	Bureau of International Organization Affairs
MINUJUSTH	United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti
MINURSO	United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MINUSTAH	United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
MONUC	United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
State	Department of State
UN	United Nations
UNAMID	African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur
UNDOF	United Nations Disengagement Observer Force
UNFICYP	United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNISFA	United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
UNMIS	United Nations Mission in Sudan
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan
UNMOGIP	United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan
UNTSO	United Nations Truce Supervision Organization
USUN	United States Mission to the UN

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U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE
441 G St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20548

March 19, 2019

The Honorable Todd Young
Chairman
The Honorable Jeffrey A. Merkley
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Multilateral International Development, Multilateral Institutions, and International Economic, Energy, and Environmental Policy
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate

According to the United Nations (UN), UN peacekeeping is one of the main tools employed by the organization to promote international peace and security. Also, UN peacekeeping supports U.S. government objectives by helping to sustain peace, protect civilians, and promote conditions necessary for political resolution of conflicts. As of December 2018, the UN had led 14 peacekeeping operations worldwide with over 103,000 military, police, and civilian personnel and a budget of $7 billion for the UN's 2018-2019 fiscal year.[1] The United States is a member of the UN Security Council and the single largest financial contributor to these operations.[2] According to the Department of State (State), in fiscal year 2018, total U.S. assessments for UN peacekeeping activities were $1.7

[1]This amount finances 12 of the 14 UN peacekeeping operations, supports logistics for the African Union Mission in Somalia through the UN Support Office in Somalia, and provides support, technology, and logistics to all peace operations through global and regional service centers. The remaining two peacekeeping operations, the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) and the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), are financed through the UN regular budget. UN fiscal years for the peacekeeping budget cycle run from July 1 through June 30 of the following year.

[2]The Security Council is a 15-member UN component that has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

billion.[3] In his fiscal year 2018 and 2019 proposed budgets, the President of the United States cited a desire to reduce U.S. peacekeeping contributions while advancing measures to improve performance of UN peacekeeping operations. Further, the United States has highlighted several principles for effective UN peacekeeping operations, including the need for host country consent and a clear exit strategy; and the UN Secretary-General regularly reports to member states on the performance of such operations.

In this context, you asked us to examine a number of issues related to UN peacekeeping operations. In this report, we examine (1) the UN's process to establish and renew peacekeeping operations, including the tasks these operations perform; (2) State's assessment of the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations; (3) how the United States works within the UN to adjust peacekeeping mandates and associated resources, and (4) UN member states' concerns regarding the UN's performance information.

To examine the UN's process to establish and renew peacekeeping operations, including the tasks these operations perform, we first reviewed various UN documents and websites to describe steps taken by UN components. Next, to determine the tasks peacekeeping operations perform, we analyzed the UN Security Council resolutions authorizing each peacekeeping operation—generally referred to as a mandate—as of December 2018. We described the types of mandated tasks performed by peacekeeping operations using categories and definitions published in UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations-Department of Field Support's training documents. We also reviewed these mandates to identify the date on which the authority for each operation expires and the period of time reported until the next renewal decision.

[3]The UN General Assembly sets the assessment levels for UN member contributions to peacekeeping operations every 3 years. The United States' assessment has averaged about 28.5 percent of the UN peacekeeping budget; however, according to State, Congress has authorized payment with appropriated funds at about 27 percent for U.S. fiscal years 2014 through 2016, and 25 percent for U.S. fiscal year 2017. According to State officials, because of a legislative restriction limiting the amount of U.S. contributions to 25 percent of UN peacekeeping assessments and delays in the receipt of assessments and funding to pay those assessments, the amount of UN peacekeeping contributions paid in fiscal year 2018 was $992.7 million, including contributions for the UN Support Office in Somalia. The United States paid an additional $394.8 million in peacekeeping contributions in October 2018.

To examine State's assessment of the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations, we reviewed State documents that include the department's assessment of these operations against principles of effective peacekeeping, which, according to State, establish critical conditions for an operation to successfully implement its mandate. We analyzed these documents to determine State's assessment of whether the peacekeeping operations met the principles of effectiveness and categorized State's results as: met, partially met, or did not meet. In December 2018, we updated our categorization of State's assessments based on our discussions with State/IO and officials at the U.S. Mission to the UN (USUN). We discussed our methodology and results with officials at State, who confirmed that our methodology and results were valid. We also discussed with these officials additional steps the United States could take to ensure that peacekeeping operations meet the principles for effective peacekeeping. We did not independently verify State's assessments, but we reviewed State's methodology and discussed it with officials and found the information in State's reporting to be sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report.

To examine how the United States works within the UN to adjust peacekeeping mandates and associated resources, we spoke with State officials to understand the different approaches the Security Council takes to revise mandates and the types of information available to UN member states to determine appropriate resource adjustments when mandates change. We also compared the information the UN provides to member states to make these adjustments to internationally-accepted and federal standards for internal control, which state that policymakers should have quality information to help them make decisions.[4]

To examine UN member states' concerns regarding the UN's performance information, we interviewed officials from the USUN and reviewed UN documents to understand member states' concerns

[4]Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission, *Internal Control—Integrated Framework* (New York: American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, 2013) and GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, GAO-14-704G (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 10, 2014). Internal control involves the plans, methods, policies, and procedures that an entity uses to fulfill its mission. COSO guidance has been adopted as the generally accepted framework for internal control and is recognized as the standard against which organizations can measure the effectiveness of their systems of internal control. GAO's *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government* provides the overall framework for establishing and maintaining an effective internal control system in the federal government. It may also be adopted by other governmental entities and not-for-profit organizations.

regarding the quality of performance information available to them from the UN. We compared member states' concerns and the Secretary-General's plans for implementing reforms for improving performance information with internationally-accepted and federal standards for internal controls, which state that organizations should use quality information to better achieve their performance goals.[5]

To address all four objectives, we reviewed UN policies, Security Council resolutions, General Assembly reports, Secretary-General's reports, Security Council meeting transcripts, budget documents, and various UN websites. We also interviewed UN officials from the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support and U.S. government officials from State and the Department of Defense. Additionally, we selected operations in four countries—the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Kosovo, and Lebanon—as case studies. We selected these peacekeeping operations because, among other attributes, they represent a mix of different types of UN peacekeeping operations located in different regions of the world.[6] We interviewed U.S., UN, and, when possible, host government officials and representatives of civil society organizations in these countries.[7] While the findings from these peacekeeping operations cannot be generalized, they provide illustrations of the UN's peacekeeping activities. Appendix I provides more information on our objectives, scope, and methodology.

We conducted this performance audit from October 2017 to March 2019 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

[5]COSO, *Internal Control—Integrated Framework* and GAO-14-704G.

[6]The UN has employed three types of peacekeeping operations: traditional, multidimensional, and transitional authority, according to UN guidance. The guidance states that *traditional* peacekeeping was the original form of UN peacekeeping as an interim measure to help manage a conflict and create safer conditions for those working on peacemaking activities. *Multidimensional* peacekeeping operations have become the most common form of UN peacekeeping operation and are typically deployed in the aftermath of a violent internal conflict, once there is a peace agreement or political process in place. The UN sets up a *transitional authority* to temporarily take responsibility for the legislative and administrative functions of the state. The four peacekeeping operations we selected represent the largest operation in each category and the four regions in which peacekeeping operations are employed—Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and the Western Hemisphere.

[7]We conducted site visits of the peacekeeping operations in Haiti, Kosovo, and Lebanon. We conducted videoconferences with officials from the peacekeeping operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Background

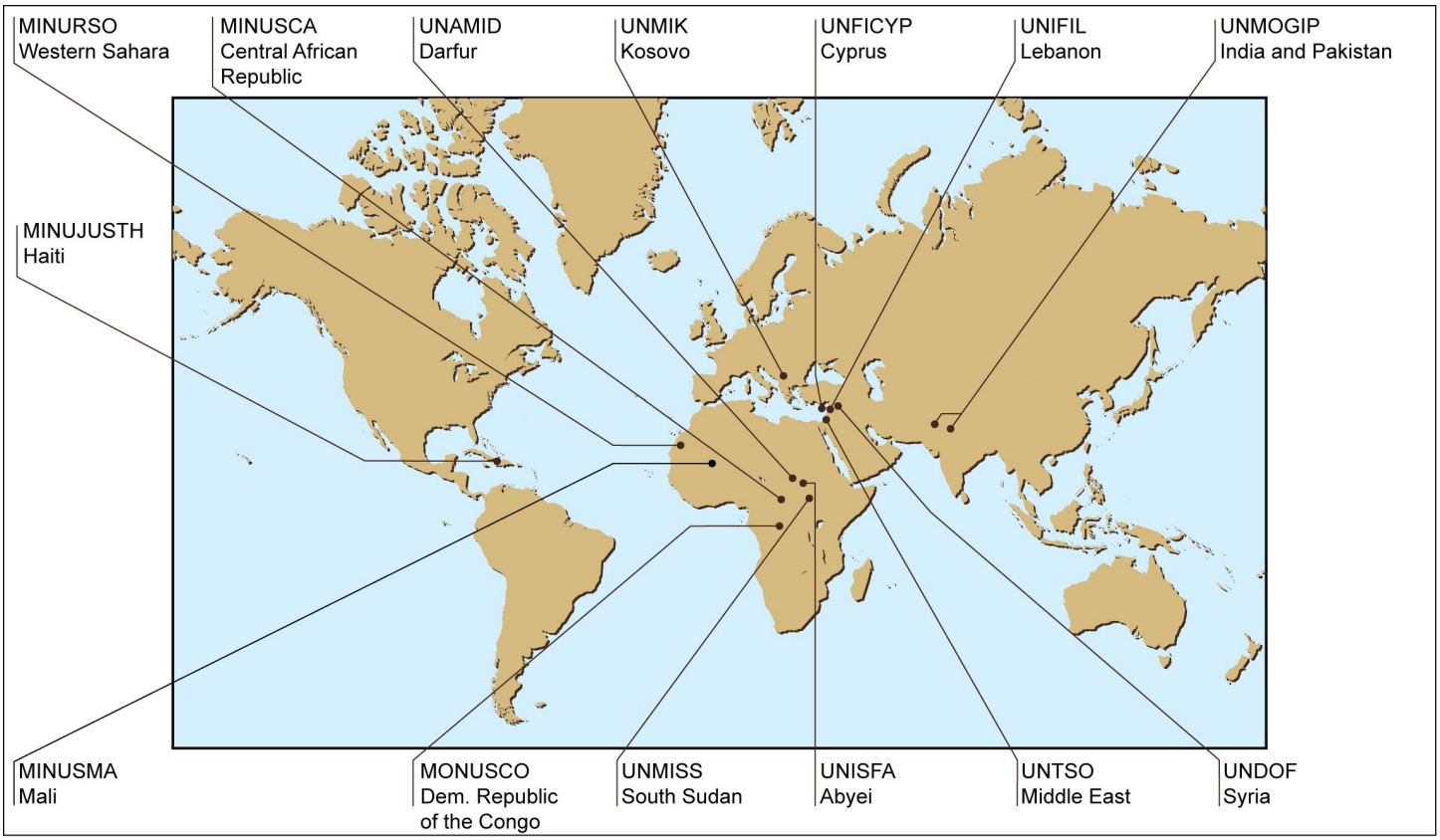
Overview of Peacekeeping Operations

In accordance with the UN Charter, peacekeeping operations aim to maintain international peace and security, among other things.[8] The UN has deployed 71 peacekeeping operations since 1948. As of December 2018, the UN had 14 active peacekeeping operations worldwide (see fig. 1).[9]

[8]United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations* (San Francisco: June 26, 1945), accessed February 26, 2019, http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/un-charter-full-text/.

[9]The UN also provides logistics support for the African Union Mission in Somalia through the United Nations Support Office in Somalia.

Figure 1: Location of United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Operations, as of December 2018



Legend (year established in parentheses):

UNTSO (1948)	UN Truce Supervision Organization
UNMOGIP (1949)	UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan
UNFICYP (1964)	UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
UNDOF (1974)	UN Disengagement Observer Force
UNIFIL (1978)	UN Interim Force in Lebanon
MINURSO (1991)	UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
UNMIK (1999)	UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
UNAMID (2007)	African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur
MONUSCO (2010)	UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
UNISFA (2011)	UN Interim Security Force for Abyei
UNMISS (2011)	UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan
MINUSMA (2013)	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MINUSCA (2014)	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MINUJUSTH (2017)	UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti

Sources: United Nations (UN) (data); Map Resources (map). | GAO-19-224

Note: The United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), which was established on November 30, 1999, was renamed MONUSCO on July 2010. MINUJUSTH is a follow-on mission to MINUSTAH, which closed in October 2017. UNMISS is a successor mission to the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS), which closed on July 9, 2011.

We have previously reported that UN peacekeeping operations have become more complex since 1998.[10] Traditional UN peacekeeping operations were primarily military in nature and limited to monitoring cease-fire agreements and stabilizing situations on the ground while political efforts were made to resolve conflicts. More recently, in response to increasingly complex situations in which conflicts may be internal, involve many parties, and include civilians as deliberate targets, several UN peacekeeping operations deploy civilian and police personnel, in addition to those from the military, and focus on peacebuilding activities.

Key UN Components in Establishing UN Peacekeeping Operations

There are three principal UN bodies active in peacekeeping:

- *The General Assembly*, which consists of 193 member states that work through membership in one of six main committees and various subsidiary components tasked with specific issue areas.
- *The Security Council*, which has 15 members, including 5 permanent members with veto power: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China. The remaining 10 members of the Security Council are elected for 2-year terms to ensure geographical representation.[11]
- *The Secretariat*, which comprises the administrative component of the UN and is led by the Secretary-General, who has responsibility for managing multiple UN departments, offices, and activities.

The United States holds positions in two of these three components—the General Assembly and the Security Council. See table 1 for more information.

[10]GAO, *United Nations Peacekeeping: Challenges Obtaining Needed Resources Could Limit Further Large Deployments and Should Be Addressed in U.S. Reports to Congress*, GAO-09-142 (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 18, 2008).

[11]As of January 2019, the current non-permanent members of the Security Council are Belgium, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Germany, Indonesia, Kuwait, Peru, Poland, and South Africa.

Table 1: United Nations (UN) Components Involved in Peacekeeping Operations

UN component	Description of responsibilities	U.S. role
General Assembly	Main forum for member states to make decisions with representatives of all the member states of the UN. Provides final approval of appropriation for peacekeeping budgets	Member state
General Assembly: Fourth Committee	Reports to the General Assembly on behalf of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, which reviews and recommends actions on peacekeeping	U.S. representative
General Assembly: Fifth Committee	Recommends budgets for peacekeeping operations for approval by the General Assembly	Committee member
General Assembly: Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions	Reviews peacekeeping budgets submitted by the Secretary-General and recommends actions on peacekeeping	U.S. citizen representative[a]
Security Council	Has the lead responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security	Permanent member
Secretariat	Administers peacekeeping operations, mediates international disputes, surveys economic and social trends and problems, and prepares studies on human rights and sustainable development, among other tasks	
Secretariat: Department of Field Support[b]	Delivers financial, personnel, administrative, information, communications, and logistical support to all UN field missions, including peacekeeping operations	
Secretariat: Department of Peacekeeping Operations	Provides executive direction to UN peacekeeping operations and maintains contact with the Security Council, troop and financial contributors, and parties to the conflict in the implementation of Security Council mandates	
Secretariat: Department of Political Affairs	Is the lead UN department for peacemaking and preventive diplomacy	

Source: GAO analysis of UN documents. | GAO-19-224

[a]Representatives to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions serve in a personal capacity and not as representatives of member states.

[b]In October 2018, the UN announced that Department of Field Support services would be placed under two newly-formed departments in January 2019: the Department of Management Strategy, Policy, and Compliance and the Department of Operational Support. The Department of Management Strategy, Policy, and Compliance would be responsible for the overarching strategy, regulatory framework and compliance monitoring, and the Department of Operational Support would provide operational and transactional support to the field to support peace operations.

The United States' Role in UN Peacekeeping

State's Bureau of International Organization Affairs (State/IO) and the USUN serve primary roles with regard to the UN. State/IO is the U.S. government's primary interlocutor with the UN and other international organizations, and is charged with advancing U.S. national interests through multilateral engagement on a range of global issues, including peace and security, nuclear nonproliferation, human rights, economic development, climate change, and global health. The USUN serves as the United States' delegation to the UN and is responsible for carrying out

U.S. participation in the organization. The USUN represents the United States' political, legal, military, and public diplomacy interests at the UN.

As part of its oversight of UN peacekeeping operations, State/IO conducts annual monitoring trips to most UN peacekeeping operations and documents the findings of these trips in Mission Monitoring and Evaluation reports. These reports summarize State/IO's evaluation of each peacekeeping operation's progress toward meeting its mandate and identify challenges the operation faces in doing so. State/IO summarizes the findings of these reports for the National Security Council in a U.S. strategy and priorities memorandum that includes recommendations for U.S. action, including how the United States should conduct negotiations and vote on upcoming renewals of the mandates that authorize peacekeeping operations. According to State, the National Security Council conducts an interagency policy formulation process based on this input.

Other U.S. government entities also support UN peacekeeping operations. For instance, State's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs and Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs provide capacity-building support for troops and police from troop- and police-contributing countries, respectively, serving in UN peacekeeping operations. Additionally, the Department of Defense participates in UN peacekeeping operations by providing UN forces with equipment, personnel, and other support services.

The United States' Principles of Effective Peacekeeping

In April 2017, during a Security Council meeting on peacekeeping, the U.S. Permanent Representative to the UN outlined five principles that the United States believes are critical for effective peacekeeping.[12] She remarked that, while peacekeeping is the UN's most powerful tool to promote international peace and security, there is room for improvement, citing examples of operations that no longer need to exist or have limited host country consent. To make peacekeeping operations more effective, she emphasized that the UN should identify operations that lack the underlying political conditions for a resolution to the conflict, noting that

[12]Ambassador Nikki Haley, *Remarks at a UN Security Council Thematic Briefing on UN Peacekeeping Operations* (New York: Apr. 6, 2017), accessed Feb. 21, 2019, https://usun.state.gov/remarks/7753. The Permanent Representative is the head of the diplomatic mission to the UN.

numerous studies have concluded that such conditions are central to an operation's success.[13] To guide this process, she announced a set of five principles to which peacekeeping operations should be held:[14]

1. Peacekeeping operations must support political solutions to conflict.
2. Operations must have host country consent.[15]
3. Mandates must be realistic and achievable.[16]
4. There should be an exit strategy, which would articulate the Security Council's agreement on what success looks like and how to achieve it.

[13]For example, in March 2000, the UN Secretary-General appointed a panel to assess the shortcomings of UN peacekeeping and to make specific and realistic recommendations for change. The result of the assessment, known as the *Brahimi Report*, called for renewed political commitment on the part of member states, among other things. In the report, the panel also noted that in order to be effective, UN peacekeeping operations must be properly resourced and equipped, and operate under clear, credible, and achievable mandates. United Nations, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, A/55/305–S/2000/809 (New York: Aug. 21, 2000).

[14]Some of these principles are also included as part of the Secretary-General's peacekeeping reform efforts, which he announced in March 2018. As part of these reforms, many member states and relevant organizations have renewed their commitments to some of these principles. According to State officials, these commitments include the following, which are not binding: (1) member states affirmed the primacy of politics in the resolution of conflict and the supporting role peacekeeping operations play; (2) host governments of peacekeeping operations committed to make efforts to build and sustain peace and to cooperate with peacekeeping operations in the pursuit of Security Council mandates, including facilitating access, and recognize national responsibilities related to the safety and security of peacekeepers; (3) member states committed to clear, focused, sequenced, prioritized, and achievable mandates; and (4) the Secretary-General committed to report to the Security Council using a comprehensive analysis and realistic recommendations to propose changes to mandates. Moreover, according to UN guidance, the UN considers two of these principles—support for political solutions and host country consent—basic to peacekeeping operations. UN peacekeeping operations are deployed with the consent of the main parties to the conflict, which requires a commitment by the parties to a political process and their acceptance of a peacekeeping operation mandated to support that process. In the absence of such consent, a peacekeeping operation risks becoming a party to the conflict, being drawn toward enforcement activities and away from its role of keeping the peace.

[15]The U.S. Permanent Representative to the UN noted that the UN has the authority to intervene, but has on occasion failed to help those in need when host governments obstructed a peacekeeping operation's efforts.

[16]The U.S. Permanent Representative to the UN stated that although mandates should be targeted to the challenges facing the country, it has become common practice for the Security Council to gradually add more tasks and staff over time, resulting in operations that have unclear priorities and reporting lines.

5. The Security Council should be willing to adjust peacekeeping mandates when situations improve or fail to improve.

Since the Permanent Representative's announcement of these principles, State/IO has included an assessment of each peacekeeping operation against these principles in the U.S. strategy and priorities memoranda that it prepares for the National Security Council. With regard to the fifth principle, in these memoranda, State/IO assesses whether and how a mandate itself should be changed, rather than assessing the Security Council's willingness to change the mandate. Officials indicated that they conduct their assessment in this manner in order to inform and establish the U.S. negotiating position.

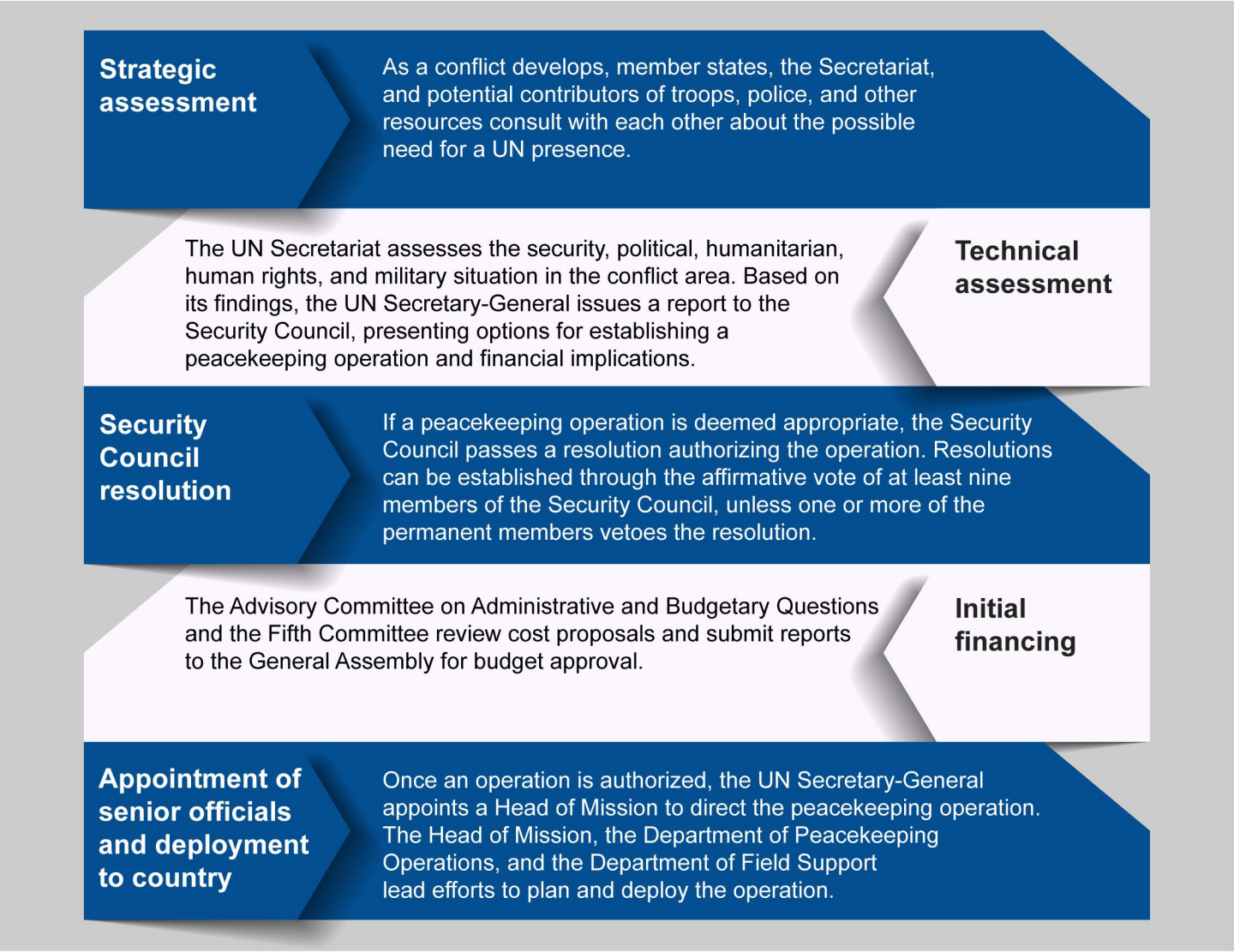
The UN Security Council Establishes and Renews Peacekeeping Operations, Which Conduct a Range of Tasks

Working with UN Member States, the UN Security Council Establishes and Renews Peacekeeping Operations

Establishing Peacekeeping Operations

The Security Council determines when and where to deploy a UN peacekeeping operation. According to UN documents, the organization does not follow a set sequence of steps when establishing a peacekeeping operation, but in most cases, some combination of the steps described in figure 2 below occurs.

Figure 2: United Nations' (UN) Process for Establishing Peacekeeping Operations



Source: GAO analysis of UN documents. | GAO-19-224

Notes: According to UN documents, the UN does not follow a set sequence of steps when establishing a peacekeeping operation, though in most cases, some combination of the above steps occurs.

The Fifth Committee recommends budgets for peacekeeping operations for approval by the General Assembly.

Renewing Peacekeeping Operations

According to UN documents, the Security Council renews and adjusts an operation's mandate as needed until the operation is completed or closed. As of December 2018, three of the 14 mandates authorizing UN peacekeeping operations did not have a renewal date and therefore remain open until the Security Council decides to close them, six were up for renewal in 1 year, one was up for renewal in 11 months, and four were up for renewal in 6 months. For more information, see table 2.

Table 2: Date of Last Mandate Renewal and Time until Next Renewal Decision for United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Operations, as of December 2018

Operation	Acronym	Last renewal date	Time until next renewal decision
United Nations Truce Supervision Organization	UNTSO	May 1948	Not specified
United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan	UNMOGIP	December 1971	Not specified
United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo	UNMIK	June 1999	Not specified
United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon	UNIFIL	August 2018	1 year
United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan	UNMISS	March 2018	1 year
United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	MONUSCO	March 2018	1 year
United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti	MINUJUSTH	April 2018	1 year
United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali	MINUSMA	June 2018	1 year
African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur	UNAMID	July 2018	1 year
United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic	MINUSCA	December 2018	11 months
United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara	MINURSO	October 2018	6 months
United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei	UNISFA	November 2018	6 months
United Nations Disengagement Observer Force	UNDOF	December 2018	6 months
United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus	UNFICYP	July 2018	6 months

Source: GAO analysis of UN documents. | GAO-19-224

Note: "Time until next renewal decision not specified" indicates that the mandate authorizing the peacekeeping operation does not have a renewal date; therefore, the peacekeeping operation remains open until the Security Council decides to close it.

To assist in the mandate renewal process, the Secretary-General submits reports on most peacekeeping operations to the Security Council at regular intervals, ranging from twice a year to monthly, depending on the volatility of the situation in the area of operation. The frequency of the reporting is generally stated in the mandate. For example, in the April 2018 mandate for the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti

(MINUJUSTH), the Security Council requested that the Secretary-General report to the Council every 90 days starting on June 1, 2018.

The Security Council reviews and renews mandates for each peacekeeping operation according to the frequency that the Council prescribes based on the situation on the ground, but normally for up to 1 year. The Secretary-General also reports to the General Assembly annually on the financial performance of each peacekeeping operation. These financial reports account for funds spent and show the status of allotments, expenditures, and fund balances by budget category and line item. The reports also contain separate budget requests for the following annual reporting period and serve as the basis for General Assembly review and approval. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) reviews the Secretary-General's annual budget proposals for each peacekeeping operation and prepares separate reports for each one. Each ACABQ report contains findings and recommendations with a view to ensuring that the operation has the appropriate amount of resources required to implement the mandate. The ACABQ report is then presented to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly for its consideration. Once the Fifth Committee has considered the individual budgets, it crafts separate and individual resolutions for each operation that the General Assembly then approves. For most peacekeeping operations, the ACABQ reviews the peacekeeping budgets for the upcoming year in the spring, and the Fifth Committee considers the peacekeeping budgets during the second part of the General Assembly session in May or June.

UN Peacekeeping Operations Are Mandated to Perform Tasks Such As Maintaining Ceasefires, Protecting Civilians, and Providing Electoral Assistance

Security Council resolutions establishing UN peacekeeping operations define mandates, or tasks, for each operation, and the peacekeeping operations perform a variety of activities to fulfill these tasks.[17] In some

[17]The Security Council resolutions establishing UN peacekeeping activities use different terms to describe the mandated objectives of peacekeeping operations. See, for example, the use of the term "mandated tasks" in S/Res/2049 (2018), "mandate" in S/Res/2350, and "responsibilities" in S/Res/1244 (1999). In this report, we use the term "tasks" for peacekeeping objectives and "activities" for what peacekeeping operations do to complete mandated tasks.

cases, these activities are specifically mandated by a Security Council resolution; in others, the peacekeeping operation engages in an activity pursuant to a broad grant of authority to achieve a task. Each UN peacekeeping operation performs a unique set of tasks. The mandates of peacekeeping operations established prior to 1998 tend to include the monitoring of cease-fire as a mandated task, while those established after 1998 also include tasks such as the protection of civilians, facilitation of humanitarian assistance, and enforcement of economic sanctions or an arms embargo. Comparatively, operations in the African region have mandates that include the highest number of tasks. See appendix II for a list of the mandated tasks of all 14 peacekeeping operations.

The UN has defined 16 categories into which these activities can be classified, including supervision or monitoring of ceasefire agreements, the protection and promotion of human rights, and protecting civilians. See table 3 for a list and description of these categories.

Table 3: Categories of Activities Carried Out Pursuant to United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Mandates

Categories of activities	Description
Supervision or monitoring of a ceasefire agreement	Actions to gather information on compliance with an agreement to stop fighting
Provision of a secure and stable environment	Steps to protect people, property, and state institutions against threats of physical aggression
Facilitating the political process	Actions to facilitate steps to end conflict and maintain peace by promoting dialogue and reconciliation, and supporting the establishment of legitimate and effective institutions of governance
Protection and promotion of human rights	Measures to monitor, investigate, and report on human rights violations and abuses, empower the population to assert and claim their human rights, and develop the capacity of the state and national actors and institutions to implement their human rights obligations and uphold rule of law
Women, peace, and security agenda	Efforts to promote gender equality as well as women's and girls' empowerment, participation in peace processes, and protection
Protection of civilians	Actions, up to and including the use of deadly force, aimed at preventing or responding to threats of physical violence against civilians
Addressing conflict-related sexual violence	Steps to support conflict-related sexual violence prevention and response measures, political dialogue or engagements, and advocacy with all parties to conflict
Child protection	Actions protecting children from violence, abuse, or neglect, and promoting children's rights
Mine action	Measures to reduce the threat and impact of landmines, explosive remnants of war, and other explosive hazards
Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of ex-combatants	Efforts to collect, document, control, and dispose of weapons; discharge active combatants from armed forces or groups; and help ex-combatants acquire civilian status, sustainable employment, and income

Categories of activities	Description
Security sector reform	Steps to build effective and accountable structures, institutions, and personnel to manage, provide, and oversee the country's security
Rule of law related activities	Steps to strengthen police, justice, and corrections institutions and hold institutions accountable
Electoral assistance	Measures to provide legal, technical, and logistical support to electoral laws, processes, and institutions
Support to restoration and extension of state authority	Efforts to rebuild legitimacy and people's confidence in state institutions
Facilitation of the delivery of humanitarian assistance	Actions to establish the security, safety, and logistics necessary for humanitarian actors to deliver basic supplies of water, food, shelter, and medical care, as well as to cooperate and coordinate with humanitarian actors
Cooperation and coordination with mission partners to support poverty reduction and economic development	Actions involving cooperation and coordination with mission partners and development partners who lead in this area, including the mobilization of donor funds and bringing attention to key development priorities

Source: GAO analysis of UN documents. | GAO-19-224

State's Assessments Show that UN Peacekeeping Operations Generally Do Not Fully Meet U.S. Principles of Effective Peacekeeping and Face Challenges to Achieving Their Mandates

Based on our review of State's most recent assessments and discussions with State officials, we found that despite some military and political successes of individual peacekeeping operations, UN peacekeeping operations generally do not fully meet the U.S.-stated principles of effective peacekeeping and face challenges to achieving their mandates. For the 11 peacekeeping operations with mandates that renew on a regular basis, State prepares strategy and priority memoranda for appropriate committees of the National Security Council to inform the mandate renewal process. We reviewed these memoranda and spoke with State officials about their assessments of these operations against

four of the U.S. principles. Table 4 presents GAO's categorization[18] of the results of State's assessments.[19]

[18]We categorized a principle as "met" if State indicated that the mission was generally succeeding in an area. We categorized a principle as "not met" if State indicated that the operation was generally not succeeding in an area. We categorized a principle as "partially met" if State indicated that an operation had some areas of success, but was generally not succeeding or restricted from success in some way. State officials confirmed that our methodology and categorization were valid. The fifth principle for effective peacekeeping reads as the Security Council's willingness to change the mandate. However, in its memoranda, State assessed the fifth principle by examining whether the mandate was achieving its objective and, if not, whether it should be adjusted.

[19]According to officials, while State/IO assesses all UN peacekeeping operations on an ongoing basis, the bureau only assesses operations against its principles during the mandate renewal process. For the three peacekeeping operations with mandates that do not expire—UNTSO, UNMOGIP, and UNMIK—State regularly conducts Mission Monitoring and Evaluations trips to assess these operations. However, because their mandates do not come up for regular renewal, State does not prepare strategy and priority memoranda for these operations, which would include State's assessment against the U.S.-stated principles. Because the assessment is not included in a memorandum, State officials told us that their assessments of these operations against the U.S-stated principles as of February 2019 are as follows:

UNTSO: host country consent (fully met); supporting political solutions (partially met); realistic and achievable mandate (partially met); exit strategy (not met)

UNMOGIP: host country consent (partially met); supporting political solutions (not met); realistic and achievable mandate (fully met); exit strategy (not met)

UNMIK: host country consent (partially met); supporting political solutions (partially met); realistic and achievable mandate (partially met); exit strategy (not met)

Table 4: GAO Categorization of the Department of State's Assessment of the Extent to Which Selected United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Operations Met U.S.-Stated Principles of Effectiveness, as of December 2018

Peacekeeping Operation	Supporting political solutions	Host country consent	Realistic and achievable mandates	Exit strategies
UNDOF	partially met	met	met	not met
UNFICYP	met	met	met	not met
UNIFIL	partially met	partially met	partially met	not met
MINURSO	not met	partially met	partially met	not met
UNAMID	met	partially met	partially met	met
MONUSCO	met	partially met	not met	partially met
UNISFA	partially met	partially met	partially met	partially met
UNMISS	partially met	partially met	not met	not met
MINUSMA	partially met	partially met	not met	not met
MINUSCA	met	met	not met	partially met
MINUJUSTH	met	met	partially met	met

Legend: ● = Met ◐ = Partially met ○ = Not met

UNDOF United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (Syria)
UNFICYP United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
UNIFIL United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
MINURSO United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
UNAMID African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur
MONUSCO United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
UNISFA United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (Sudan)
UNMISS United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan
MINUSMA United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MINUSCA United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MINUJUSTH United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti

Source: GAO analysis of Department of State (State) documentation. | GAO-19-224

Note: To determine State's assessment of the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations, we examined State's Bureau of International Organizations Affairs documents that include its assessment of these operations against the U.S.-stated principles of effective peacekeeping and discussed State's assessment of these operations with State officials in December 2018. The United States considers these principles to be necessary conditions for an operation to successfully implement its mandate, according to State officials. We analyzed these documents to determine State's assessment of whether the peacekeeping operations met the U.S.-stated principles of effectiveness and categorized State's results as: met, partially met, or not met. State officials confirmed that our methodology and categorization were valid. We included four of the five principles in this table. The fifth principle for effective peacekeeping reads as the UN Security Council's willingness to change the mandate. However, in its memoranda, State assessed the fifth principle by examining whether the mandate was achieving its objective and, if not, whether it should be adjusted. Therefore, we have not included it in the table.

- **Supporting political solutions to conflict**. Based on State's assessment, we categorized 10 of the 11 peacekeeping operations as having met (five) or partially met (five) the principle of supporting political solutions to the conflict. For example, in Cyprus, State assessed that the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) met this principle because its activities generally support a political solution, despite the country's slow progress toward negotiating a final settlement of conflict between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. We categorized one peacekeeping operation, the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, as not meeting this principle.
- **Host country consent.** Based on State's assessment, we categorized all 11 peacekeeping operations as having met (four) or partially met (seven) the principle of host country consent. For example, State officials assessed that the government of the Central African Republic cooperates fully with the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). With respect to other peacekeeping operations, officials noted that a country's consent to host an operation differs from cooperation with all aspects of a peacekeeping operation. For example, State reported that while the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has consented to the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's (MONUSCO) presence in the country, the government has, at times, been hostile toward and actively taken steps to undermine the mission.
- **Realistic and achievable mandates.** Based on State's assessment, we categorized seven of the 11 peacekeeping operations as having met (two) or partially met (five) the principle of having realistic and achievable mandates. For example, we categorized the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) as having partially met this principle because State reports that it has been able to carry out many of its mandated tasks; however, according to State's assessments, government obstructions, a slow peace process, and mission management inefficiencies prevent the full implementation of UNAMID's mandate. We categorized the remaining four peacekeeping operations as not meeting this principle.
- **Exit strategies.** Based on State's assessment, we categorized five of the 11 peacekeeping operations as having met (two) or partially met (three) the principle of having an exit strategy in their mandates. For example, we categorized MINUSCA as having partially met the principle because, according to State's assessment, the operation's

mandate has an exit strategy that will take several years to achieve given the lack of host government capacity. We categorized the remaining six peacekeeping operations as not meeting this principle. For example, based on State's assessment, we categorized the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) as not meeting this principle because the operation had not considered a near-term exit strategy because of ongoing conflict and the political stalemate in South Sudan.

In addition to the four principles in the table, the fifth principle for effective peacekeeping reads as the Security Council's willingness to change the mandate. In its memoranda, State assessed the fifth principle by examining whether the mandate was achieving its objective and, if not, should be adjusted. Using this method, State assessments show that the Security Council should adjust the mandates of nine of the 11 peacekeeping operations. For example, State assessed that the UNFICYP (Cyprus) mandate should be adapted to address the stalled political process.

Although we found that State's assessments show most peacekeeping operations are not fully meeting the U.S.-stated principles for effective peacekeeping, State officials we interviewed noted the important role UN peacekeeping operations play in maintaining stability in volatile conflicts around the world. These officials noted the dangerous and hostile environments in which peacekeeping operations are located, and, in some cases, human atrocities these operations help prevent. Further, U.S. and UN officials cited UN peacekeeping operations' strengths, including international and local acceptance, access to global expertise, and the ability to leverage assistance from multilateral donors and development banks. Officials also cited strengths of individual operations, such as the protection of civilians against atrocities in South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Central African Republic, assistance toward the peaceful conduct of elections in numerous countries, police capacity building in Haiti, and support to peace processes and agreements in numerous countries.

According to State/IO and USUN officials, continual evaluation and adjustment of the mandates of UN peacekeeping missions to better align with the U.S. principles remains a key tenet of the Administration's UN peacekeeping policy, but the U.S. government faces two key challenges in this regard. First, some aspects of two of the five principles—host country consent and support for a political process—may be outside of

the control of any international organization or bilateral partner. For example, MONUSCO's (Democratic Republic of the Congo) mandate includes the provision of elections assistance in support of the nation's political process, but, according to State officials, the lack of host government cooperation has relegated MONUSCO's efforts in this area to technical assistance. Second, these officials explained that the Security Council does not always adopt U.S. proposals to change mandates to align with these principles, such as including an exit strategy. Changing peacekeeping mandates requires nine affirmative votes and no vetoes from permanent Council members, which, according to State and USUN officials, can be difficult. For example, USUN officials stated that the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) had fulfilled its mandate, but Russia and China were not supporting a vote to close the operation.

Moreover, State officials noted that the assessment process using the principles began in 2017 and the United States has had a limited number of opportunities to negotiate changes to peacekeeping mandates because renewals generally occur annually. State officials cited several examples of notable progress, however, in improving the efficiency and focus of UN peacekeeping operations. According to State officials, through U.S. leadership, the Security Council reconfigured the operation in Haiti to focus on police and the rule of law. Additionally, the Security Council changed and downsized the operation in Darfur to reflect current political and security realities. State officials also said that the UN Security Council supported responsible drawdowns of peacekeeping operations, most recently in Cote d'Ivoire, while pushing peacekeepers in Lebanon to use all of their mandated authorities to be more effective in carrying out their tasks.

According to State officials, adherence to these principles is not sufficient to guarantee success. An operation could fully meet all the principles, but still face challenges carrying out its mandate because of formidable circumstances, such as insecure security environments or limited government cooperation.[20] However, State officials also noted that these principles describe critical conditions for effective peacekeeping in that an operation that does not meet these principles is unlikely to be able to fully carry out its mandate. Moreover, given the importance of establishing the

[20]For more information, see the discussion of State's assessment of challenges peacekeeping operations face in appendix III. For a more detailed discussion of our four case-study peacekeeping operations and key challenges they face, see appendix IV.

necessary conditions for peacekeeping success, State/IO and USUN officials acknowledged that State must continue to work with the Security Council to ensure that peacekeeping operations meet the principles of effectiveness, such as modifying mandates to include exit strategies. In doing so, the UN and its member states could have greater assurance that they have set up peacekeeping operations for success.

The United States Has Worked with the UN to Adjust Peacekeeping Mandates, but Does Not Have Sufficient Information to Determine if UN Resource Decisions Accurately Reflect These Adjustments

The United States Has Worked with Security Council Members to Adjust Peacekeeping Mandates

When the U.S. agencies involved in peacekeeping agree that the UN should change a peacekeeping operation's mandate, USUN officials told us that the USUN works with other Security Council members to make adjustments, such as adding or removing tasks from an operation's mandate. While not all proposals are adopted by the Security Council, State officials highlighted several types of mandate adjustments the United States has pursued, including:

- **Removal of tasks.** State and USUN officials told us they strive to remove tasks from peacekeeping mandates when those tasks have been achieved or are no longer relevant or achievable. For example, officials noted that the USUN successfully advocated that election monitoring be removed from the list of mandated tasks for MINUSCA because the elections had taken place in the previous year and, therefore, the task was no longer relevant.
- **Addition of language to prioritize tasks**. State and USUN officials told us that another strategy is to add language to a mandate to designate priority tasks. Officials stated that, as a result of such language in mandates for MINUSCA, MONUSCO, and MINUSMA, management at these peacekeeping operations had shifted mission resources to focus on priority tasks. For example, officials cited MINUSCA's proposed budget, which increased resources for protection of civilians—a task designated as a priority by the Security

Council—and reduced resources for Security Sector Reform, an area of less relevance to the mission given the current situation in the Central African Republic.

- **Addition of language to clarify exit strategies.** State and USUN officials noted that adding language to clarify exit strategies aids an operation's success. For example, for the MINUJUSTH (Haiti) 2017 mandate, USUN officials noted that the United States had advocated successfully for the Security Council to include language calling for an exit strategy with benchmarks to assist the UN in monitoring the progress of the operation's transition to a non-peacekeeping mission beginning in October 2019.

USUN Does Not Have Sufficient Information from the UN on the Cost of Peacekeeping Operations to Determine Accurate Resource Allocation When Adjusting Mandates

USUN officials told us that they do not have sufficient information to allow them to determine accurate resource allocation to peacekeeping operations when the Security Council makes a change to the mandate. For example, USUN officials told us that as a result of the Security Council's decision to reduce resources for specific tasks in MONUSCO's 2017 mandate—such as Security Sector Reform and Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration activities, where little progress had been achieved—the United States had sought to reduce the MONUSCO budget to reflect this change. However, the USUN did not have complete information from the UN on all of the costs associated with this change, including support costs, such as flight hours and fuel for transport vehicles. In the absence of such information from the UN, USUN officials estimated these costs and advocated for a reduction in MONUSCO's budget based on their own estimates. USUN officials noted that without input from the UN, they did not have sufficient information to determine the accuracy of their estimates.

USUN officials told us that these information gaps exist because UN peacekeeping budgets do not include estimated costs by task. Rather, UN peacekeeping budgets provide information on the operation's use of financial resources for personnel and operational costs. Thus, according to USUN officials, when the Security Council changes a peacekeeping operation's mandate—such as by adding or removing a task—it is not clear how to adjust the budget for that operation to accurately reflect the change. UN headquarters officials told us that the UN does not prepare peacekeeping budgets with estimated costs by task because it is

challenging to do so. However, senior officials with whom we spoke at two peacekeeping operations said that, despite challenges, it is possible to estimate costs by mandated task, which would provide additional budget transparency for the UN. Further, USUN officials stated that having UN estimates readily available to all member states would not only improve the accuracy of decisions related to resource allocation, but also improve the transparency of the budget negotiation process.

UN guidance on peacekeeping states that when the UN changes an existing peacekeeping mandate it should make commensurate changes in the resources available to the operation.[21] Further, internationally-accepted and federal standards for internal control note that organizations should use quality information to make informed decisions to achieve their objectives.[22] Without information on estimated costs by task, USUN and other UN member states have difficulty determining that resources for UN peacekeeping operations accurately reflect changes to the mandates of peacekeeping operations. With this information, the United States and the international community can better ensure that resources provided to peacekeeping operations support the tasks agreed upon by UN member states.

[21]United Nations, *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines* (New York, N.Y.: March 2008).

[22]COSO, *Internal Control—Integrated Framework* and GAO-14-704G.

Member States Have Expressed Concerns Regarding the Quality of Peacekeeping Performance Information, Despite UN Reform Efforts in This Area

Member States Have Expressed Concerns about the Completeness and Timeliness of UN Peacekeeping Performance Data

UN member states, including the United States, have expressed concerns regarding the quality of information regarding UN peacekeeping operations. Specifically, according to member states, information on peacekeeping performance can be incomplete and is not always provided on a timely basis, despite ongoing UN efforts to improve performance information. UN Security Council resolutions and peacekeeping guidance documents have stated the importance of having access to quality performance information to make management decisions. For example, UN Security Council resolutions note that data—based on clear and well-defined benchmarks—should be used to improve the performance of peacekeeping operations. The UN's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations has also called for a timely flow of information regarding how well peacekeeping operations perform their mandated activities.[23] Additionally, internationally-accepted and federal standards for internal control also highlight the importance of quality information in enhancing the ability of organizations to achieve their performance goals.[24] Quality information includes information that is complete and provided on a timely basis, among other attributes.

Completeness

UN member states have expressed concerns regarding the completeness of peacekeeping performance information. For example, USUN officials have noted concerns related to the completeness of performance information about peacekeeping troops. USUN officials noted that while

[23]United Nations General Assembly, *Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations: 2018 Substantive Session*, A/72/19 (New York, N.Y.: March 2018).

[24]COSO, *Internal Control—Integrated Framework* and GAO-14-704G.

the UN maintains some performance information on peacekeeping operations, such as a database with information on troop capabilities and readiness to deploy, it does not provide a complete picture of peacekeeping performance. Specifically, USUN officials noted that they would like better performance information about when peacekeeping units are engaging well, failing to engage, or lack the training to perform the tasks they have been asked to carry out. Also, the Security Council noted concern in a September 2018 resolution sponsored by the United States about the underperformance of some peacekeepers, such as inaction in the face of imminent threats of physical violence against civilians and conduct issues.[25]

Another concern relates to the completeness of performance information about civilian peacekeeping staff. According to the UN, civilian peacekeeping staff, who comprise about 14 percent of all peacekeeping personnel,[26] perform many of the mandated activities of peacekeeping operations, including promoting and protecting human rights, helping strengthen the rule of law, and fostering the political process. However, according to USUN officials, the UN needs more complete information on the performance of these staff. For example, as noted above, UN officials told us that the UN had developed a database to collect performance information on military personnel staffed to UN peacekeeping operations, but did not have a similar way to track information on civilian personnel. Additionally, the Security Council noted in a September 2018 resolution that the UN must improve evaluation of all UN personnel supporting peacekeeping operations, including civilians.[27] Individual member states

[25]S/Res/2436 (2018). According to officials at the USUN, the United States drafted and sponsored Security Council Resolution 2436 to address performance information gaps within the UN. In the resolution, which passed unanimously, the Security Council acknowledged the importance of data to inform objective decision-making to improve the performance of UN peacekeeping and requested the Secretary-General to report on a number of performance issues, including detailed reporting on the findings of special investigations into alleged instances of significant performance failures, as well as recommendations to address all factors contributing to any identified failures. In the resolution, the Security Council also noted prior resolutions—2378 (2017) and 2382 (2017)—which included requests to the Secretary-General to ensure that data related to the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, including peacekeeping performance data, are used to improve analytics and the evaluation of mission operations and based on clear and well-identified benchmarks for mandate implementation.

[26]This figure was calculated using December 2018 UN data, which include May 2018 civilian personnel levels.

[27]S/Res/2436 (2018).

have concurred, with some stating that better performance information is needed in all sectors of UN peacekeeping and others noting the need for comprehensive information on all peacekeeping personnel, including civilian personnel.

The Security Council has also noted concerns about underreporting of information, which can affect data completeness. For example, in a September 2018 resolution, the Security Council expressed concern regarding the underreporting of sexual exploitation and abuse by some UN peacekeepers and non-UN forces authorized under a Security Council mandate, including military, civilian, and police personnel.[28] The UN has reported that instances of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers undermine the credibility of peacekeeping operations by breaking down the trust between an operation and the communities it serves.

Timeliness

UN member states have also expressed concerns regarding the timeliness of UN performance information on peacekeeping. For example, USUN officials cited instances of conduct violations by UN troops in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo about which the Security Council had not been informed for several months. Ultimately, the Security Council learned of these incidents from media reporting and had to seek additional information from the UN Secretariat.

Additionally, the Security Council has expressed concern regarding the timely reporting of performance information on police personnel assisting peacekeeping operations. For instance, in Resolution 2382 adopted in November 2017, the Security Council emphasized the need to improve accountability and effectiveness in the performance of peacekeeping operations, requesting that the UN Secretariat provide member states timely and complete information regarding the training needs of police personnel.[29]

Further, the UN's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations has also called for a timely flow of information on a range of peacekeeping performance issues, such as reports and evaluations of peacekeeping

[28]S/Res/2436 (2018).

[29]S/Res/2382 (2017).

operations, incidents involving the safety and security of peacekeepers, and troop misconduct, such as sexual exploitation and abuse. For example, in its March 2018 report, the committee stressed the need for timely information sharing about serious incidents involving the safety and security of peacekeepers, noting that prompt reporting of such incidents contributes to their prevention and positive resolution.

UN Is in Early Stages of Reform Efforts to Improve Performance Information and the Extent to Which the Efforts Will Address Member States' Concerns Is Unclear

USUN officials told us that they have concerns about the quality of peacekeeping performance data because the UN does not have comprehensive performance information about its peacekeeping operations and officials are unsure whether new UN reforms in this area will address their concerns. USUN officials described various UN sources of performance information on peacekeeping operations, such as strategic reviews conducted by the Secretary-General on the performance of peacekeeping operations and a UN database containing information on peacekeeping troops' readiness to deploy. However, officials noted that this information is insufficient to help them assess the overall performance of UN peacekeeping operations. For instance, USUN officials noted that the information collected is not standardized across UN peacekeeping operations or for all peacekeeping personnel. Without better information, USUN officials said that they had challenges obtaining a clear picture of the performance of UN peacekeeping operations. According to USUN officials, a culture of performance in peacekeeping is important to better deliver on peacekeeping mandates and improve the safety and security of peacekeepers in the field.

Acknowledging challenges related to peacekeeping, the UN Secretary-General announced a peacekeeping reform initiative known as Action for Peacekeeping in March 2018. As part of this effort, the Secretary-General invited member states to help develop a set of mutually agreed principles and commitments to improve peacekeeping operations. The Secretary-General announced these shared commitments in August 2018 and, as of September 2018, 151 member states and several regional organizations had made political commitments to implement them.[30] The declaration of

[30]As of September 2018, four regional organizations had endorsed the shared commitments, including the European Union, the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, the African Union Commission, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

shared commitments includes a commitment to ensure the highest level of peacekeeping performance and to hold all peacekeeping personnel accountable for effective performance by, among other things, ensuring that performance data are used to inform planning, evaluation, deployment decisions and reporting.

However, USUN officials told us in October 2018 that their concerns about the quality of UN peacekeeping performance data still remained because the UN is in the early stages of adopting these reforms. Further, USUN officials stated that they have yet to see concrete plans of action and as such, it is not clear to them that the reforms will address their concerns to ensure that the UN provides complete and timely peacekeeping performance information to its member states. For instance, officials stated that in September 2018—6 months after the Action for Peacekeeping agreements to improve the use of performance data to manage peacekeeping operations—the Security Council adopted Resolution 2436, which noted continued concerns related to completeness and timeliness of peacekeeping performance information provided to the Council. Without fully addressing member states' concerns about the quality of information on the performance of peacekeeping operations, the Security Council is limited in its ability to identify problems and take corrective action to improve the performance of peacekeeping operations. More complete and timely performance information could enhance the Security Council's ability to effectively manage peacekeeping operations.

Conclusions

Peacekeeping operations are a key instrument for implementing the UN's central mission of maintaining international peace and security. As a member state of the UN, a permanent member of the Security Council, and the largest financial contributor to the UN peacekeeping budget, the United States plays a significant role in both the management of peacekeeping operations and encouraging reforms to improve peacekeeping activities. According to State, the U.S.-stated principles for effective peacekeeping are critical conditions for peacekeeping operations to carry out their mandates. Given the importance of establishing the necessary conditions for peacekeeping success, State/IO and USUN officials acknowledged the imperative of continuing to work with the Security Council to ensure that peacekeeping operations meet U.S.-stated principles of effectiveness. In doing so, the UN and its member states could have greater assurance that they have set up

peacekeeping operations for success. Without information on estimated costs by task, USUN and other UN member states have difficulty determining that resources for UN peacekeeping operations accurately reflect changes to the mandates of peacekeeping operations. With this information, the United States and the international community can better ensure that resources provided to peacekeeping operations support the tasks agreed upon by UN member states. Additionally, while the UN has initiated reform efforts to strengthen peacekeeping, including better use of performance information, UN member states have continued to express concerns about the quality of this information and note that it is too soon to tell whether reforms will address their concerns. Without fully addressing member states' concerns about the quality of information on the performance of peacekeeping operations, the Security Council is limited in its ability to identify problems and take corrective action to improve the performance of peacekeeping operations.

Recommendations for Executive Action

We are making the following three recommendations to State:

The Secretary of State should continue to work with the Permanent Representative to the United Nations to ensure that UN peacekeeping operations fully meet principles of effective peacekeeping. (Recommendation 1)

The Secretary of State should work with the Permanent Representative to the United Nations to ensure that the United Nations provides information to member states on the estimated costs of mandated peacekeeping tasks to provide better cost information when the Security Council adjusts peacekeeping mandates. (Recommendation 2)

The Secretary of State should continue to work with the Permanent Representative to the United Nations to ensure that the United Nations takes additional steps to address member states' concerns about complete and timely information on the performance of United Nations peacekeeping operations. (Recommendation 3)

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

We provided a draft of this report to the Departments of Defense and State for review and comment. The Department of Defense told us that

they had no comments on the draft report. In its comments, reproduced in appendix V, State concurred with our recommendations. State also provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate throughout the report.

We are sending copies of this report to congressional committees; the Acting Secretary of the Department of Defense; and the Secretary of the Department of State. In addition, the report is available at no charge on the GAO website at http://www.gao.gov.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-7141 or groverj@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made significant contributions to this report are listed in appendix VI.

Jennifer Grover
Director, International Affairs and Trade

Appendix I: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

In this report, we examine (1) the United Nations' (UN) process to establish and renew peacekeeping operations, including the tasks these operations perform; (2) the Department of State's (State) assessment of the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations; (3) how the United States works within the UN to adjust peacekeeping mandates and associated resources; and (4) UN member states' concerns regarding the UN's performance information.

To examine the UN's process to establish and renew peacekeeping operations and the tasks these operations perform, we reviewed UN policy and guidance, as well as various UN websites accessed as of November 2018, and interviewed State and UN officials to discuss UN processes. To determine the tasks these operations perform, we analyzed the most recent UN resolution authorizing the peacekeeping operation passed by the Security Council as of December 31, 2018—generally referred to as a mandate—for each of UN's 14 peacekeeping operations, and categorized the tasks of each operation. We describe UN categories of activities to achieve mandated tasks as listed in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations-Department of Field Support's Core *Pre-deployment Training Materials for United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, which lists and defines 16 categories.[1] We also analyzed the most recent mandate as of December 31, 2018 for the 14 UN peacekeeping operations to identify the date on which the authority for each operation expires and the period of time reported until the next renewal decision.

To examine State's assessment of the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations, we analyzed State's Bureau of International Organization Affairs' (State/IO) most recent Mission Monitoring and Evaluation reports as of December 2018 and the accompanying U.S. strategy and priorities memoranda outlining U.S. priorities for the operations' mandate renewal.[2]

[1]United Nations, *Core Pre-deployment Training Materials* (New York: May 2, 2017).

[2]Recent annual Department of State Foreign Operations and Related Programs appropriations acts (e.g., Pub. L. No. 114-113, Div. K; Pub. L. No. 115-31, Div. J; and Pub. L. No. 115-141, Div. K) have called for State to evaluate peacekeeping operations.

State bases its Mission Monitoring and Evaluation reports on annual field visits to peacekeeping operations during which assessors interview U.S. and UN officials to evaluate the operation's progress toward meeting its mandate and identify factors that affect the operation's ability to do so. Based on these reports, State's strategy and priorities memoranda summarize U.S. observations on the peacekeeping operation and, among other things, propose options for U.S. action within the Security Council. Each of the 11 memoranda we reviewed also includes State's assessment of the peacekeeping operation against the U.S. government's stated principles of effective peacekeeping, which State considers to be critical conditions for an operation to successfully implement its mandate. These principles are whether a peacekeeping operation (1) supports a political solution to conflict, (2) has host country consent, (3) has a realistic and achievable mandate, and (4) has an exit strategy; and (5) whether the Security Council is willing to adjust the mandate if the situation in the country improves or fails to improve.

We reviewed State's memoranda on the operations and considered the following types of factors when determining whether to categorize State's assessments as met, partially met, or not met:

Supporting political solutions: Mediation processes, peace agreements, and support for democratic elections.

Host country consent: Consent to the operation, and the necessary freedom of action, both political and physical to carry out its mandated tasks.

Realistic and achievable mandates: Extent to which operation tasks appeared feasible in light of current conditions and available resources.

Exit strategies: Strategic goals and targets, strategic planning, and timetables for withdrawal.

We categorized a principle as "met" if State indicated that the operation was generally succeeding in an area. We categorized a principle as "not met" if State indicated that the operation was generally not succeeding in an area. We categorized a principle as "partially met" if State indicated that the operation had some areas of success, but was generally not succeeding or restricted from success in some way. The fifth principle for effective peacekeeping reads as the Security Council's willingness to change the mandate. However, in its memoranda, State/IO assesses

whether and how a mandate should be changed, rather than assessing the Security Council's willingness to change the mandate. For this principle, we categorized State's results as either "yes" or "no." We coded the results as "yes" if State assessed that the Security Council should adjust the mandate. We categorized the results as "no" if State assessed that the Security Council did not need to adjust the mandate. The coding was conducted by one GAO analyst and separately verified by two other GAO analysts. In December 2018, we met with State/IO and USUN officials to discuss their current assessment of each peacekeeping operation. We updated our categorization of State's written assessments to reflect the agency's most current assessment as appropriate.

We discussed our methodology and results with officials from the U.S. Mission to the UN (USUN), who confirmed that our methodology and results were valid. We also discussed with these officials additional steps the United States could take to ensure that peacekeeping operations fully meet the principles for effective peacekeeping. We did not independently verify State's assessment, but we reviewed State's methodology and discussed it with officials and found the information in State's reporting to be sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report.

To examine how the United States works within the UN to adjust peacekeeping mandates and associated resources, we interviewed USUN officials to understand the different approaches the Security Council takes to revise mandates and to understand the types of information available to UN member states to determine appropriate resource adjustments when mandates change. We also interviewed a senior official from the UN Department of Field Support's Field Budget and Finance Division and reviewed UN budget and performance reports to identify how the UN reports on peacekeeping budget information to member states. In addition, we interviewed officials at two of the four peacekeeping operations we selected for in-depth case studies, as discussed below, to determine whether they were able to report on the operation's budget by mandated task. To determine the extent to which State has sufficient information to advocate for resources adjustments when mandates change, we compared information currently provided by the UN to internationally-accepted and federal standards for internal

control, which state that organizations should have quality information to help them make decisions.[3]

To examine UN member states' concerns regarding the UN's performance information, we interviewed officials from the USUN to understand their concerns regarding performance information available to them from the UN. Based on these interviews, we identified two main issues of completeness and timeliness. To understand the extent to which UN member states share these concerns, we analyzed the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping's 2016, 2017, and 2018 annual reports and Security Council resolutions to confirm member states' concerns related to completeness and timeliness of performance information. We did not independently verify the veracity of these concerns, because we did not have access to the UN's internal performance information. We also reviewed UN documents on the Secretary-General's new reform efforts, transcripts of meetings the Security Council held on peacekeeping in 2018, and Security Council resolutions to identify steps the UN is taking to address these concerns. Further, we analyzed the extent to which the UN could better address member state concerns regarding performance information by comparing the Secretary-General's plans for implementing the UN's new reform efforts with internationally-accepted and federal standards for internal controls, which identify necessary elements of performance information.

To inform our analyses of all four objectives, we also selected UN peacekeeping operations in four countries—the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Kosovo, and Lebanon—for in-depth case studies. We selected these peacekeeping operations because they are the largest of the three types the UN employs, and are located in the four geographic regions in which UN peacekeeping operations are currently deployed—Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and the Western Hemisphere. While the findings from these peacekeeping operations cannot be generalized, they provide an illustrative mix of the UN's peacekeeping activities. To inform our audit, we conducted a literature review using ProQuest language searches, focusing on literature published between 2015 and 2018. In total, we identified and reviewed 12 relevant publications that helped inform our study of the four operations. We conducted fieldwork at

[3]Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission, *Internal Control—Integrated Framework* (New York: American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, 2013) and GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, GAO-14-704G (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 10, 2014).

peacekeeping operations in Haiti, Kosovo, and Lebanon, and interviewed U.S., UN, and host government officials, as well as representatives of other donor countries and civil society. In lieu of fieldwork, we conducted videoconferences with senior officials at the peacekeeping operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We conducted this performance audit from October 2017 to March 2019 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Appendix II: Mandated Tasks of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations

We analyzed United Nations (UN) Security Council resolutions authorizing the 14 UN peacekeeping operations, in effect as of December 31, 2018, and identified the mandated tasks of these operations.[1] See table 5 below for a complete list.

Table 5: United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Tasks as Mandated in Security Council Resolutions, as of December 2018

Operation (month/year established)	Mandated tasks
United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (May 1948)	Assist UN Mediator in the supervision of observance of the provisions of a UN Security Council Resolution 50 calling for a ceasefire
United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (January 1949)	Supervise the cease-fire line in Jammu and Kashmir
United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (March 1964)	• Prevent a recurrence of fighting • Contribute to the maintenance of law and order and a return to normal conditions
United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (June 1974)	• Maintain the ceasefire between Israel and Syria • Supervise the disengagement of Israeli and Syrian forces • Supervise the areas of separation and limitation, as provided in the May 1974 Agreement on Disengagement

[1]The Security Council resolutions establishing UN peacekeeping activities use different terms to describe the mandated objectives of peacekeeping operations. See, for example, the use of the term “mandated tasks” in S/Res/2049 (2018), “mandate” in S/Res/2350, and “responsibilities” in S/Res/1244 (1999). In this report, we use the term “tasks” for peacekeeping objectives and “activities” for what peacekeeping operations do to complete mandated tasks.

Operation (month/year established)	Mandated tasks
United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (March 1978)	• Confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon • Restore international peace and security • Assist the government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area • Monitor the cessation of hostilities • Accompany and support Lebanese armed forces as they deploy throughout the South, including along the Blue Line, as Israel withdraws its armed forces from Lebanon • Coordinate activities related to support of Lebanese armed forces, as mandated by the Security Council, with the governments of Lebanon and Israel • Extend assistance to help ensure humanitarian access to civilian populations and the voluntary and safe return of displaced persons • Assist Lebanese armed forces in taking steps toward the establishment between the Blue Line and the Litani River of an area free of any armed personnel, assets, and weapons other than those of the government of Lebanon and of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon deployed in this area • Assist the government of Lebanon, at its request, in securing its borders and other entry points to prevent the entry in Lebanon without its consent of arms or related materiel
United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (April 1991)	• Monitor the ceasefire between Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente Polisario) • Verify the reduction of Moroccan troops in the territory • Monitor the confinement of Moroccan and Frente Polisario troops to designated locations • Take steps with relevant parties to ensure the release of all Western Saharan political prisoners or detainees • Oversee the exchange of prisoners of war, to be implemented by the International Committee of the Red Cross • Repatriate the refugees of Western Sahara, a task to be carried out by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees • Identify and register qualified voters

Operation (month/year established)	Mandated tasks
United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (June 1999)	• Deter renewed hostilities, maintain and where necessary enforce a ceasefire, and ensure the withdrawal and prevent the return into Kosovo of Federal and Republic military, police, and paramilitary forces • Demilitarize the Kosovo Liberation Army and other armed Kosovo Albanian groups • Establish a secure environment in which refugees and displaced persons can return home in safety, the international civil presence can operate, a transitional administration can be established, and humanitarian aid can be delivered • Ensure public safety and order until the international civil presence can take responsibility for this task • Supervise demining until the international civil presence can, as appropriate, take over responsibility for this task • Support, as appropriate, and coordinate closely with the work of the international civil presence • Conduct border monitoring duties as required • Ensure the protection and freedom of movement of itself, the international civil presence, and other international organizations • Promote the establishment, pending a final settlement, of substantial autonomy and self-government in Kosovo, taking full account of annex 2 and of the Rambouillet Accords (S/1999/648) • Perform basic civilian administrative functions where and as long as required • Organize and oversee the development of provisional institutions for democratic and autonomous self-government pending a political settlement, including the holding of elections • Transfer, as these institutions are established, its administrative responsibilities while overseeing and supporting the consolidation of Kosovo's local provisional institutions and other peacebuilding activities • Facilitate a political process designed to determine Kosovo's future status, taking into account the Rambouillet Accords (S/1999/648) • In a final stage, oversee the transfer of authority from Kosovo's provisional institutions to institutions established under a political settlement • Support the reconstruction of key infrastructure and other economic reconstruction • Support, in coordination with international humanitarian organizations, humanitarian and disaster relief aid • Maintain civil law and order, including establishing local police forces and through the deployment of international police personnel to serve in Kosovo • Protect and promote human rights • Assure the safe and unimpeded return of all refugees and displaced persons to their homes in Kosovo
African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (July 2007)	• Protect civilians, facilitation of humanitarian assistance, and the safety and security of humanitarian personnel • Mediate between the government of Sudan and non-signatory armed movements • Support the mediation of inter-communal conflict, including measures to address root causes

Operation (month/year established)	Mandated tasks
United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (July 2010)	• Protect civilians • Implement the December 2016 peace accord and support the electoral process • Protect the UN • Conduct Stabilization and Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration activities • Conduct Security Sector Reform activities • Implement sanctions regime assistance
United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (June 2011)	• Monitor and verify the redeployment of any Sudan Armed Forces, Sudan People's Liberation Army or its successor, from the Abyei area as defined by the Permanent Court of Arbitration; henceforth, the Abyei area shall be demilitarized from any forces other than United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei and the Abyei Police Service • Participate in relevant Abyei area bodies as stipulated in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement • Provide, in cooperation with other international partners in the mine action sector, de-mining assistance and technical advice • Facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and the free movement of humanitarian personnel in coordination with relevant Abyei area bodies, as defined by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement • Strengthen the capacity of the Abyei Police Service by providing support, including the training of personnel, and coordinate with the Abyei Police Service on matters of law and order • When necessary and in cooperation with the Abyei Police Service, provide security for oil infrastructure in the Abyei area • Support the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism
United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (July 2011)	• Protect civilians • Create conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance • Monitor and investigate human rights • Support implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and the peace process
United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (March 2013)	• Support implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali • Support the restoration of state authority in central Mali • Support the Secretary-General's good offices and reconciliation role • Protect civilians and stabilization • Promote and protect human rights • Support humanitarian assistance • Contribute to the creation of a secure environment for projects aimed at stabilizing northern Mali • Carry out weapons and ammunition management • Cooperation with sanctions committees

Operation (month/year established)	Mandated tasks
United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (April 2014)	• Protect civilians • Support the good offices role and provide support to the peace process, including national reconciliation, social cohesion, and transitional justice • Facilitate the immediate, full, safe, and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance • Protect the UN • Support the extension of state authority, deployment of security forces, and preservation of territorial integrity • Conduct Security Sector Reform activities • Implement Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration, and Repatriation activities • Promote and protect human rights • Support national and international justice, the fight against impunity, and the rule of law • Coordinate international assistance as appropriate • Assist the sanctions committee established pursuant to paragraph 57 of Security Council Resolution 2127 • Assist in the imposition of an arms embargo that the Central African Republic imposed pursuant to paragraph 54 of Security Council Resolution 2127 (2013) • Support the Panel of Experts established pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2127 (2013) in collecting information about acts of incitement to violence, in particular on an ethnic or religious basis, that undermine the peace, stability, or security of the Central African Republic in accordance with paragraph 32(g) of Security Council Resolution 2399 (2018) • Contribute—as appropriate, and taking into account the comparative advantage of other relevant partners—to support Central African Republic authorities in developing and finalizing a nationally owned strategy to address the illicit exploitation and trafficking networks of natural resources • Provide transport for relevant state authorities in carrying out inspections and monitoring visits in key mining areas and sites as appropriate
United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (October 2017)	• Assist the government of Haiti to strengthen rule of law institutions • Further support and develop the Haitian National Police • Engage in human rights monitoring, reporting, and analysis

Source: GAO analysis of UN Security Council resolutions. | GAO-19-224

Appendix III: Department of State's Assessment of Challenges United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Face

To inform its oversight of United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations, the Department of State's Bureau of International Organizations Affairs (State/IO) conducts annual monitoring trips to most UN peacekeeping operations. State/IO evaluates peacekeeping operations' progress toward meeting their mandates and identifies any challenges to their progress. State/IO documents its findings in Mission Monitoring and Evaluation reports and disseminates these reports for comment to various State bureaus involved in international peacekeeping efforts and to relevant offices in the Department of Defense. The findings of these assessments are intended to inform the National Security Council and the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in their decision-making.

We analyzed the most recent Mission Monitoring and Evaluation reports that State had conducted through June 30, 2018.[1] In our analysis of State's assessments, we found that the challenges State most frequently identified for each UN peacekeeping operation were those associated with host government cooperation, resources, and the security situation.[2]

[1]State provided Mission Monitoring and Evaluation reports for 12 of the 14 current UN peacekeeping operations. According to (State/IO) officials, while the bureau regularly assesses all peacekeeping operations, the bureau has not traveled to the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan in recent years because travel to the region is difficult. State/IO officials also told us that although they evaluated the UN Mission in South Sudan in May 2017, they did not document their assessment in a Mission Monitoring and Evaluation report.

[2]To identify these categories of challenges, two GAO analysts separately reviewed State's Mission Monitoring and Evaluation reports and identified the categories of challenges peacekeeping operations faced in meeting their mandates. The analysts then reconciled any differences in their findings.

Host Government Cooperation

According to the UN, the UN does not deploy a peacekeeping operation unless the organization has the consent of the involved parties, which often include the governments of the countries in which conflicts occur. While host governments generally have consented to the presence of UN peacekeeping operations, State found instances in which the host government did not cooperate fully or did not have a positive relationship with the peacekeeping operation working in-country. For example, in Darfur, State found that while the Sudanese government had demonstrated some progress, it continued to restrict the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur's (UNAMID) access and movement in certain regions. Additionally, according to government officials in Kosovo, the government of Kosovo does not engage with the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) because it considered the operation to have completed its mandate as a transitional authority once Kosovo declared its independence and established a functioning government. As a result, UNMIK works on community trust-building activities with local communities according to the vision and strategic direction of the head of the peacekeeping operation.

Resources

State found that several operations faced financial, human, and material resource constraints. For example, State assessed that the peacekeeping operations in Mali; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the Golan Heights, Syria; and Haiti did not have enough funds to meet their needs. State also found that troops in the peacekeeping operations in the Central African Republic; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and the Golan Heights, Syria did not have enough troops with sufficient skillsets. Further, State found that the operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Haiti; Mali; and Abyei, Sudan lacked adequate equipment. Officials from the peacekeeping operation at the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) also told us they anticipated a budget shortfall of over $2 million for the 2018-2019 peacekeeping fiscal year as a result of a reduced budget and an increase in UN troop salaries.

However, officials at the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) told us about ways in which they were maximizing and readjusting existing resources in spite of these challenges. They stated that MONUSCO's March 2018 mandate renewal was intended to streamline the operation and was informed by

the UN's most recent strategic review of the operation. Senior MONUSCO officials also told us that, as a result of the review, the Security Council had reduced its work in the justice reform sector by 50 percent because it believed the operation would be able to engage more meaningfully in this arena after the presidential election.

Security Situation

State identified several peacekeeping operations that worked in environments in which there were ongoing ceasefire violations or unstable security situations. State found that peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the Golan Heights, Syria; Western Sahara; Cyprus; and Lebanon faced ongoing ceasefire violations. State also found that the peacekeeping operations in Mali and the Central African Republic worked in dangerous conditions and the operations in Mali and the Democratic Republic of the Congo faced persistent attacks on civilians. During our field work in Lebanon, UNIFIL officials emphasized the importance and successes of the UNIFIL-facilitated tripartite mechanism, which provides regular opportunities for soldiers from the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israeli Defense Force to help prevent any event from escalating into a major event. According to U.S. embassy officials, because of the prevalence of armed groups in eastern Congo, the government's and international community's response to the Ebola outbreak that started there in August 2018 was significantly more complex and challenging than their response to the May 2018–July 2018 outbreak in northwestern Congo, an area that does not have a significant presence of armed groups.

Appendix IV: Synopsis of Four United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Key Challenges They Face

We selected United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations in four countries—the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Kosovo, and Lebanon—for case studies. Below is a synopsis of each of these peacekeeping operations and key challenges they face, according to U.S. and UN officials.

Appendix V: Comments from the Department of State

United States Department of State

Comptroller

Washington, D.C. 20520

FEB 2 7 2019

Thomas Melito
Managing Director
International Affairs and Trade
Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20548-0001

Dear Mr. Melito:

We appreciate the opportunity to review your draft report, "UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS: State Should Work With the UN to Improve Effectiveness and Performance Information" GAO Job Code 102379.

The enclosed Department of State comments are provided for incorporation with this letter as an appendix to the final report.

If you have any questions concerning this response, please contact John Cockrell, Acting Director, Office of Peace Operations, Sanctions, and Counterterrorism, Bureau of International Organization Affairs at (202) 736-7739.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey C. Mounts (Acting)

Enclosure:
As stated

cc: GAO – Jennifer Grover
IO – Jonathan Moore
OIG - Norman Brown

Department of State Comments on GAO Draft Report

UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS: State Should Take Additional Steps to Work with the UN to Improve Effectiveness and Performance Information
(GAO-19-224, GAO Code 102379)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the GAO draft report, entitled *"State Should Take Additional Steps to Work with the UN to Improve Effectiveness and Performance Information."*

Recommendation 1: The Secretary of State should continue to work with the Permanent Representative to the United Nations to ensure that UN peacekeeping operations fully meet principles of effective peacekeeping.

Recommendation 2: The Secretary of State should work with the Permanent Representative to the United Nations to ensure that the United Nations provides information to member states on the estimated costs of mandated peacekeeping tasks to provide better cost information when the Security Council adjusts peacekeeping mandates.

Recommendation 3: The Secretary of State should continue to work with the Permanent Representative to the United Nations to ensure that the United Nations takes additional steps to address member states' concerns about complete and timely information on the performance of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

The Department of State agrees with these recommendations.

As the report details, the United States has achieved significant successes increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of UN peacekeeping operations. The five peacekeeping principles provide a framework for honest, strategic reviews of peacekeeping operations in order to continue working to ensure that the UN is performing at its highest level in-country, and that the United States and United States taxpayers are receiving the best value for our financial contributions. U.S. leadership and effective collaboration within the UN Security Council has led to smart reductions of over $800 million in the UN peacekeeping budget since July 2016. In response to analysis of conditions on the ground, we have reconfigured missions in Haiti and Darfur, bolstered the mission in the Central African Republic, made the mission in Lebanon more relevant to the challenges to peace presented by Hizballah, closed the mission in Cote d'Ivoire, and more. The United

2

States will continue to engage in close interagency cooperation, as well as strong advocacy within the UN Security Council to continue improving UN peacekeeping.

The report correctly states that there is a need for better financial information related to UN peacekeeping operations. While the UN Secretariat provides a large volume of financial information to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, that information does not correlate well with changes that the Security Council makes to specific peacekeeping mandates. Instead, the financial information represents the totality of resources that the UN Secretariat estimates needing to accomplish a given peacekeeping mission's overall mandate. Achieving the desired level of detail will require changes to UN financial management practices and reporting to the Fifth Committee. The United States will work to advance these changes, which may require adoption through a resolution by the UN General Assembly. In the meantime and in the absence of that structural change, the United States will continue to closely scrutinize all proposed UN peacekeeping budgets to ensure to the extent possible that approved resource levels are realistic and afford missions the ability to implement their mandates, based in part on historical forecasting and expenditure patterns. With the implementation of the UN reform agenda and the expected and related UN cultural shift to one that is results based in 2019 and beyond, the United States will continue to advocate for greater transparency and accountability in the use of peacekeeping resources.

The United States has been a leader on the UN Security Council in order to create a "culture of performance" in UN peacekeeping. The United States drafted and achieved Security Council approval of resolution 2436 in September 2018, the first-ever resolution focused on improving the performance of UN peacekeeping, and implementing a system of accountability. This resolution calls for a timely and transparent reporting process for performance failures, real accountability measures for when these failures occur, and the application of objective criteria – data, not politics – to match the right police and troops with the right peacekeeping roles. The United States will continue to work with the UN Secretary-General, the Security Council, General Assembly, UN Secretariat, as well as troop- and police-contributing countries in order to ensure effective implementation of resolution 2436 (2018) going forward.

Appendix VI: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

Jennifer Grover, (202) 512-7141 or groverj@gao.gov

Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the individual named above, Elizabeth Repko (Assistant Director), Shirley Min (Analyst in Charge), Julia Jebo Grant, Sarah Amer, Molly Miller, Debbie Chung, Martin de Alteriis, Neil Doherty, Mark Dowling, Michael Rohrback, and Brandon Hunt made contributions to this report.

Appendix VII: Accessible Data

Agency Comment Letter

Accessible Text for Appendix V Comments from the Department of State

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FEB 27 2019

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Managing Director

International Affairs and Trade Gove1nment Accountability Office

441 G Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20548-0001

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