

Counter-Terrorism & Peace Operations: The Impacts of UN Security Council Approaches to Tackling Terror on the Pursuit of Peace

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KEY FINDINGS

- **United Nations Security Council (UNSC) counter-terrorism frameworks have generated security-focused approaches to tackling terrorism that have failed to leverage the strengths of peace operations and should be replaced by civilian-driven and military-supported activities focused on addressing the conditions conducive to radicalization to violence.**
- **To enable peace operations to better address the drivers of violent extremism, the UNSC should clarify the relationship among peacekeeping, counter-terrorism, and preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) and provide clear policy frameworks and guidance for responses.**
- **The presence of multiple, uncoordinated actors undertaking peace operations, counter-terrorism, and P/CVE activities in the same theater of operations requires a comprehensive political strategy - driven by the UNSC - to align and harmonize entities and efforts.**
- **In the future, the UNSC must critically consider when it is appropriate to deploy peace operations in settings affected by violent extremism and then think creatively about how it can utilize the entire spectrum of peace operations broadly defined at its disposal.**

INTRODUCTION

The past twenty years of global counter-terrorism efforts have profoundly influenced the work of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The proliferation of terrorist activity since 2001, including a high percentage of terrorist attacks occurring in conflict zones (97 percent),¹ and emerging imperatives to protect civilians from conflict and terrorist violence, has seen the influence of counter-terrorism frameworks extend to the mandates and practices of UN peace operations from Mali to Yemen,² despite their potentially conflicting operational logics. In particular, security-focused approaches to addressing the threats posed by terrorism have contributed to an erosion of the fundamental principles of peacekeeping, as liberal norms of peacebuilding have faded in the face of more pragmatic ideas of stability, emphasizing traditional ideas of security.³

UN Peace operations are generally considered a poor vehicle for counter-terrorism. The 2000 Brahimi Report and 2008 capstone doctrine both emphasized that UN peacekeeping operations are not fit for peace enforcement and counter-terrorism operations.⁴ More recently, the 2015 High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations stated that “UN troops should not undertake military counter-terrorism operations” and that “[e]xtreme caution should guide the mandating of enforcement tasks to degrade, neutralize or defeat a designated enemy”.⁵ Yet, UN peace operations are regularly deployed by the UNSC to settings affected by terrorism and violent extremism. The confluence of terrorism and conflict make this co-existence inevitable, but some missions have also engaged more directly in countering these elements. For example, the UNSC continues to support the mission in Somalia, which actively faces terrorist threats,⁶ and has also deployed a peacekeeping mission to Mali amid a jihadist insurgency.⁷ At the same time, in places like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), peace operations have engaged in offensive military operations that target groups labelled as “terrorists” by their host government partners.

1 “Global Terrorism Index 2022: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism,” *Institute for Economics and Peace*, March 2022, <https://www.vision-ofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/GTI-2022-web.pdf>.

2 In this policy brief ‘peace operations’ refers to the range of special political missions, traditional and multidimensional peacekeeping operations, as well as newer stabilisation missions. Their defining characteristic is that they are authorised by the UNSC and staffed by personnel contributed to the UN.

3 Louise Wiuff Moe and Finn Stepputat, “Introduction: Peacebuilding in an Era of Pragmatism,” *International Affairs* 94, no. 2 (2018): 293-99.

4 “Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (the Brahimi Report),” *United Nations* (New York: UN, 21 August 2000); “United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines,” *United Nations*, Capstone Doctrine, New York, 2008.

5 “Uniting Our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnership and People,” *High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, New York, 2015: p. x.

6 Though it is important to note that Al-Shabab is not listed by the UNSC’s 1267 sanctions committee. See: <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/1267>.

7 Vanessa Gauthier Vela, “MINUSMA and the Militarization of UN Peacekeeping,” *International Peacekeeping* 28, no. 5 (2021): 838-63, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2021.1951610>.

Academics and peacekeeping experts have raised concerns and noted the initial impacts of counter-terrorism efforts on UN peace operations.⁸ Building on this work, this brief draws on illustrative examples from the field to examine how the UNSC's counter-terrorism framework has impacted the mandates and practice of the UN's peace operations, particularly the large stabilization operations deployed in Africa. It shows that counter-terrorism efforts at the level of the UNSC have blurred the normative distinctions between peace operations and counter-terrorism to the detriment of the former. This brief concludes by providing recommendations to ensure that UNSC responses to terrorism and violent extremism do not unintentionally undermine the effectiveness of UN peace operations.

ANALYSIS

Blurring Lines Between Peace and Counter-Terrorism Operations

Even when the members of the UNSC are deeply divided, UN peace operations and counter-terrorism have been two topics on which the P5 have generally found ways to – if not reach consensus – compromise enough to enable decision-making and action.⁹ While such cooperation among the P5 on matters of peace and security is desirable, the prevailing approach to counter-terrorism in the UNSC can be understood to have influenced its efforts in other areas, including peace operations. In particular, this has resulted in the creation of an enabling environment for their increased deployment to active conflict zones, more robust postures, as well as growing centrality of mandates to extend state authority, which undermines their impartiality.

There are active debates around whether peace operations should engage in kinetic offensive counter-terrorism operations. These include the potential impact of counter-terrorism on UN peace operations' impartiality,¹⁰ use of force,¹¹ ability to protect civilians,¹² the related degradation of human rights,¹³ and

8 See, for example: Bruno Charbonneau, "Intervention in Mali: Building Peace between Peacekeeping and Counterterrorism," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 35, no. 4 (2017): 415-31; John Karlsrud, "From Liberal Peacebuilding to Stabilization and Counterterrorism." *International Peacekeeping* 26(1) (2019): 1-21; Arthur Boutellis and Naureen Chowdhury Fink, "Waging Peace: UN Peace Operations Confronting Terrorism and Violent Extremism," *International Peace Institute*, New York, October 2016, p. 7, <https://www.ipinst.org/2016/10/un-peaceops-confronting-terrorism-extremism>.

9 Richard Gowan, "UN Peacekeeping in a Fragmenting International Order." *International Crisis Group*, 25 November, 2020, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/un-peacekeeping-fragmenting-international-order>.

10 Emily Paddon Rhoads, *Taking Sides in Peacekeeping. Impartiality and the Future of the United Nations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

11 Lise Howard, "Peacekeeping Is Not Counterinsurgency," *International Peacekeeping* 26, no. 5 (2019): 545-48; Cedric de Coning, "Is Stabilization the New Normal? Implications of Stabilization Mandates for the Use of Force in UN Peace Operations," in *Use of Force in UN Peacekeeping* by Peter Nadin (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2018); Cedric de Coning, "Peace Enforcement in Africa: Doctrinal Distinctions between the African Union and United Nations," *Contemporary Security Policy* 38, no. 1 (2017).

12 Louise Wiuff Moe, "The Dark Side of Institutional Collaboration: How Peacekeeping-Counterterrorism Convergences Weaken the Protection of Civilians in Mali," *International Peacekeeping* 28, no. 1 (2021): 1-29, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2020.1821364>.

13 Melissa Lefas, Junko Nozawa, and Eelco Kessels, "Blue Sky V: An Independent Analysis of UN Counterterrorism Efforts," *Global Center on Cooperative Security*, Washington D.C., November 2020.

the emergence of parallel operations.¹⁴ In principle, UN peace operations are consent-based, of an impartial nature, and they limit the use of force – except for self-defense and in defense of the mandate. This remains the foundation that enables them to deploy and operate in the field.

However, complications arise with the deployment of UN peace operations into active conflicts where terrorism is evident. Missions must respond when under attack and peacekeepers are mandated to address these threats directly or indirectly. This has led to a greater number of security-focused missions. As a result, in these settings short-term conflict management has been prioritized over the more traditional focus on conflict resolution and sustaining peace. Such trends have not only obscured the nature and goals of UN peace operations but also, as is noted below, undermined peace operations' core principles and norms, posing specific problems for addressing extremism in UN peace operation contexts.

A Robust Turn

To protect themselves, civilians, and host states in active conflict settings – including where violent extremism is present - the UNSC has provided peace operations with more robust mandates authorized to use “all necessary means” to implement key aspects of their mandates. For example, in 2016, the Council authorized United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) peacekeepers to conduct “direct operations” to: “anticipate, deter, and counter threats, including asymmetric threats, and to take robust and active steps to protect civilians, including through active and effective patrolling in areas where civilians are at risk, and to prevent the return of armed elements to those areas.”¹⁵ While this directive has rarely been acted on by peacekeepers, this evidences the influence of counter-terrorism thinking on Council mandates for peace operations.

Over the past two decades, the UNSC has increasingly mandated UN peace operations to assist host governments and military forces, making them partial to the state.¹⁶ Logistical and capacity-building support to unreformed host-state security actors to combat asymmetric threats, including from terrorist groups, has at times facilitated abuses against civilian populations in the name of counter-terrorism. In Mali, for instance, the International Commission of Inquiry found that UN-supported Malian troops committed atrocities against civilians who they conflated with members of terrorist armed groups.¹⁷ Negative interactions with the military and law enforcement are a major driver of radicalization to

14 Naureen Chowdhury Fink and Arthur Boutellis, “Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Counterterrorism and Peacekeeping in the Sahel,” *Global Observatory*, International Peace Institute, July 20, 2021, <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2021/07/between-a-rock-and-a-hard-place-counterterrorism-and-peacekeeping-in-the-sahel/>; Lisa Sharland and Alexandra Novosseloff, “Partners and Competitors: Forces Operating in Parallel to Un Peace Operations,” *International Peace Institute*, New York, 2019.

15 United Nations Security Council Resolution 2295 (2016), S/RES/2295, p.8, para 19.(c)(ii).

16 Alex J. Bellamy and Charles T. Hunt, “Twenty-First Century UN Peace Operations: Protection, Force and the Changing Security Environment,” *International Affairs* 91, no. 6 (2015): 1277-98, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.12456>.

17 International Commission of Inquiry for Mali, “Report of the International Commission of Inquiry for Mali,” *United Nations*, S/2020/1332, 29 January 2021, <https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=S%2F2020%2F1332&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=Falet>.

violence and violent extremism¹⁸ and contribute to the cross-fertilization of local conflict dynamics with transnational violent extremist elements.¹⁹ Such clashes with security forces have deepened distrust in state institutions among local populations and undermined the legitimacy and perceived impartiality of UN peace operations by association.²⁰

Close cooperation with, and support to, host-state security forces can also alter the legal footing of missions, potentially making peacekeepers participants in the conflict, something for which they are not adequately trained or prepared.²¹ It has also rendered operations vulnerable to manipulation by host governments who have sought to instrumentalize terrorism to benefit from UN support. For example, in the DRC, The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's (MONUSCO) mandate to conduct joint offensive operations with the Congolese military emboldened the host government to identify armed groups, such as the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), as terrorist organizations to make them legitimate military targets, including for MONUSCO's Force Intervention Brigade (FIB).²²

Uncoordinated Constellations

Even though UN peace operations are rarely explicitly mandated to tackle terrorism or violent extremism, they are increasingly entangled in ad hoc and shifting constellations of actors who are. In Mali, for instance, MINUSMA has worked alongside or in close proximity to: the French counter-terrorism Operation Barkhane; the five-country G5-Sahel Joint Force; the European Takuba Task Force, which accompanies and advises Malian forces; multiple European Union training missions, which train Malian defense and security forces; as well as myriad bi-lateral donors or their proxies such as China, Turkey, and, more recently, the Russian private military company the Wagner Group. Similar constellations of actors pertain in the Central African Republic (CAR) and the DRC. Each of these actors has their own political and strategic objectives, which are rarely coordinated with the work of the UN's own presence.²³ Without

18 "Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment," *United Nations Development Programme*, New York, 2017, <https://journey-to-extremism.undp.org/en/reports>.

19 Alexander Gilder, "The Effect of 'Stabilization' in the Mandates and Practice of UN Peace Operations," *Netherlands International Law Review* 66, no. 1 (2019): 47-73.

20 "Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment," *United Nations Development Programme*, New York, 2017, <https://journey-to-extremism.undp.org/en/reports>.

21 Michelle Nel, "From Peacekeeping to Stabilisation: Interorganisational Co-Operation, Challenges and the Law," *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 14, no. 2 (2020): 237-52, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2020.1732151>.

22 Alberto Barrera, "The Congo Trap: MONUSCO Islands of Stability in the Sea of Instability," *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 4, no. 1 (2015), <https://www.stabilityjournal.org/articles/10.5334/sta.gn/>; Jenna Russo, "Militarised Peacekeeping: Lessons from the Democratic Republic of the Congo," *Third World Quarterly* 42, no. 12 (2021): 3070-86; Denis M. Tull, "The Limits and Unintended Consequences of UN Peace Enforcement: The Force Intervention Brigade in the DR Congo," *International Peacekeeping* 25, no. 2 (2018): 167-90, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2017.1360139>.

23 Alexandra Novosseloff and Lisa Sharland, "Partners and Competitors: Forces Operating in Parallel to UN Peace Operations," *International Peace Institute*, November 2019; Shannon Zimmerman, "Parallel Lines in the Sand: The Impact of Parallel French Interventions on UN Stabilization Operations in Mali and the Central African Republic," *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* 28(1) (2022): 58-79, <https://doi.org/10.1163/19426720-0280100>.

a coherent and unified political strategy to coordinate these adjacent actors – many of whom have UN mandates, support, or approval – their actions have duplicated, undermined, or even contradicted the work of UN peace operations.²⁴ At the same time, when UN peacekeepers have been associated with counter-terrorist forces, the wider UN system and its goals have been undermined.²⁵

Failing to Leverage the Strengths of UN Peace Operations

Hostile environments, robust mandates, cooperation with host-state security forces, and the presence of parallel counter-terrorism operations have normalized and, to some extent, prioritized military strategies in pursuit of peaceful objectives over the civilian and police components of the mission.²⁶ This has led to a disconnect between the military and the civilian-led political and reform-focused aspects of UN missions most suited to P/CVE work. In the longer-term, the UNSC's security-focused responses to violent extremism have filtered through and contributed to a 'pragmatic turn' in UN peace operations, where robust mandates and stabilization approaches have eschewed the liberal state-building norms that peace operations had hitherto relied on to create stable regimes.²⁷ In addition, conflict management logics have at times directly contradicted and confounded important approaches, such as disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR), which envisage the transformation of armed actors and other security agencies before they are deployed to tackle insurgents. In short, mission mandates have shifted from conflict resolution through socio-political processes to conflict management underpinned by coercion from peacekeepers and host-state security forces.²⁸

This more militarized approach limits the possibilities of peace, closing political space for inclusive negotiated settlements by privileging state actors – regardless of their local legitimacy – alienating non-state actors with legitimate grievances, and changing the political calculus on the ground by reducing non-state actor influence.²⁹ Additionally, the UNSC's labelling of groups as terrorist complicates UN engagement with key actors. Though not a legal impediment per se, in practice this designation has made it difficult for UN missions to engage with the nuanced dynamics of conflict actors on the ground when the reality is that the line between terrorist and other criminal/armed groups deemed legitimate and part of political process is blurry and continually shifting. While missions like MINUSMA have explicitly used such

24 Shannon Zimmerman, "Parallel Lines in the Sand: The Impact of Parallel French Interventions on UN Stabilization Operations in Mali and the Central African Republic," *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* 28(1) (2022): 58-79, <https://doi.org/10.1163/19426720-0280100>.

25 Charles T. Hunt, "All Necessary Means to What Ends? The Unintended Consequences of the 'Robust Turn' in UN Peace Operations," *International Peacekeeping* 24, no. 1 (2017): 108-31, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2016.1214074>.

26 Vanessa Gauthier Vela, "MINUSMA and the Militarization of UN Peacekeeping," *International Peacekeeping* 28, no. 5 (2021): 838-63, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2021.1951610>.

27 John Karlsrud, "From Liberal Peacebuilding to Stabilization and Counterterrorism," *International Peacekeeping* 26, no. 1 (2019): 1-21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2018.1502040>; John Karlsrud, *The UN at War: Peace Operations in a New Era* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

28 Bruno Charbonneau, "Intervention in Mali: Building Peace between Peacekeeping and Counterterrorism," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 35, no. 4 (2017): 415-31, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02589001.2017.1363383>.

29 Jenna Russo, "Militarised Peacekeeping: Lessons from the Democratic Republic of the Congo," *Third World Quarterly* 42, no. 12 (2021): 3070-86, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2021.1992272>.

nomenclature, this scenario has also arisen when UNSC sanctions regimes further ostracize stakeholders deemed important to the political process. For instance, in Yemen, when the UNSC's designation of the Houthis as a terrorist group happened at the same time as the UN's own Special Envoy called inclusive talks with all parties.³⁰

Peace operations already engage in a range of initiatives, including mediation, human rights, gender, SSR, and early peacebuilding/development, that contribute to addressing drivers of violent extremism.³¹ However, despite the growing experience of missions in settings impacted by violent extremism, there remains a shortage of training, guidance, and resources to help peacekeepers recognize, prevent, and respond to violent extremism and terrorism. Apart from concerns regarding the safety and security of UN personnel, this has inhibited peacekeeper awareness of the unique challenges posed by violent extremism, undermined their ability to leverage the P/CVE aspects of their work, and made it more difficult to connect this work to a long-term political strategy.

As described above, the UNSC's expanding counter-terrorism framework has infused the thinking, mandates, and activities of UN peace operations, creating an enabling environment for more security-focused stabilization approaches. In some cases, this has contributed to undermining core peace operations principles and privileging conflict management at the expense of longer-term conflict resolution and sustaining peace.³² These impacts, combined with the lack of guidance for how peacekeepers can leverage relevant aspects of their mandates for P/CVE purposes have, at times, inadvertently fostered rather than prevented extremist violence. Given that addressing violent extremism/terrorism will continue to be an imperative for the UNSC, and UN peace operations are already deployed in their midst, it is critical that steps are taken to ensure that these missions are part of the solution rather than part of the problem.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With a view to addressing terrorist threats in future without undermining the effectiveness of peace operations, the UNSC should consider the following:

1. Devise a comprehensive strategic vision for the various interventions in settings affected by violent extremism.

Any UN peace operation needs to be situated in relation to other preceding, parallel, or subsequent military and non-military initiatives. This is particularly vital when force mandates or areas of

30 "Security Council Renews Arms Embargo, Travel Ban, Asset Freeze Imposed on Those Threatening Peace in Yemen," *United Nations*, SC/14810, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sc14810.doc.htm>.

31 Arthur Boutellis and Naureen Chowdhury Fink, "Waging Peace: UN Peace Operations Confronting Terrorism and Violent Extremism," *International Peace Institute*, New York, October 2016, p. 7, <https://www.ipinst.org/2016/10/un-peaceops-confronting-terrorism-extremism>.

32 John Karlsrud, "From Liberal Peacebuilding to Stabilization and Counterterrorism," *International Peacekeeping* 26, no. 1 (2019): 1-21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2018.1502040>.

operations overlap, where these have regional dimensions, cross national borders, and when UN support offices to those parallel missions are considered.³³ This includes directing UN agencies, funds, and programs through the integrated missions' structure or the relevant UN Country Team and Resident Coordinator(s). A good template for this is the "UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel" which brought together a "One UN" approach, including a wide range of actors following the crisis in Libya, but was never fully implemented.³⁴

2. Develop coherent political strategies for UN peace and stabilization operations.

The UNSC and other UN member states relevant to particular mission settings should ensure that military and technical actions (counter-terrorism or otherwise) are explicitly connected to the pursuit of political solutions. A clear political strategy must extend from the UNSC through to mission initiatives at the local level. Such political strategies should drive UNSC mandates and include a roadmap and milestones for achieving peace through inclusive negotiated agreements that stop killing and address major grievances.³⁵ Importantly, this strategy should foster coherence between UNSC mandates for UN peace operations and sanctions regimes, including the mandates for the associated Panels of Experts, which are too often disconnected and at times even working at cross-purposes. It should also articulate a common vision for the UN peace operation that is shared by the members of the UNSC and make clear the level of political commitment expected by member states throughout the life of the operation. Such a political strategy must draw on country-specific expertise, assessment, and analysis to ensure that political objectives reflect realities on the ground, create space to ensure the political process is inclusive, and address the push and pull factors that lead to terrorism.

33 John Karlsrud, "Future of UN Peace Operations: UN Support Offices to Regional Counterterrorism Operations?," *Global Observatory, International Peace Institute*, July 7, 2021, <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2021/07/future-of-un-peace-operations-un-support-offices-to-regional-counterterrorism-operations/>; Cedric de Coning and John Karlsrud, "Can the UN Security Council Enhance the Effectiveness of the G5 Sahel Force?," *Global Observatory, International Peace Institute*, May 13, 2021, <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2021/05/can-un-security-council-enhance-effectiveness-of-g5-sahel-force/>; Paul Williams, "Why a UN Support Office for the G5 Sahel Joint Force Is a Bad Idea," *Global Observatory, International Peace Institute*, June 8, 2021, <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2021/06/why-a-un-support-office-for-the-g5-sahel-joint-force-is-a-bad-idea/>.

34 "Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in the Sahel Region," UN Security Council, UN Doc. S/2013/354, June 14, 2013, <https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=S%2F2013%2F354&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False>.

35 Adam Day, Aditi Gorur, Victoria K. Holt, and Charles T. Hunt, *The Political Practice of Peacekeeping: How Strategies for Peace Operations are Developed and Implemented* (New York: United Nations University, 2020): pp. 5, 10, <https://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:7791/FullReport-PoliticalPracticeofPeacekeeping.pdf>.

3. Articulate and embed P/CVE in the assessments, analysis, mission planning, and mandates of extant peace operations in violent extremism-affected settings, with careful consideration of when is the right time, context for, and what type of intervention is most appropriate.

The UNSC needs to shift focus away from advocating for and authorizing security-focused responses in violent extremism-affected settings to broaden the discourse around appropriate activities, including leveraging a range of civilian capacities to address the drivers of radicalization and violent extremism. The 2015 UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism already identifies much of what is needed to address the underlying conditions that lead to radicalization and terrorism, expanding on Pillar 1 of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (GCTS).³⁶ The Council should therefore seek to initiate reengagement with the plan and refinement of P/CVE ideas and build a constituency for it through high-level meetings, as well as open debates and informal Arria-formula meetings of the UNSC and other interested parties.

One key area of focus here is so-called *judicialized* responses – i.e., those that seek to tackle violent extremism through the promotion and (re-) establishment of the rule of law. For example, recent UNSC practice promoting comprehensive and tailored *prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration* (PRR) strategies and protocols instead of more conventional DDR. However, it can also harness existing efforts by peace operations, in collaboration with UN and other partners, to reform police and justice sector institutions to tackle impunity and work towards restoring and building trust in state institutions, as well as the state-society relationship around security and justice. Peace operation contributions to efforts such as SSR and DDR/PRR/community violence reduction (CVR) can be facilitated and coordinated better to fulfill the needs of both P/CVE and conflict management/resolution without retroactively re-labelling everything peace operations do as P/CVE. To facilitate the integration of P/CVE in mission assessment, analysis, and planning, it would also be prudent to include a P/CVE expert on the “panel of experts” mandated alongside field missions. While mainstreaming P/CVE is important, this must be done in such a way that it does not divert funds away from broader peacebuilding approaches to sustainable peace.

36 “Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy,” *United Nations*, A/RES/60/288, September 20, 2006, <https://undocs.org/A/RES/60/288>.

4. Support a Secretary-General appointed High-Level Commission to further develop guidance and doctrine to enhance awareness of Violent Extremism and the synergies between P/CVE and early peacebuilding in UN missions.

Peace operations require doctrine that clearly defines what activities military, police, and civilian peacekeepers can and cannot engage in. Specifically, it should differentiate and distinguish between P/CVE activities and kinetic counter-terrorism operations and make clear which are acceptable for peace operations to undertake. Any such doctrine must consider the foundational principles of UN peace operations' impartiality, host-state consent, and non-use of force and provide guidance on how P/CVE activities fit into broader peacebuilding aspects of mission mandates. Guidance should explicitly acknowledge the presence of terrorist threats and define the limits on when and how peacekeepers can protect themselves and civilians in these contexts.³⁷ It should also clarify if, when, and how UN peace operations can politically engage with terrorist groups, including the implications of designation as terrorists under the various UNSC sanctions regimes.

New guidance should also address how, and to what extent, peace operations should work with other counter-terrorism forces. This should capture the range of existing modalities of cooperation such as internal structures in peace operations like the FIB in MONUSCO, UN support offices to counter-terrorism-focused forces like the the UN Support office for the African Union Mission in Somalia (UNSOA), and UN mission support to host-state and parallel counter-terrorism forces like in Mali.

Finally, guidance should encourage missions to engage with other UN agencies, funds, and programs undertaking P/CVE-related work and develop more interagency cooperation among missions, country teams, and regional field offices of relevant entities on P/CVE topics. The UNSC's ambiguity on a definition of terrorism may be a political necessity, but this does not preclude clarifying the scope and limits of counter-terrorism activities to ensure they observe human rights (including application of the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy) and are connected to broader political strategies. This will also provide further clarity as to where peace operations end, counter-terrorism operations begin, and when and where they may overlap.

37 Naureen Chowdhury Fink and Arthur Boutellis, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Counterterrorism and Peacekeeping in the Sahel," *Global Observatory, International Peace Institute*, July 20, 2021, <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2021/07/between-a-rock-and-a-hard-place-counterterrorism-and-peacekeeping-in-the-sahel/>; Namie Di Razza, "Protecting Civilians in the Context of Violent Extremism: The Dilemmas of UN Peacekeeping in Mali," *International Peace Institute*, New York, October 2018, https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/1810-POC-in-the-Context_of_Violent-Extremism.pdf.

5. Revitalize the debate around a spectrum of peace operations.

A key recommendation of the 2015 report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) was to avoid the tendency of the UNSC and member states to think in terms of a binary of peacekeeping vs. special political missions/everything else, but instead consider a spectrum of UN “peace operations”. Rather than facilitate this, the reform of the peace and security pillar at HQ and the flagship “Action for Peacekeeping” initiative have reinforced this binary and made it more difficult to think creatively about the scope of options available and what UN presence would best meet the risks presented by violent extremist settings. The UNSC, with the Secretariat, should find ways to better consider the range of possibilities – from mediation and special political missions through the more conventional multidimensional peacekeeping missions, to peacebuilding offices and even more P/CVE-oriented missions. They should also be willing to break with supply-driven models and contemplate innovative rule of law-oriented approaches that might be more effective at addressing violent extremist threats in a more sustainable manner.

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