

Sharing the Burden: Lessons from the European Return to Multidimensional Peacekeeping

ARTHUR BOUTELLIS AND MICHAEL BEARY



Cover Photo: Members of Dutch Special Forces serving with the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) secure the area during the visit of the force commander, Major General Michael Lollesgaard, to Anefis, in northern Mali, September 14, 2015. UN Photo/Marco Dormino.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

ARTHUR BOUTELLIS is a Non-resident Senior Advisor at the International Peace Institute.

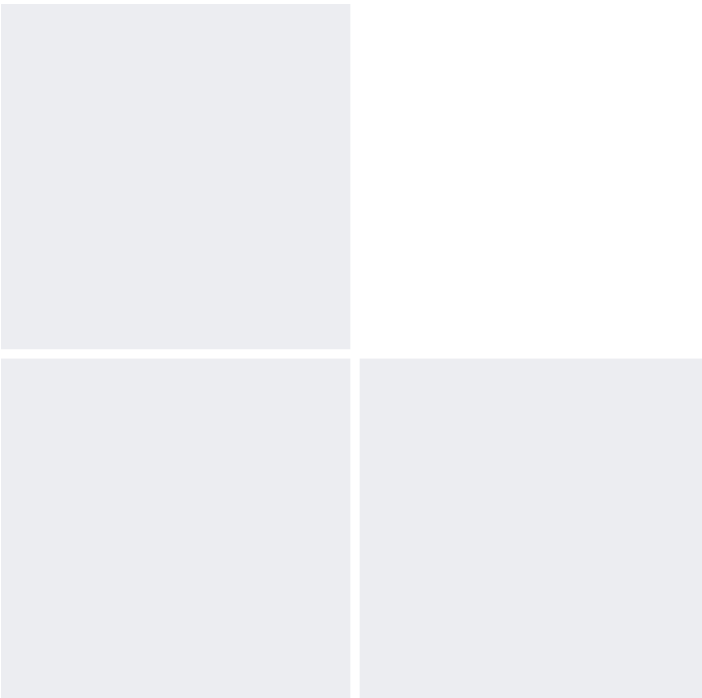
Email: boutellis@ipinst.org

MICHAEL BEARY is a retired Irish Army major general and was Head of Mission and Force Commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and Commander of the EU Training Mission in Somalia.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFISMA	African-Led International Support Mission to Mali
AMISOM	African Union Mission to Somalia
AMET	Aerial medical evacuation teams
ASIFU	All Sources Information Fusion Unit
CAR	Central African Republic
Casevac	Casualty evacuation
EUFOR	EU Force
IED	Improvised explosive device
ISR	Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
LOA	Letter of assist
LRRPTG	Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol Task Group
MINURCAT	UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad
MINUSCA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MINUSMA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
MRC	Multinational rotation contribution
MTT	Mobile training team
MUH	Military unit helicopter
PESCO	Permanent Structured Cooperation
QRF	Quick-reaction force
SOLTG	Special operations land task group
SUR	Statement of unit requirements
TCC	Troop-contributing country
UAV	Unmanned aerial vehicle
UNFICYP	UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
UNIFIL	UN Interim Force in Lebanon
UNMAS	UN Mine Action Service
UNMISS	UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan

Executive Summary

Since 2013, after years of near absence from the continent, a number of European countries, along with Canada, have again deployed to UN peacekeeping missions in Africa. The European presence in UN peacekeeping in Africa is now nearly at its largest since the mid-1990s. Overall, however, European countries still only contribute about 8 percent of UN peacekeepers globally, and less than 40 percent of these are deployed in Africa.

For European states, the decision to deploy troops to UN missions is first and foremost a political decision based on national interests and values. Other factors driving European deployments include Security Council bids, the NATO drawdown in Afghanistan, and peer pressure from other countries. European countries are more likely to contribute troops when they receive political support from other countries, can deploy alongside one another, and have confidence in a mission's leadership.

Most European states contributing to peacekeeping in Africa have deployed high-end, low-risk capabilities for short periods of time. This is evident in Mali, where European states have favored capabilities such as peacekeeping intelligence, special forces, and air assets. An exception is the Portuguese quick-reaction force in the Central African Republic—seen by many as “the best case” of a European contribution—which has been more willing to use force and does not have an end date for its deployment. The UK has also adopted a different approach in South Sudan, deploying more modest capabilities that it then handed over to non-European countries.

The return of European states and Canada to UN peacekeeping in Africa has come with challenges for all involved. Interviewees from these countries highlighted ten main issues: their mistrust of UN command and control, particularly of military utility helicopters; the inadequacy of medical guarantees; the lack of professional peacekeeping intelligence; the lack of clarity on tasks and end dates; the slowness of UN processes for agreeing on deployments; the underuse of their assets and skills; the UN's lack of proactive and inclusive planning; the difficulty of meeting the target for

female peacekeepers; cost considerations; and insufficient support for strategic communication to domestic audiences. Nonetheless, most agreed that these challenges were surmountable.

Among UN officials interviewed, the value of European and Canadian contributions was universally recognized: their contingents and staff officers are professional, well-trained, and well-equipped, and the military capabilities they provide come with financial and political support. However, many raised the operational challenges posed by these contributions: European and Canadian troops often are reluctant to leave their bases due to risk-aversion and “caveats,” sometimes lack a clear understanding of UN command and control, and tend to be deployed for short periods of time, which disrupts continuity. Another source of frustration is that European and Canadian contingents are sometimes treated differently than those from other countries. Nonetheless, feedback from non-European troop contributors in field missions was generally positive.

The UN Secretariat could take a number of actions to overcome these challenges and improve future contributions from European countries and Canada:

1. Build peacekeeping operations around first-class medical systems;
2. Focus on improving processes for casualty evacuation;
3. Strengthen the UN's capacity to foster partnerships among troop-contributing countries;
4. Engage Europe strategically and politically;
5. Be flexible and make European contributors (and others) feel included in planning;
6. Continue educating European contributors about UN peacekeeping;
7. Do not limit engagement with European contributors to high-end capabilities;
8. Ensure European contributors adhere to UN standards; and
9. Encourage European contributors to commit to longer deployments.

Introduction

Since 2013, after years of near absence from the continent, a number of European countries, along with Canada, have again deployed to UN peacekeeping missions in Africa.¹ This cautious return has been driven by the drawdown of NATO operations in Afghanistan, the US-led Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping in 2015, and peer pressure. The European presence in UN peacekeeping in Africa is now nearly at its largest since the mid-1990s.² Overall, however, European countries still only make 8 percent of total troop contributions to UN peacekeeping, and most of these are outside Africa (see Figure 1).

The UN Secretariat has invested a lot of effort into getting European troop-contributing countries (TCCs) back on board with peacekeeping operations and keeping them engaged over the past few years. These TCCs provide much-needed high-end capabilities and political and financial capital to UN peacekeeping operations in Africa. They also increase the legitimacy and representativeness of these operations due to greater collective “burden sharing” with Asian and African TCCs. But while the UN has never faced difficulties generating European contributions for its forces in Cyprus (UNFICYP) or Lebanon (UNIFIL), securing and sustaining European contributions to peacekeeping operations in Africa remains an uphill battle.

This paper's objective is to draw lessons from this renewed engagement by European TCCs and Canada, both from their own point of view (from their units in the field all the way up to their ministries of defense and foreign affairs) as well as from that of the UN Secretariat, UN field missions, and other TCCs. It is not meant to single out a certain group of TCCs but instead to see how these and other TCCs can best work together in a collective endeavor to improve UN peacekeeping's efficiency and effectiveness. Interviews were conducted from January to June 2019 with officials from the UN Secretariat and permanent missions in New York; personnel from the UN

Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in the cities of Bamako, Gao, and Timbuktu; and officials in several capitals. Information was also gathered from remote interviews with personnel from the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS).

Peacekeeping Trends: Where Does Europe Fit In?

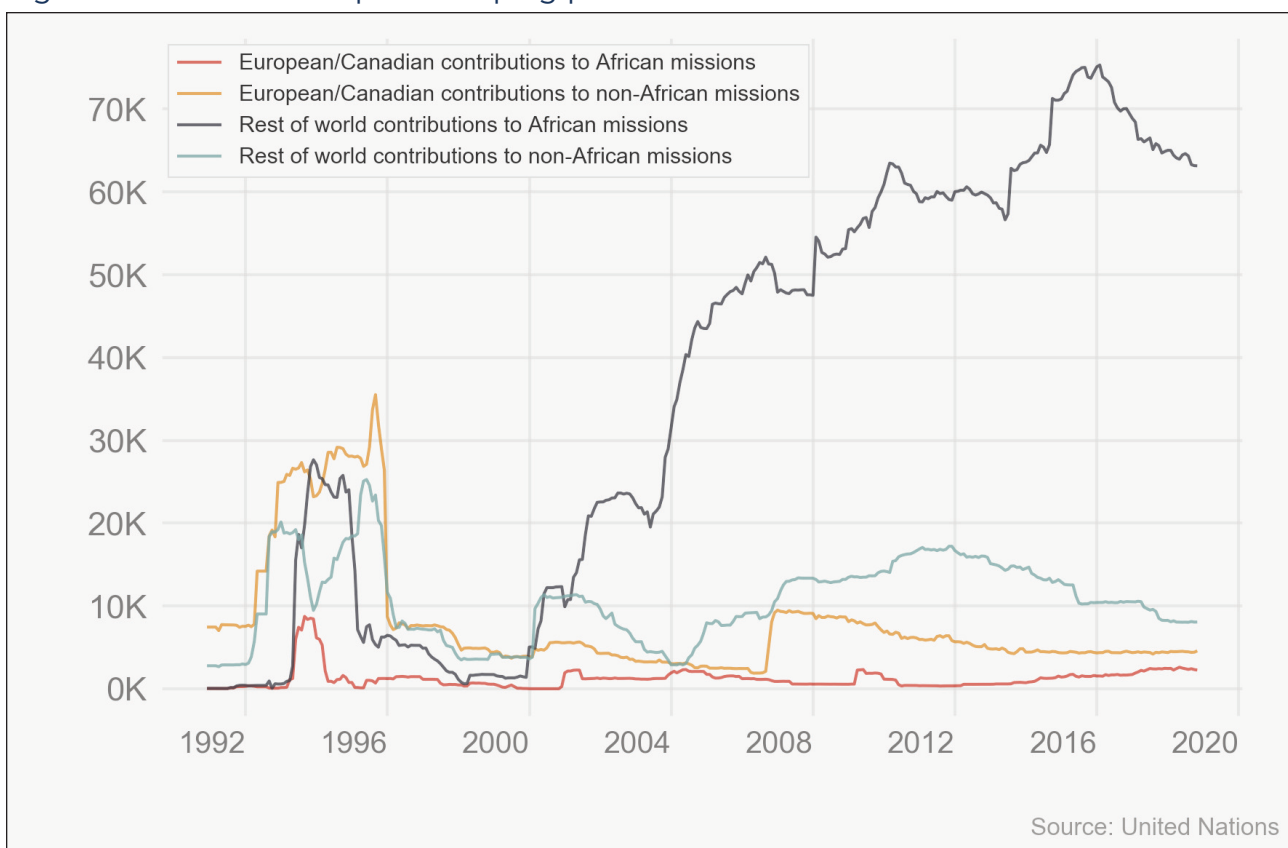
Contributions from European TCCs and Canada peaked at nearly 40,000 in the early 1990s during the UN missions in the former Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR), Somalia (UNOSOM), and Cambodia (UNTAC). They then dropped below 10,000 in 1995 and have largely remained there since, with a short spike to around 12,000 in 2009 and 2010 due to the “re-hatting” of over 1,000 troops from the EU force (EUFOR) in Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR) into the UN Mission in CAR and Chad (MINURCAT II).

Today, the bulk of UN peacekeepers are still from African and Asian countries (around 44,000 and 35,000 respectively), Africa having surpassed Asia in 2013. As of September 2019, more than 7,000 out of some 85,000 uniformed peacekeepers deployed around the world came from European and Canadian troop-contributing countries (TCCs)—about 8 percent of the total. Of the European peacekeepers, more than 60 percent are deployed in Lebanon (UNIFIL), Cyprus (UNFICYP), and the Golan Heights (UNDOF). Over the past five years, however, European contributions to African missions have gradually increased (see Figure 1). The largest single European contribution to a peacekeeping mission in Africa is from Germany in MINUSMA (383 troops), followed by the UK in UNMISS (299 troops).³ This section will discuss why and how European and Canadian TCCs contributed to UN peacekeeping missions in Africa.

1 This paper addresses both European countries and Canada, which have demonstrated a similar trend in their contributions to UN peacekeeping. For the purposes of this paper, all mentions of European countries writ large are inclusive of Canada.

2 Europeans had a larger presence in Africa for a brief period from 2009 to 2010 when select contingents of the EU force (EUFOR) in Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR) were “re-hatted” as part of the UN Mission in CAR and Chad (MINURCAT II).

3 As of September 30, 2019. See UN Peacekeeping, “Troop and Police Contributors,” available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors>.

Figure 1. Uniformed UN peacekeeping personnel⁴

Why Europeans Have Deployed to Peacekeeping Missions in Africa since 2013

Like other TCCs, European states contribute to UN peacekeeping for various reasons, but first and foremost it is a political decision and a function of values and national interests.⁵ The EU and NATO have identified North Africa and the Sahel as strategically important for several reasons, including terrorism, criminality and trafficking, and migration. France in particular has strategic interests in the Sahel and has pushed European states to focus more on this region. Although some EU and NATO TCCs are also considering working directly with the French counterterrorism force in the Sahel (Operation Barkhane), they do not necessarily see this as precluding their simulta-

neous deployment to UN peacekeeping missions. But while many European TCCs share similar values and national priorities, they do not necessarily see UN peacekeeping in Africa as contributing to these priorities in the same way. Notably, for northern European states, the southern flank of Europe—which lies closer to North Africa and the Sahel—is not as pressing a security priority as the eastern flank.

Security, however, is not the only driver of these deployments. Another factor driving some contributions is Security Council bids. Peacekeeping contributions are still considered an important part of a successful candidacy for an elected seat on the council from the Western European and Others Group (WEOG). Once a country is elected, having peacekeepers on the ground is also a way for it to contribute more meaningfully when that operation

⁴ This includes numbers for all the countries of continental Europe (with the exception of Russia and Turkey).

⁵ For more on this, see Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams, eds., *Providing Peacekeepers: The Politics, Challenges, and Future of United Nations Peacekeeping Contributions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). For profiles of individual TCCs, see the “Providing for Peacekeeping” website at: www.providingforpeacekeeping.org.

is discussed by the council. Council bids are therefore a good indicator for the UN of which member states to approach for contributions. However, contributions motivated by a country's ambition to join the Security Council are often relatively short-term rather than part of an effort to put capabilities at the disposal of the UN mission in the longer term.

As NATO draws down in Afghanistan, NATO and EU countries have also turned to UN peacekeeping operations so their militaries could practice interoperability as part of multilateral operations and provide a focus for domestic recruitment. Some interviewees from ministries of defense noted their defense forces' interest in keeping certain capabilities operational (and funded) at a time when they are under financial pressure to downsize. Some European interviewees also cited their interest in developing their militaries' ability to operate in similar theaters as China and Russia, which are increasingly present in Africa.

For these reasons, the majority of European ministries of defense have supported deploying to UN peacekeeping operations post-Afghanistan. While the decision to deploy troops to UN peacekeeping operations is always made at the very top of the government, with varying degrees of parliamentary oversight, ministries of defense advise on, and ultimately implement, these decisions. The UN's greater high-level engagement with ministers of defense in recent years has therefore helped increase European contributions to peacekeeping.

Peer pressure has played an important part in some European countries' return to peacekeeping in Africa, with some countries pushing others to contribute to the collective burden of maintaining European and global peace and stability. France has been the driving force. Most notably, following the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris, President Emmanuel Macron triggered Article 42.7 of the Lisbon Treaty—a never before used mutual-defense clause. This caused Germany to reevaluate its

foreign and defense policy and influenced its decision to contribute troops to MINUSMA, which it framed in part as an effort to support French troops in the Sahel.⁶ The former Dutch minister of defense was also instrumental in this European drive.

Pressure has also come from the US. Before the 2015 Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping, US President Barack Obama and his secretary of defense engaged their counterparts in European capitals, encouraging them to contribute peacekeepers. This push focused European TCCs on the importance of contributing to UN peacekeeping and increased their political will to pledge and deploy contributions. It is credited with encouraging the UK to deploy to South Sudan and host the 2016 Peacekeeping Defense Ministerial and with prompting Portugal to deploy to CAR. However, the current US administration has not followed the same line, instead focusing on pressuring its allies to meet the NATO defense-spending target. As one interviewee put it, "Nobody is cajoling member states at this time to participate." In addition, contributing to peacekeeping remains an important vehicle for countries to demonstrate support for multilateralism.

Beyond political cajoling, practical support from the US and other partners is also an important factor behind certain European TCCs' decisions to contribute. Romania, for instance, would not have been in the position to deploy four military utility helicopters (MUHs) to MINUSMA in 2019 if not for US financial and technical support. Similarly, European countries might find it politically easier to contribute to a mission that has contingents from other European TCCs or a parallel EU training mission.

Confidence in the civilian and military leadership of a UN mission has also been cited as a factor in TCCs' decisions about whether to contribute. For example, the presence of Bert Koenders, a Dutch national, as one of the initial leaders of MINUSMA,

⁶ German participation in EU missions and operations has been and remains generally modest, except for the EU force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2006, which was led by Germany and for which it provided the second-largest contingent (780 troops), just behind France. Germany currently commands the EU training mission in Mali. See: *Institute de recherche stratégique de l'école militaire*, "French-German Cooperation in the Sahel: Consequences of and Perspectives for Germany's 'Turn to Africa,'" September 2017.

made it easier for the Netherlands to commit its task force to the mission early in 2013. The current deputy special representative of the secretary-general in Mali, Joanne Adamson, a British national, has actively encouraged the UK to deploy troops. The nationality of the secretary-general is thought to have played a part in Portugal's contribution to MINUSCA. European countries with an embassy or cooperation project in Mali or the Sahel also seem to have factored that into their decision to deploy troops to MINUSMA.

Additionally, countries that hold key positions in force headquarters (e.g., force commander, deputy force commander, chief of staff, deputy chief of staff for operations, and chiefs of the U2, U3, or U5 branches) may be more likely to deploy troops. This appears to have been the case for Denmark when it deployed a twenty-person special-forces team after Danish Major General Michael Lollesgaard was nominated as MINUSMA force commander. Belgium deployed helicopters and an intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) platoon (as part of the German ISR task force) when Belgian Major General Jean-Paul Deconinck succeeded him.

How Europeans Have Contributed to Peacekeeping in Africa

European TCCs that have deployed to UN peacekeeping operations since 2013 have not all done so with the same motivations or in a similar manner. This section details the different ways European TCCs have chosen to deploy, with a focus on MINUSMA, MINUSCA, and UNMISS. However, it is important to note that most European TCCs have preferred deploying for short periods of time.

High-End, Low-Risk Capabilities in MINUSMA

Most European states contributing to peacekeeping in Africa have deployed to MINUSMA and have favored high-end but low-risk capabilities such as peacekeeping intelligence, special forces, and air assets. Such capabilities are difficult for missions to generate from other TCCs and grant European states increased political visibility. The contribution of these high-end capabilities also fulfills a recent push from the Secretariat to focus on capabilities over numbers and to improve performance and accountability.⁷ They also limit the risk of casualties, which, in Mali, are mostly the result of roadside improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and are therefore borne by the African and Asian TCCs that do most of the road patrols.⁸

Focusing on such high-end capabilities, the Netherlands contributed 450 personnel to MINUSMA in 2013 (along with more than 200 national support elements). These included a special operations land task group (SOLTG); an intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) company; and Apache and Chinook helicopters with aerial medical evacuation teams (AMETs), all based in a Dutch camp in Gao.⁹ The last Dutch unit remaining, a long-range reconnaissance patrol task group (LRRPTG) embedded with German forces, left Mali at the end of 2019. The United Kingdom is due to deploy 250 personnel to replace that long-range reconnaissance capability in 2020. In addition, the Netherlands led MINUSMA's multinational All Sources Information Fusion Unit (ASIFU), comprised of eighty European intelligence officers—from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden—who deployed in early 2014 (later restructured into the mission's military information branch).

⁷ The US-sponsored Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping in 2015—and the creation of the Strategic Force Generation and Capability Planning Cell in the UN Secretariat—provided the impetus for this shift. The focus on capabilities also played an important role in encouraging the deployment of new European units, notably by the UK in South Sudan; Portugal in CAR; and Canada, Germany, and the Netherlands in Mali. The importance of highly capable TCCs to operating safely and effectively in complex environments was reemphasized in the 2017 independent report on "Improving Security of UN Peacekeepers."

⁸ The only casualties experienced by European TCCs to date in MINUSMA were the result of two helicopter crashes (one Dutch Apache and one German Tiger) and one faulty mortar Dutch incident in Kidal. On January 1, 2020, two Belgium soldiers who were members of a MINUSMA ISR unit were injured after their vehicle ran over an IED.

⁹ Special operations units from Denmark and the Czech Republic also worked with the Dutch at different points in time.

In 2014, Sweden deployed an ISR task force to Timbuktu with approximately 220 personnel (as well as nearly 100 national support elements), making it the only European TCC with personnel not based in Gao.¹⁰ The deployment was initially for eighteen months but was ultimately extended to five years. Sweden's decision to contribute to UN peacekeeping after eight years of focusing on NATO was an easy one: as one interviewee put it, "Multilateralism [and] the UN [are] part of our DNA," even if implementation was challenging as "we had to relearn." Sweden decided to build its own camp in Timbuktu after the UN experienced delays in building its "super camp," as Swedish troops were already ready and would have missed their window for deployment. Sweden also offered to contribute a C-130 transport plane in Timbuktu in 2014, but by the time MINUSMA had acquired the capability to rehabilitate and maintain the airfield, the Swedish plane was no longer available.¹¹

Following short deployments of C-130 transport aircraft by Portugal and Denmark to MINUSMA between 2013 and 2015, Norway spearheaded the provision of a multinational rotation contribution (MRC) of a C-130 to the mission in 2016, together with Belgium, Denmark, Portugal, and Sweden. The initial rotation period was January 2016 to December 2018 but has since been extended to 2021.

In 2016, Germany deployed around 600 soldiers to Gao to take over from the Dutch, including Tiger and NH90 helicopters and an ISR company.¹² Several years earlier, in 2013, Germany had also contributed two C-160 transport aircraft, initially in support of the African-Led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA). But while considered useful when supporting AFISMA, the C-160s could not fulfill MINUSMA's needs and requirements, especially in northern Mali as the heat limited their load, and their deployment ended after twelve months. These planes ended up in Dakar in 2014, and Germany offered them to support the UN

Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) in West Africa. They are now in Niger in support of the German contribution to MINUSMA, but in a national support capacity.

In summer 2018, Canada replaced the German helicopter task force with three Chinooks, five Griffins, and 250 personnel (including three AMETs), but for only one year (two six-month rotations). Canada eventually extended the deployment by a few weeks until Romania could replace the helicopters with four Puma MUHs (including two AMETs) in October 2019. The Romanian helicopters are also deployed for one year and benefit from the German camp's infrastructure and support.

High-Impact Portuguese Contribution to MINUSCA

The Portuguese quick-reaction force (QRF) deployed to MINUSCA in 2017 was presented by many interviewees as "the best case" of a European contribution to peacekeeping. It initially consisted of a company of 160 troops—paratroopers and commandos—reinforced by 20 additional personnel after one year (an ambulance with two doctors and three nurses as well as some intelligence and civil-military cooperation officers). As a QRF, the unit can only be deployed for up to thirty days at a time in any given location in CAR—because of heavy wear and tear on vehicles, weapons, and other equipment—followed by thirty days of rest and recuperation. This was an issue for the mission at the beginning but has since become understood and accepted. Given that MINUSCA does not have the ability to move vehicles by air, all movements are done by road using "light" Humvee-like vehicles (five tons compared to the ten–twelve-ton armored personnel carriers that have limited mobility, especially in the rainy season). It typically requires two to four days' drive to reach the area of operation.

Like other European TCCs, Portugal, after years of

10 In MINUSMA, besides Sweden in Sector West (Timbuktu), all other European TCCs and Canada have deployed to Sector East (Gao) adjacent to the Gao airport and a major base of Operation Barkhane. No European TCC has deployed to Sector North (Kidal), which was created in 2014 and has been the mission's deadliest sector. Notably, the UN has never been able to generate the required ISR company for Sector North. IHS Jane's Defence Industry and Markets Intelligence Centre, "Desert Watchers: MINUSMA's Intelligence Capabilities," 2017.

11 The UN formally replied to Sweden in October that MINUSMA was unable to utilize the proposed aircraft until necessary arrangements had been made to maintain airfields. At the time, the French flew C-130s to these locations in northern Mali but provided their own airfield maintenance.

12 Germany was also supported by two Belgian NH90 helicopters for four months in 2018 and by a Lithuanian force protection unit beginning in 2017.

peacekeeping experience in Angola, Mozambique, Timor-Leste, Guinea-Bissau, and Lebanon, had been busy with NATO operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Unlike most European TCCs and Canada, however, Portugal does not seem reluctant to use force. Its QRF has become engaged in firefights most of the times it has been deployed inside CAR. Also, Portugal has not provided an end date for its deployment to MINUSCA and sees its simultaneous engagement with the EU training mission in CAR (with fifty staff officers, including the brigadier general) as an incentive to remain (public praise of the Portuguese QRF by the UN has also helped). Finally, the Portuguese QRF—the only European unit in the mission with the exception of a Serbian level I hospital—has also shown that it can work with non-European TCCs to prepare for operations, including Senegalese attack helicopters (for air-ground operations), Bangladeshi special forces, and Nepalese and Rwandan troops. This makes the QRF more effective and its posture more robust.

Low-Key UK Engineering and Medical Contribution to UNMISS

The United Kingdom adopted a different approach to its return to UN peacekeeping when it deployed to UNMISS in 2017. Instead of high-end capabilities, it deployed an engineering task force and a tented level II hospital to Bentiu (UK engineers then built a hard-walled hospital), initially sending almost 400 troops for a duration of three years.¹³

The UK emphasized that such a modest contribution was meant to manage expectations as it relearned how to engage in UN peacekeeping.

Guaranteeing its own high standard of medical care was critical for the UK's initial deployment, but it progressively gained confidence in the Indian level II hospital.¹⁴ Like Portugal in CAR, the UK highlighted the importance of working with non-

European TCCs to raise the standards of the mission. Most notably, in advance of its departure in October 2018, it partnered with Vietnam to prepare it to officially take over command of the level II hospital (the UK provided an “advise, assist, and mentor” package to its Vietnamese counterparts, while the US provided equipment and Australia provided language training). Three hundred UK engineers will remain until 2020.

Challenges to European Peacekeeping Deployments in Africa

The return of European TCCs and Canada to UN peacekeeping in Africa has come with challenges for all involved. This section summarizes the main challenges raised by personnel from European TCCs, including from capitals (from both ministries of defense and foreign affairs), by UN Secretariat and mission staff, and by personnel from other TCCs.

Issues Raised by European TCCs

European TCCs agree that the UN they have returned to is different than the one they had experienced in the 1990s. This perception is also shaped by their recent experience with NATO in Afghanistan and resulting expectation to find a similar setup at the UN, most notably in terms of

command and control and the medical 10-1-2 rule. However, while feedback is mixed and varies from one TCC to another (and sometimes from one unit commander to the next), most conclude that the UN is “not that bad” after all and that “nothing is insurmountable.”

While feedback from European and Canadian officials is mixed, most conclude that the UN is “not that bad” after all and that “nothing is unsurmountable.”

While these are evolving experiences, interviewees from TCCs highlighted ten main issues: command and control, particularly of military utility helicop-

¹³ UK Ministry of Defence, “UK Medical Support to Largest UN Peacekeeping Mission in South Sudan Continues after Hospital Handover to Vietnam,” December 6, 2018.

¹⁴ Similarly, in MINUSMA, European TCCs seem to have progressively gained confidence in the level II Chinese hospital in Gao, including its dentist, whose services a German contingent's commander reportedly benefited from.

ters (MUHs); medical guarantees; peacekeeping intelligence; tasks and end dates; bureaucracy and administrative processes; use of assets and skills; planning; the number of female peacekeepers; money; and strategic communication to domestic audiences.

Mistrust of UN Command and Control

Command and control was generally the first issue raised by military advisers from permanent missions in New York. Rather than command and control generally, what seems to be the critical issue is who controls military utility helicopters (MUHs) in missions. While there is no dispute over control of the military attack helicopters (which are directly under the force commander), concerns were raised that difficulties surrounding the control of the MUHs could impact casualty evacuation (casevac) in emergencies. In UN peacekeeping missions, the civilian side (the director or chief of mission support through the integrated mission air operations center) has the authority to task all utility helicopters (both military and civilian), which are treated as mission assets. Some European TCCs see this as contrary to the military imperative to swiftly evacuate injured personnel without involving the leadership of the mission support component and regardless of the cost. Interviewees from some TCCs mentioned that they would be reluctant to provide MUHs to the UN unless

command and control of those assets changes.

This lack of trust has more to do with command-and-control processes and decision making than with the quality of civilian helicopters and aerial medical evacuation teams (AMETs)—though some interviewees suggested that UN helicopter operators are not always up to what they consider minimum standards. As a result, in MINUSMA, all European TCCs in Gao have made direct bilateral arrangements for casevac with the Canadian helicopter task force or the French Operation Barkhane, and all European TCCs have a bilateral arrangement with the EU training mission's German-provided level II hospital in Koulikoro. In MINUSCA, although Portugal relies on the mission's helicopters for casevac, Portuguese interviewees said they found the process too slow and burdensome and the role of the director of mission support problematic (see Box 1). Similarly, a European contingent commander in MINUSMA said, "We trust the civilian AMETs but do not trust the launch authority and mission air ops in between.... We have no trust in the 'white fleet' AMET because they are too slow to move." Another interviewee based in the capital of a European TCC emphasized the "need to have confidence that what the UN says it will deliver will actually be there on the ground and not only on paper." This was less an issue for the UK in UNMISS since it had its own level II field hospital.

Box 1. Casevac arrangements for Portuguese operations in Bambari

In January 2019, 135 of the 180 personnel from the Portuguese quick-reaction force (QRF) in MINUSCA were deployed to dislodge an armed group from Bambari (the Union for Peace in CAR). The QRF achieved this objective after five hours of combat during which more than twenty rebels were killed and many others wounded, according to press reports. In order for the Portuguese QRF to accept this level of risk, it had asked the mission to preposition an MUH AMET nearby for the duration of the operation, something the mission eventually agreed to after assessing the cost.

While the Portuguese have been more willing to accept risk than other European TCCs, such medical guarantees have been critical. Despite Portugal reinforcing the medical capabilities of its own unit, it relies on the MUH units of other TCCs (Pakistan and Sri Lanka) for casevac (but will send its own aircraft from Portugal for strategic medical airlift of Portuguese soldiers). While Portugal has confidence in MINUSCA's Serbian level II hospital and in the AMETs, interviewees raised questions about the process of authorizing casevac, which it characterized as too slow with too many people involved. For example, Portuguese military officers in Bangui described an incident when a private was wounded and a detailed email had to be sent and other steps taken, with the helicopter only deployed the next day.

Beyond casevac, another challenge in MINUSMA is quickly tasking helicopters to take weapons investigation teams to sites immediately following IED attacks to preserve and exploit the evidence and use it to disrupt future attacks. This does not always happen due to the slow decision-making process, limiting the mission's ability to proactively prevent the planting of IEDs. To overcome this challenge, the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and the mission started training explosive ordnance disposal units in Mali to exploit basic evidence, but these do not provide the same quality of information as weapons investigation teams.

While the command and control of helicopters was a major concern among interviewees at UN headquarters (mostly military advisers), it did not have the same resonance in MINUSMA or in the capitals of European TCCs. To them, the situation was irritating but manageable. One official from a European TCC even suggested that the issue was overblown, saying, "At the end of the day it does not matter who controls helis as long as [the] injured get casevac.... There is no empirical evidence that there is a problem, so take the emotion out of it. The UN has professional air asset managers."

Generally speaking, the more volatile the mission environment, the more difficult it is for European TCCs to cede control of their contingents to a commander of another nationality. In these cases, contingents sometimes contact their respective capitals before responding to sensitive commands that could violate their rules of engagement or other *modi operandi*. On the other hand, European TCCs have greater confidence in UN command and control when staff officers from other Western countries are present at a mission's force headquarters and at the sector level. Staff officers from NATO countries in particular work well together due to their shared experience in Afghanistan and adherence to common standards. In MINUSMA and MINUSCA, for instance, the force chief of staff, deputy chief of staff for operations, and chiefs of the U3 and U5 branches have always been from European TCCs. US staff officers were also present for a while as mentors in MINUSMA's force headquarters and some of its sector headquarters, which was well received by European TCCs.

While these Western staff officers have helped these missions—notably with their experience as planners—they rely on NATO standards that they then seek to adjust to UN standards, using military thought processes not necessarily in line with the UN's civilian-led system. It was apparent that most European TCCs do not understand UN civilian systems (notably for aviation). They often do not understand that the role of a mission is to support a political process, and therefore decision making will not be based on military logic alone. What European TCCs do understand in stark terms is that they cannot compromise their duty to care for their deployed personnel.

Inadequate Medical Guarantees

The point was made repeatedly that the greatest barrier to entry for European TCCs to peacekeeping is the UN's inability to guarantee the highest level of medical support; several interviewees even noted that it was the only real problem they had with the UN. All interviewees indicated that medical support that adheres to the 10-1-2 rule—enhanced first aid within ten minutes followed by enhanced field care within one hour and damage-control surgery and acute medicine within two hours—is a prerequisite for deployment to UN missions. Any shortfall in medical capabilities that results in poorer patient outcomes during deployment to UN missions can have an adverse impact on public support for missions, leading to domestic political consequences (see Box 2). At the same time, when European contingents are unable to operate in certain areas due to a mission's noncompliance with the 10-1-2 rule, they experience lower morale and a damaged reputation with other TCCs that leave their camps and sometimes sustain casualties.

One development that could help mitigate these concerns is the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), launched by the European Council in December 2017 to improve cooperation on defense among participating EU member states. As part of this effort, the European Medical Command will allow the EU to coordinate military medical resources.¹⁵ It is designed to ensure efficient, EU-wide management of scarce European medical

15 PESCO Projects, "European Medical Command," available at <https://pesco.europa.eu/project/european-medical-command/>.

Box 2. The political risks of medical support: Swedish and Dutch deployments in Mali

The Swedish deployment to MINUSMA is a case in point of European concerns over deploying to UN missions without medical guarantees. These concerns were continuously raised in the Swedish parliament when extending the country's deployment to MINUSMA, because parliamentarians wanted to make sure a "medical umbrella" was in place. Given that Sweden had low confidence in the medical support provided by MINUSMA in Timbuktu, it brought its own forward surgical and resuscitation teams, in addition to a level I+ field hospital attached to its ISR task force. During Operation Folon I in central Mali in February 2019, the Swedish ISR task force brought along its two forward teams, effectively creating a two-hour radius for acute medical care around Mopti. Its force still has operational limitations, however, as it can only treat three casualties at a time.

The Dutch deployment to MINUSMA demonstrates the political risks of medical guarantees. The Dutch defense minister resigned in October 2017 following a report from the Dutch Safety Board on the deaths of two soldiers due to an accidental mortar explosion in Kidal in July 2016. The board found that the military had been using old mortar rounds bought in 2006, one of which had exploded inside the mortar tube despite being loaded correctly. The report also noted that while a third injured soldier had received satisfactory emergency treatment on site, he was later transferred to a Togolese level II hospital in Kidal that met UN standards but apparently not Dutch national military guidelines. Although the Dutch special operations land task group (SOLTG) had previously been able to go further away from Gao, bringing along its own advanced medical team (the only European unit to spend days at a time in Sector North), this incident effectively reduced the Dutch operational radius to eighty-four miles. Following this incident, the Dutch and other European TCCs rented their own Dash plane for medical evacuation and troop rotation so they would not have to rely on the UN mission.

services and is expected to enhance the interoperability and coherence of healthcare capabilities in Europe and lay the foundation for the effective generation of medical forces. As it matures, this command could help satisfy the UN requirement for first-class medical units.

Lack of Professional Peacekeeping Intelligence

Intelligence, which was a taboo word in the UN for a long time, has increasingly become a requirement for European TCCs to deploy. However, the All Sources Information Fusion Unit (ASIFU), an intelligence unit in MINUSMA deployed by European TCCs, contributed to growing acceptance among member states of the necessity of professional intelligence in UN missions operating in high-risk environments. There is now broader recognition that intelligence is needed not only to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers but also to enhance missions' situational awareness and inform their operations and activities related to the protection of civilians.

Another challenge is the gap between the technology-heavy ISR (see Box 3) and the human intelligence gathered by other parts of the mission, including African TCCs, which benefit from better command of French and local languages but whose military units often lack adequate structures for tactical intelligence or intelligence training. To fill this gap, Sweden, for instance, has been continuously providing intelligence training to personnel from other TCCs in its sector.

The first UN peacekeeping intelligence policy, issued in 2017 and revised in 2019, highlights that peacekeeping-intelligence analysis should be a whole-of-mission process that includes the military and police components. This is partly why the stand-alone ASIFU, which was military-only and had refused to integrate non-NATO intelligence officers, was restructured into the mission's U2 branch following a UN review of MINUSMA's peacekeeping-intelligence architecture (see Box 4). One of the challenges is now to develop a professional U2 that can adequately task the mission's intelligence assets (out of 160 officers in

Box 3. Sweden's intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance task force in Timbuktu

Sweden's intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) task force in Timbuktu has been able to operate as far out as 120 kilometers from the city, including overnight, which has allowed the mission to gather information on local dynamics. From the Swedish perspective, serving in the task force has been a good professional experience for junior leaders and staff officers.

A lesson learned by the Swedish, however, is the need to build relationships within the UN system and to integrate military and civilian personnel. A major concern is the absence of good structural relationships between the mission's U2 branch (which has access to the mission's Thales drones) and the Swedish ISR task force. As a result, the task force undertakes many initiatives without guidance from U2. Another challenge for the Swedish task force has been adapting to the diverse cultural environment of the super camp in Timbuktu, which includes contingents from thirteen countries.

The ISR task force also seems and feels underused. As one Swedish member of the task force put it, "We are almost doing the same as the Swedish QRF was doing in Liberia [i.e., long-range patrols]. Given the tasks at hand, an infantry company with supporting parts could have managed with half of the personnel; the intel products would not have been as advanced, but the UN seems happy with low-level intel." Sweden brought home its signals intelligence capability at the end of 2017 because it was not useful. While its long-range unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) proved useful for conducting reconnaissance before operations, it was also brought home at the end of 2018 because there were not enough personnel to continue operating it (MINUSMA replaced it with a similar commercial UAV).

Box 4. Lessons learned from the All Sources Information Fusion Unit (ASIFU)

The UN undertook a lessons-learned exercise in December 2015 to examine the enhanced role of military intelligence in MINUSMA, and particularly the deployment and operation of the All Sources Information Fusion Unit (ASIFU). The internal UN report found that this enhanced intelligence architecture offered new capacities that were critical to the mission operating safely and effectively in a high-tempo threat environment. However, the intelligence generated by ASIFU and related assets was of limited benefit to the mission due to issues related to the unit's lack of integration into the mission structure; information classification, ownership, and sharing; levels of focus and analysis; and tasking relationships.

The report recommended a more integrated organization for military intelligence, with ASIFU's capacities merged with the U2 branch and moved into a Military All Sources Information Cell. However, the recommendation that ISR companies commanded by ASIFU come under the command of sector commanders to improve the provision of timely operational and tactical intelligence where it is needed most was not followed. At the mission level, the report recommended how to make the mission intelligence and analysis cycle more efficient and effective, particularly by strengthening the Joint Coordination Board.

The Netherlands, which led ASIFU, is currently carrying out its own lessons-learned exercise, conscious of the fact that ASIFU was designed for medium- or long-term forecasting to support the planning and conduct of operations when MINUSMA increasingly required tactical intelligence for force protection—something U2 was not able to do. One of the lessons the Netherlands seems to have taken away is that if it had to do it again, it would instead focus on the whole peacekeeping-intelligence chain, reinforcing it at key levels (including the tactical level) and better integrating military and civilian intelligence.

MINUSMA's U2, only about 50 percent are said to have formal intelligence training). Toward this end, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the UK have been providing funding and expertise to the development of a UN Military Peacekeeping-Intelligence Handbook and Peacekeeping Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Handbook.

Overall, MINUSMA represents a great leap forward for UN peacekeeping intelligence, but continued progress in this area will be needed if the UN is to convince more European TCCs to deploy. An official from the UK noted that "increased use of peacekeeping intelligence in operational planning will increase the effectiveness of UK contingents and increase the likelihood of a decision to deploy."

Unclear Tasks and End Dates

European TCCs require both a clear rationale for deploying and for remaining deployed and a clear understanding of tasks their contingents are expected to carry out once in the mission. This is the joint responsibility of the Security Council and the UN Secretariat. A clear understanding of a mission's purpose and tasks is central to all military operations, particularly UN peacekeeping missions operating in uncertain environments where the danger of "task creep" is ever present. Swedish interviewees noted that it is imperative for the UN to explain in detail the rationale for a deployment in advance, particularly in missions that have existed for years.¹⁶ A lack of common understanding of what tasks they are expected to perform can also be frustrating for European contingents after they deploy. In MINUSCA, for example, the mission initially pushed the Portuguese QRF to deploy to the field beyond its clearly stated capability of thirty days. Such a lack of clear tasks or a sense of purpose can turn away European TCCs.

European TCCs also demand a clear end date for their contributions. British interviewees, for example, noted that time-bound commitments (three years, in the case of the UK) provide the UK

more freedom, increasing its ability to deploy. Some TCCs seem to resent political pressure to remain beyond their end date. This was particularly acute with the Netherlands, which some respondents said felt "blackmailed" to keep its helicopter task force in MINUSMA longer if the UN could not secure a replacement for fear of being blamed for failing the mission. As one respondent said, "You should not be punished for leaving when you say you are going to leave." Canada felt pressure to extend the deployment of its helicopter task force beyond one year (for two to three extra months until Romania could replace it) despite domestic political imperatives to withdraw. Canada ultimately extended the deployment by one month to the end of August 2019 and sent a team back to Mali in September to help Romania minimize the gap in medical evacuation.¹⁷ Predictability of deployments is important for most European TCCs to reduce political risk.

Slow UN Processes for Agreeing on Deployments

Entering into agreements with the UN for deploying troops—including letters of assist (LOAs), memoranda of understanding (MOUs), and statements of unit requirements (SURs)—can be a lengthy process, especially when it involves a new concept like the ASIFU or the rotational system for the C-130 in Mali. It can also take longer when a TCC's personnel are new to the UN force-generation process, as is the case with many European countries that lack institutional knowledge due to their long absence from peacekeeping in Africa.

European TCCs' most common criticisms of this process are that it is overly bureaucratic, not transparent, and inflexible. The UN often needs to elevate decisions to the level of the under-secretaries-general of the Department of Peace Operations and Department of Operational Support in New York, as was the case with the Swedish request to upgrade the airstrip in Timbuktu. Some interviewees also lamented that even when these officials show willingness and

¹⁶ A positive example mentioned was the two-pager developed by France explaining the continued relevance of MINUSMA ahead of its 2019 mandate renewal.

¹⁷ "Canada to Send Team back to Mali to Help Romania Minimize Gap in Evacuation," CBC, August 28, 2019.

flexibility to make things happen, this does not always result in follow-up at the operational level. The slowness of the process can have a real operational impact. For instance, the Norwegian C-130 was grounded for ten days upon its arrival in MINUSMA because the MOU/LOA had not yet been finalized, and MINUSMA would not initially let it fly until this was completed.¹⁸

Some European TCCs also lamented the UN's "narrow" approach to certification standards, which limits their ability to find suitable personnel. Contrary to UN requirements, many European armies use non-doctors in some clinical roles (e.g., nurse practitioners, nurse anesthetists, physician assistants) and in command or administrative roles (e.g., medical support officers, medical service corps officers). Similarly, the UN's requirement for pilots to have 1,000 total flight hours has proven problematic for some European TCCs. For example, the Dutch—who have a lower flight-hour requirement but test their pilots' aptitude in different ways—were not able to use their Chinook helicopters to their full capacity because the UN did not deliver the promised waivers.¹⁹ Some also raised the UN's age limit for staff officers as a constraint and took issue with certain standard UN procedures such as the requirement to use breathalyzers on pilots.

Efforts are underway to simplify and rationalize the process for agreeing on LOAs. European TCCs generally welcomed the creation of the Department of Operational Support's Uniformed Capabilities Support Division, which in theory serves as a "one-stop shop" for TCCs. This division handles all engagement with member states, from development of MOUs to deployment of contingents and reimbursement for personnel and contingent-owned equipment. But despite the division's quarterly briefings to TCCs on UN systems and procedures, many officials continue having trouble understanding how the UN functions, notably with regard to reimbursements. Nonetheless, European TCCs have learned from each other and have, for instance, shared the MOUs/LOAs and SURs they have negotiated with the UN to help each other out

and save time.

While UN bureaucracy may account for some of these challenges, it should be kept in mind that the UN has limited capacity and funding, and its bureaucratic rules and strictures have, in large part, been mandated by the same member states that complain about them. Moreover, according to the UN, MOUs/LOAs are often delayed because of TCCs requesting amendments or special treatment, even though the UN has encouraged them to agree to a standard MOU. For example, European TCCs often ask for more flexibility in the standards for contingent-owned equipment and the composition of their units since their armies are not structured along the same lines as those of many other TCCs. Such deviations from the SUR can be agreed to by the UN Office of Military Affairs, endorsed by UN headquarters and mission focal points, and incorporated into the MOU as a deviation table. But since some European TCCs have introduced mission-specific amendments to the standard forms, particularly in terms of rules of engagement and status of forces agreements, the UN Office of Legal Affairs has been brought into some negotiations, delaying the process.

SURs can be changed during the deployment. One example was Portugal's request to reinforce its QRF with twenty additional personnel (an ambulance with medical, intelligence, and civil-military cooperation personnel) after one year. While the UN initially denied this request, the SUR was eventually amended following a political demarche. Many such issues cannot be resolved at the working level and end up going to the level of the undersecretaries-general.

Underuse of Assets and Skills

Another complaint heard from many European TCCs was their inability to utilize their assets fully in UN missions. For example, European TCCs are often suspicious of the UN for favoring fixed-cost contracted aircraft over their expensive military aircraft. A member of the Canadian helicopter task force in MINUSMA suggested that if Canada could

18 For more detail, see Arthur Boutellis and John Karlsrud, "Plug and Play: Multinational Rotation Contributions for UN Peacekeeping Operations," Norwegian Institute of International Affairs and International Peace Institute, 2017.

19 International Peace Institute, "European Contributions to UN Peacekeeping Operations: Lessons Learned and the Way Forward," August 2018.

renegotiate its LOA, it would ask the UN for payment for a set number of hours up-front, which would incentivize the UN to use its MUHs more. That said, they welcomed the fact that the task force has 40 to 100 hours of flying time at its disposal for training, which it can use to fly its own missions.

A related concern is the nature of the tasks given to contingents from European TCCs. Notably, they prefer using their air assets for “military missions” for which they feel they have added value. For example, they prefer using their air assets to transport weapons and explosives, deploy or extract troops, or evacuate casualties rather than to transport goods or civilian staff (see Box 5). This is less of a concern in a context like Mali, however, where the heightened risk of moving by road has led TCCs to consider flying civilians to be a worthwhile contribution. When those deployed are given tasks that fall short of their capabilities, they can also see their skills fade over time. This was an issue raised by UK interviewees in relation to medical personnel in UNMISS, especially during extended deployments.

Similarly, as noted previously, Sweden sees its ISR task force as overly capable for the role it plays in MINUSMA, prompting Sweden to replace it with a lower-capability infantry unit. Likewise, the Netherlands replaced its special operations land task group (SOLTG) with a lower-capability long-range reconnaissance patrol task group (LRRPTG). The LRRPTG apparently worked better and exchanged more information with the rest of the mission—including units from other TCCs—in part because it did not share the same culture of secrecy as the SOLTG.

Overall, European TCCs would like to see the UN

focus more on the desired effect of a capability than on the number of capabilities deployed, particularly when these are high-end, expensive capabilities. A challenge, however, is that while European TCCs want their high-end assets to have an impact on the ground, this impact is not always evident in a UN mission whose goals are primarily political rather than military.

Lack of Proactive and Inclusive Planning

The internal planning cycles of EU and NATO TCCs require planning new deployments at least a year in advance, particularly for specialized capabilities such as medical units, peacekeeping-intelligence units, or helicopters. Advance planning is especially important since NATO increased its commitments in Eastern Europe following Russia’s occupation and militarization of Crimea. Due to the political nature of peacekeeping mandates, however, the UN is rarely in a position to provide a full picture of where new deployments will be needed in the following three to five years.

Nonetheless, awareness of the UN’s need for flexible planning time frames seems to be emerging among Europeans. Moreover, a number of European TCCs have deemed the UN’s organization of force-generation conferences, piloted for MINUSMA in May 2017, a step in the right direction. Such conferences are something these TCCs are familiar with from NATO and the EU (e.g., the indicative contribution meetings NATO organized every six months for the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan). They allow the UN to increase transparency and encourage dialogue and cooperation among like-minded TCCs instead of working with each TCC bilaterally. Some interviewees suggested holding capability-specific force-genera-

Box 5. The Aguelhok casevac: A Canadian success story

One of the deadliest attacks on MINUSMA happened in Aguelhok camp in northern Mali on January 20, 2019, killing ten Chadian peacekeepers and injuring another twenty-five. The Canadian helicopter task force in Gao was quickly notified of the mass casualties. Since Canada had an additional crew at the time (due to the handover period between two rotations), it was able to fly three CH-146 Griffon and two CH-147F Chinook helicopters nonstop between Gao and Aguelhok to deliver water, food, and ammunition and evacuate fifteen wounded soldiers. This showed the added value of MUHs (over civilian helicopters), which can fly even while a firefight is ongoing. According to the commander, this was the day the unit felt most valued and proud, something that was promoted back home in Canada.

tion conferences including only TCCs that possess a certain capability (e.g., the approximately twenty TCCs that currently provide air assets to UN peace operations). However, force-generation conferences are labor-intensive and would probably require additional UN capacities. There are also concerns that, compared to the EU and NATO, the larger membership of the UN would prevent the organization of smaller meetings with frank discussions.

European TCCs also like to feel included in the planning of a mission they will deploy to. Several indicated that the UN military planning process (and the UN mission planning process in general) should allow for more input from member states that may want to contribute capabilities that the UN might not envision in the force requirements and SURs. This could be done through “mission start-up capability planning meetings” that would allow TCCs, at the outset of the mission planning process, to give informal, non-binding indications of capabilities they could contribute and how these would help the mission achieve its mandated tasks. Having European staff officers at UN headquarters and in the mission can also help make these TCCs feel more included in planning.

Difficulty Meeting the Target for Female Peacekeepers

All interlocutors were aware of the imperative to enable the deployment of uniformed female personnel at both headquarters and in the field. European TCCs fully support mainstreaming gender and ensuring the broadest possible participation by women at all levels of UN peacekeeping, both civilian and military and especially among leadership. However, considerable challenges remain to satisfy the 15 percent quota by 2028 as set out by the UN’s 2018 Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy and reaffirmed in the secretary-general’s Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative.

European TCCs, including more expeditionary militaries like the UK, struggle to attract female recruits because most women do not serve in the operational units drawn from for UN missions (see Table 1). For instance, Sweden, a country at the vanguard of implementing Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security has made determined efforts to increase the participa-

tion of women and incorporate gender perspectives into its military. But even in Sweden, military officials believed the targets were challenging and ambitious.

Some TCCs suggested that even though they may not be able to meet the target, they could help other TCCs meet it. For example, through the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations, Canada is supporting Ghana to reach this target. Romania also has a mobile training team for women, peace, and security that it uses in the South-Eastern Europe Brigade, whose military observers and staff officers are 17 percent women; it could use this team in the future to support UN peacekeeping.

Cost Considerations

European TCCs are less motivated by financial concerns or incentives than many other TCCs. At the national level, reimbursement by the UN for financial outlays and troop costs are not of major political significance to many wealthy European nations. When Germany took over Camp Castor, for example, it significantly upgraded the infrastructure at great expense to bring it up to its national standards without expecting reimbursement. Similarly, interviewees from the Netherlands mentioned that recovering costs from the UN in Mali was not initially a concern, though it was welcomed (even if the reimbursement only covered a portion of actual costs). When the Dutch later deployed Chinook helicopters, however, they asked for more than the UN reimbursement rate for typical transport helicopters (Mi-8 or Mi-26); this was a sticking point until the UN accepted the

Table 1. Women serving in TCCs

TCC	Percentage women in national service
Canada	15%
France	15% (only 6.7% in operations abroad)
Sweden	13%
Germany	12%
United Kingdom	11%
Ireland	6 %

higher rate, recognizing that Chinooks have more capabilities.

At the individual level, the bonuses many European countries pay to their troops who deploy to peacekeeping missions do not seem to be a major incentive; as one interviewee noted, “1000-plus dollars a month is no draw” to go into peacekeeping. Individuals are usually motivated to participate in peacekeeping (often by volunteering for deployment) for nonfinancial reasons.

Nonetheless, the UN should be aware that the cost of contributing and sustaining high-end capabilities is not negligible. Interviewees from Sweden mentioned that cost played a big part in the decision to leave Timbuktu and deploy a less costly unit (an infantry company). Following this drawdown, Sweden could not sustain its camp there—a cost of thirty-five million euros a year—or find another TCC to share it with or take it over (in the end, Sweden has offered to donate parts of the camp to MINUSMA as it exits the country).

Insufficient Support for Strategic Communication to Domestic Audiences

Interviewees from European TCCs indicated that their domestic audience—people, parliament, and government officials—had to be prepared for them to deploy to and sustain engagement in peacekeeping operations. Some suggested that the UN could do more to help them communicate the benefits of participation in peacekeeping prior to deployment to make their political path easier. Interviewees from Sweden noted that the UN should provide more than “a soundbite or tweet”; it should demonstrate how a country’s peacekeepers, together with its financial and other contributions, could help the mission fulfill its mandate and how they would make a difference on the ground. Unlike the secretary-general’s periodic reports aimed at Security Council members, this communication should be directed at a domestic audience.

It was also suggested that senior UN leaders have an important role to play not only in encouraging politicians to contribute to a mission but also in reminding them of the benefits of participation in peacekeeping after they have deployed.

Interviewees from Portugal, for instance, shared that positive, public messaging from the UN regarding the Portuguese contribution to MINUSCA has been well-received and is an incentive to continue contributing. Such messaging can also help with recruitment drives when countries are facing difficulty getting youth to join the military. The UK is working to ensure the electorate understands the value of the country’s contribution to UNMISS and to build support within the Ministry of Defence, including through a ceremony for UN peacekeepers at Whitehall in May 2019. Ireland also has a robust strategy to sustain public support for peacekeeping (see Box 6).

Support from the UN for such messaging is helpful because it is costly and complicated for TCCs to send their own media teams. Several interviewees mentioned that they would welcome edited video footage, written narratives, or other material from the UN that they could use to communicate better at home. Short of UN support, however, many European TCCs have used their own communication teams. These teams, however, sometimes send mixed messages about the mission’s mandate and the situation on the ground, focusing on the danger facing troops and often emphasizing counterterrorism when it is not a part of the mission’s mandate.

UN Assessment of the European Engagement in Peacekeeping in Africa

At a geopolitical level, the value added by European TCCs and Canada is not disputed. These countries rapidly deploy not only military capabilities but also political, diplomatic, financial, economic, and informational resources. But European TCCs are also high-maintenance, giving rise to the question: Are European contributions worth the UN’s investment of effort? This section focuses on how the UN Secretariat assesses European military contributions to peacekeeping in Africa.

Operational Limitations

The first issue that usually comes up when discussing European TCCs with UN staff is the fact that they are risk-averse and, relatedly, have

Box 6. Ireland's communications strategy to increase support for peacekeeping

Keeping the domestic population invested is central to consolidating support for foreign deployments of blue helmets. To that end, the Irish Defence Forces have developed a national communications strategy through which they keep civil society and the government informed of their actions and the rationale behind them. First, the Defence Forces ensure that the pre-deployment training of troops receives regular attention in the national media. Second, the minister of defense reviews units departing for UN duty (or duty in EU or NATO missions) in high-profile public places or the towns from which the troops are drawn. Third, the return of the troops, in particular their reunions with their families, receives planned media coverage that also highlights the mission context and the role of the Irish Defence Forces.

This contributes to the general population's sense of ownership of Irish peacekeepers, and over time Ireland's engagement in UN peacekeeping operations has become a source of national pride. This is particularly the case with the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), where Ireland has been present since 1978. The media frequently interviews Irish force commanders and picks up on references to Irish involvement by the UN secretary-general or under-secretary-general. In 2018, a televised event at Dublin Castle was organized by the Defence Forces at the request of the government to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of Ireland's engagement in peacekeeping with the president and prime minister in attendance.

operational limitations or “caveats.” As European TCCs' capabilities are considered “force assets,” the force commander can theoretically use them in all parts of the mission area. This rarely happens, however, because of operational limitations imposed by TCCs. These limitations have at times called into question the added value of European TCCs' advanced capabilities.

While the value added by European and Canadian contributions is not disputed, these contributions are also high-maintenance. The question is: Are they worth the UN's investment of effort?

According to some interviewees, European contingents in MINUSMA have a “garrison mindset” and are unprepared to venture out of their bases, in part due to concerns about medical support for their peacekeepers. The Swedish ISR task force generally operates within a forty-kilometer radius of Timbuktu, for example, and the German ISR company also reportedly has limited range outside of Gao. As a result, while 128 non-European MINUSMA peacekeepers had been killed in hostile acts as of October 2019, European TCCs have only suffered fatalities from accidents.²⁰

Because of this mindset, European TCCs often check with their capital before following an order,

do their own risk assessments (and ignore those of the UN), and follow their own rules of engagement, particularly for aviation assets. In Mali, for example, European TCCs have on various occasions used their own intelligence to justify raising a “red card” as an excuse not to fly to certain places in their area of operation (NATO terminology for when senior

national representatives of a TCC exert their authority to veto missions or tasks). In such cases, commercial or civilian aviation assets have been used instead. As a senior support staff member in MINUSMA commented, “What level of dignity do you have when civilian aircraft go where military aircraft don't go?” In response, the mission is in the process of reworking its rules of engagement.

MINUSMA's senior leadership specifically lamented that most European TCCs are cantoned in Gao and do not operate in Sector North (Kidal), where they are most needed but where most attacks on the mission take place. The only European force based outside of Gao was the Swedish ISR task

²⁰ UN Peacekeeping, “Fatalities by Mission and Incident Type,” October 31, 2019, available at https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/statsbymissionincidenttype_4_33.pdf.

force, which relocated to central Mali for the duration of Operation Folon I and is currently drawing down. But the ISR task force confessed that it only did this because the force commander was Swedish. It also came with a cost, because the Swedes asked to be airlifted from Timbuktu with their vehicles, while troops from other TCCs go by road. There was also a brief period when Dutch and Danish SOLTG and LRRPTG would go to Sector North, which instilled a sense of pride in these units—notably when they were able to keep belligerent armed groups from fighting each other in Kidal in the summer of 2016 by going back and forth between them. However, convincing these contingents to go to the north took a lot of effort from MINUSMA’s leadership, including engagement with capitals, and they stopped doing so following the Dutch mortar incident.

This risk-aversion reduces the operational visibility of these TCCs and keeps them in a “national/NATO spirit.” In Mali, their reluctance to confront armed groups has also limited the mission’s ability to support the implementation of the peace agreement. As one interviewee noted, while “this may be understandable for some TCCs which do not have stakes in the Malian political process, it is more difficult to understand coming from European TCCs who have a national interest in the stabilization of Mali, particularly if they sit on the [Security] Council.” This risk-aversion can also undermine the security of peacekeepers—since 2016, the UN Secretariat and Security Council have been telling MINUSMA that the best way to enhance the security of peacekeepers is by being more proactive and leaving the camps, a point reiterated in the 2018 Cruz report and by MINUSMA’s current force commander.

Operational challenges have also arisen because of a lack of clarity on command and control. A senior MINUSMA support person said the mission initially had some difficulties with the Canadian helicopter task force because its personnel had not read the MOU and therefore thought they could only be tasked by the force commander and could fly “non-MINUSMA missions”: “At times they are

not reliable when we most need them.” Similarly, during the first years of MINUSMA, the Dutch SOLTG often monopolized the Dutch helicopter task force, which was intended to be available mission-wide as a force asset (Apache attack helicopters) and mission asset (Chinook transport helicopters).

Several interviewees raised the use of six-month rotation periods for European contingents and staff officers (compared to a year for most other TCCs) as a challenge to continuity and institutional knowledge.²¹ They also noted that the quality and mindset of European and Canadian commanders and their contingents varied from one rotation to the next. Some smaller European TCCs, on the other hand, had to rotate the same soldiers to MINUSMA multiple times over the years, which helped with institutional knowledge, even though it was an issue for TCCs that had limited numbers of specialized troops. An even bigger issue is when European TCCs only deploy for one year, which, in addition to increasing the cost of deployment and repatriation, increases the risk of gaps. Some UN interviewees therefore suggested that if a unit is deployed it should stay for three to seven years, with the exception of expensive air assets (to which the rotation policy for contingent-owned assets does not apply). This would make it important to have collaborative, multinational rotational arrangements to sustain such air capabilities.

Differences in Treatment

Another source of frustration for the UN is that European and Canadian contingents are sometimes treated differently than contingents from other TCCs. In MINUSMA, this view is reinforced by their different force protection requirements. In most missions, they also refuse to paint any of their vehicles or aircraft white, even though this is mandatory for all other TCCs (the exception is the Portuguese, who painted their vehicles white after the issue was raised in a report from the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services in 2016). This feeds a narrative and perception of “green versus white.”

²¹ The General Assembly decided that a twelve-month rotation period should be considered for reimbursement purposes. It also noted, however, that the establishment of a typical rotation period for contingent personnel did not infringe upon the authority of contributing countries to decide on the frequency of rotation for their units deployed to UN peacekeeping missions. UN General Assembly Resolution 67/261 (June 6, 2013), UN Doc. A/RES/67/261.

The evolution of “gated communities” or “camps within camps” is a similar concern. While every TCC has its own areas or camp within a MINUSMA super camp, European TCCs gate their camps to satisfy their particular security concerns, effectively segregating themselves from the mission. Examples include the Swedish camp in Timbuktu, which requires special yellow identity cards to enter, even for UN staff with a UN ID, as well as in Camp Castor in Gao, where most European TCCs and Canada are located and which has its own security protocol. As a result, there have been instances when sector commanders and civilian heads of office and mission support have not been allowed to enter these camps. This creates a division between European TCCs and the rest of the mission, limiting interaction, information sharing, and coordination. As one senior UN staff member in Gao put it, “You cannot be in the system and outside of the system.”

This segregation also has negative implications for the security of MINUSMA camps, as European TCCs bunker and secure only their own camps when there is an attack on a MINUSMA camp in its entirety. During the complex attack on MINUSMA’s super camp in Timbuktu in April 2018, which lasted four hours with a number of assailants managing to enter, the Swedish contingent reportedly took Swedish staff officers to its camp within the camp until the attack was over (the Swedish sector commander, however, decided to stay with UN colleagues in the super camp). French soldiers from Operation Barkhane and some UN staff from the Department of Safety and Security ultimately fought off the assailants. In the case of this attack and others, European TCCs subsequently collected battle-scene evidence but never gave it to the mission laboratory (managed by UN police) or the Malian police. Such attacks also raise a bigger issue: European TCCs’ lack of trust in other TCCs providing effective security for the outer perimeter and gates of the camp.

Another recurring issue is European TCCs’ reluctance to comply with UN rules and regulations on investigating incidents involving their own contingents. European TCCs always immediately send home the soldiers involved, preventing investigation. Such incidents are also difficult to investigate because some of these European TCCs

rent civilian cars for their staff officers and police instead of using white UN vehicles, making them not easily identifiable as UN personnel.

Well-Trained, Well-Equipped Contingents

UN personnel interviewed also noted the many positive operational contributions of European TCCs. They all deploy professional, well-trained, and well-equipped contingents and staff officers. This is one of the reasons they are often held to a higher standard than other TCCs and therefore subject to some of the criticisms listed above; UN leadership and other TCCs know that if these TCCs had different mindsets and political direction, they could do more for the mission, as demonstrated by the Portuguese unit in CAR. One interviewee said of the Portuguese QRF, “They are highly professional, trained to fight, and have a very good mindset.” This also helps lift the standards of other units around them, which tend to benefit from interactions with highly trained, professional militaries (this is less the case in MINUSMA, where European contingents are more isolated).

Technology is another added value of European TCCs, which have deployed state-of-the-art ISR capabilities (including UAVs and signals intelligence, in some cases) and air assets equipped with sophisticated sensors and weapons systems. Some technologies have been more useful than others, however. Modern attack helicopters are clearly a plus, and the Dutch Apache attack helicopters, for instance, provided valuable images to MINUSMA and deterred armed groups. German Tiger helicopters, on the other hand, were limited by their shorter range. Both long-range and shorter-range UAVs has been unanimously welcomed, even though they regularly could not be launched quickly enough to respond to attacks, and the images they captured would be sent to capitals first, with analytical products only made available to the mission later. And while radar brought by Sweden to Timbuktu to detect the launch of mortars and rockets proved more effective than the radar contracted by MINUSMA, signals intelligence capabilities brought by some contingents do not seem to have been useful to the mission, partly due to limited distribution and analysts’ lack of language skills.

In addition to bringing air assets that are critical for moving safely in an environment like Mali, European TCCs have also brought vehicles that are more adapted to the terrain than those of other TCCs. For instance, the Swedish contingent's mine-resistant, four-wheel drive, light armored vehicles (South African Denel RG-32 Scouts) and all-terrain, six-wheel drive quads (Polaris Sportsmans) have enabled it to go further into the desert than the heavier armed personnel carriers used by African TCCs. Similarly, the Dutch SOLTG and LRRPTG used lighter armored vehicles (Mercedes G280CDIs, Thales Bushmasters, and KMW Fenneks), which are able to operate better off-road and therefore better avoid IED or mine attacks. As a senior UN civilian staff member in Timbuktu put it, "We need exactly what the Swedes have, which gives us the ability to get out and to talk to people."

Money and Political Capital

Many interviewees emphasized that the contributions of European TCCs should be seen not solely in terms of their military capabilities but also in terms of their financial and political support to the mission's mandate. In Mali, European TCCs provide financial support not only through development aid but also through contributions to the MINUSMA Trust Fund (see Table 2). These funds contribute to the mission's mandate to support the peace process, restore state authority, and implement community projects. Some more directly support the mission itself or even the work of a country's own contingents. For example, Germany funded a \$14 million project to rehabilitate the airport's runway in Gao, something MINUSMA had struggled to get funding for through the Fifth Committee. This runway now saves the mission money by allowing direct flights to Gao to rotate personnel. Similarly, the Netherlands supported a \$4 million project to help merge ASIFU with U2.

Mission personnel welcomed these contributions to the trust fund during a budget crunch in New York. The trust fund also makes it easier to ensure coherence with other kinds of funding, such as the

mission's quick-impact projects or projects of the UN country team, by coordinating all donations through the MINUSMA Stabilization and Recovery Unit. In addition, many European contingents have separate funding to support civil-military cooperation. This funding can be problematic, however, if it is not well-coordinated with the work of the mission, particularly as some actors may see it as threatening the humanitarian space (especially civil-military cooperation activities related to health and education).

In addition to money, European TCCs bring added political weight and legitimacy to a mission. The political capital that comes with a contribution by a European TCC is difficult to quantify, since many of these countries are already politically involved in the country through their embassy. In Mali, though, it is clear that they help keep attention on MINUSMA in both Brussels and New York (all the more so when these countries are serving on the Security Council). Although MINUSMA is overwhelmed with visitors, its leadership generally welcomes visits by European politicians and ministers of defense and foreign affairs, who can then convey messages back home and in international fora (visits to field offices outside Bamako tend to be more problematic because the flights and security draw on mission resources). Some interviewees noted, however, that European countries do not use their political leverage enough to encourage the Malian government to implement

Table 2. Contributions to MINUSMA Trust Fund since 2013 (millions of US dollars)²²

Germany	30.0
Denmark	12.0
Netherlands	9.3
Canada	9.0
Belgium	3.0
Sweden	2.8
Norway	1.6

22 MINUSMA, internal document.

the peace agreement.

The commitment of European TCCs to peacekeeping in contexts affected by terrorism also raises some issues. Some UN interviewees suggested European TCCs should be clear that if they are deploying with a peacekeeping mission, they should fully support the implementation of its mandate with adequate units and mindsets and be clear, especially with domestic audiences, that its mandate does not include counterterrorism. A TCC's simultaneous or subsequent deployment to MINUSMA and the French Operation Barkhane (as the UK did and others may do) also raises legal and operational issues and could undermine perceptions of the mission as an impartial actor. As one member of the MINUSMA senior leadership put it, "You are here under a multilateral umbrella, so you need to look and act UN."

The Experience of Other TCCs: Not So Bad After All

Despite the challenges discussed above, feedback from non-European TCCs on European TCCs has generally been positive. Some African TCCs in Mali lament that European TCCs are too risk-averse and do not operate in Sector North, but they generally understand the imperative to satisfy the political concerns of their capitals and public opinion by avoiding casualties through different force protection measures.

Regular Interactions, but a Sense of Disgruntlement

There is no question that European contingents in MINUSMA need to learn to cooperate better with other TCCs in the field, as Portugal has done in MINUSCA and the UK has in UNMISS.

Nonetheless, interviewees from African and Asian TCCs in Gao and Timbuktu revealed that they interact, exchange information, and collaborate extensively with European contingents on an informal basis. This happens even when the latter are "force assets" that respond directly to the force

Non-European contributors lament that European countries are too risk-averse but generally understand the imperative to satisfy the political concerns of their capitals and public opinion.

commander in Bamako rather than to sector commanders. For example, non-European personnel get invited to play soccer with Europeans at Camp Castor. They indicated that a less segregated setup would not change things much since "we have the phone number of the Canadians if we need them." Canada's regular flight to Dakar has also helped the Senegalese battalion at times, and the Canadians have worked with the Chinese level II hospital in Gao to develop bilingual documents.

That said, although interviewees from African TCCs did not mention this directly, a number of senior MINUSMA staff reported a growing sense of disgruntlement. African TCCs feel that European TCCs do not take risks—particularly because they are not present in Sector North—and get special treatment, including key staff officer positions. One example was an African contingent operating in Kidal protesting "because it no longer wanted to take orders from white [force headquarters]" and did not feel the UN treated it equally. In the past, other contingents such as the Chadians have threatened to leave Sector North because no other TCC wanted to join or relieve them.

Helicopters and UAVs: Useful but Seldom Available

The most often cited positive contribution of European TCCs is the air coverage provided by their helicopters, which reassure convoys and patrols whenever they see them flying overhead.

They also welcomed information from UAVs in advance of convoys and patrols when it is provided. The problem is that European TCCs rarely share intelligence and never guarantee air support or reconnaissance from UAVs in advance (apparently due to secrecy), so other contingents

only know at the last moment whether they will receive support. The Bangladeshi battalion had only received MD-500 helicopter support once in eleven months, and the Senegalese battalion indicated that it only got UAV support once every three times it requested it. Two-way communica-

tion between non-European units on the ground and European or Salvadoran helicopters also remains a challenge. Because they do not see peacekeeping-intelligence products, many TCCs feel European ISR assets are mainly working for the force commander directly and are not that useful.

The one exception cited has been the work done by the Swedish ISR task force during operation Folon I, which helped provide advance tactical peacekeeping intelligence (such as full mapping of villages) and reassured other TCCs before they moved into villages in central Mali. The Burkinabé contingent in Timbuktu indicated that cooperation with the Swedish ISR task force had improved greatly since 2015, making it safer.

Capacity-Building Support: A Welcome Contribution

Many interviewees from African TCCs had benefited from training provided by European countries and the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) before their deployment, such as the counter-IED training provided by UNMAS, Ireland, and the US to Burkina Faso. Such trainings have improved the capacity of less developed TCCs to counter IEDs and remove exploded ordnance, making them “feel safer.” Many TCCs also benefit from training by European mobile training teams (MTTs) upon arrival in the mission. For example, a Swedish MTT recently provided training in buddy first aid and base and convoy protection to African TCCs in Timbuktu. Interviewees from the Netherlands suggested MTTs would also be needed to train infantry battalions on tactical peacekeeping intelligence.

Feedback on both pre-deployment trainings and MTTs is generally positive. However, some African and Asian TCCs are sensitive about receiving training in-mission because they think it may suggest they are not fit for the task or reveal some weaknesses in front of other TCCs. There are also different cultural approaches to training. For example, the Chadians have been reluctant to receive training from Europeans because they view

themselves as warriors who do not require it. Nonetheless, since Sweden has a contingent on the ground and first-hand knowledge of the operational environment, its MTT has been better received than those from countries that do not have contingents deployed in Mali. Language is also an issue since most countries contributing to MINUSMA are francophone. In addition to the pushback from some TCCs, the UN itself has not been very keen on using MTTs in-mission since this can distract from operations, and TCCs are supposed to be already trained when they arrive.

Most interviewees also insisted that training (whether pre-deployment or in-mission) needs to be supplemented by the donation of equipment, such as first-aid kits and IED-detection equipment. TCCs generally welcome equipment, provided it is donated to them (so they can be reimbursed for it by the UN as contingent-owned equipment), as with the armored personnel carriers the US provided to several contingents in MINUSMA. Germany’s donation of armored vehicles to contingents and sector commanders (as MINUSMA-owned assets) has been well received by TCCs and has helped to start dispelling the notion of a two-tier mission—“the haves and the have nots”—though much more remains to be done. European TCCs could also learn from the UK’s cooperation with Vietnam, to which it handed over its hospital in UNMISS, as well as Portugal’s work to improve interoperability with Senegalese helicopters and Bangladeshi, Nepalese, and Rwandan troops.

One major challenge with donating equipment is that maintenance tends to quickly become an issue if TCCs have not been properly trained and outfitted with sufficient spare parts. They often receive equipment that has no commercial market or established supply chain in their own country or the mission area. Most European countries are also unwilling or unable to purchase military equipment for other TCCs or only purchase small equipment such as combat first-aid kits, flak jackets, and helmets (as Germany is buying for Chadian peacekeepers). The US, for instance, is one of the only countries to donate armored personnel carriers.²³

23 The US has provided several mine-proof vehicles to African TCCs and helped prepare the Romanian and Salvadoran helicopters for deployment to MINUSMA.

How to Keep European TCCs Better Engaged Over the Next Five Years

As the UN continues to encourage the sustained engagement of European TCCs in peacekeeping, it needs to ensure these countries are engaging where they are most needed and can have the most positive impact, whether directly as part of UN peacekeeping missions or in support of other TCCs. This will require the UN to engage with European capitals more strategically and to be more up-front with European TCCs about the types of contributions and mindset required for them to have a meaningful impact. It will demand continuous building of European TCCs' trust in the UN system, which will require adjusting some policies and procedures and implementing them at headquarters and in the field.

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Innovative Models That Could Make It Easier for Europeans to Engage

European TCCs, Canada, and other countries are increasingly looking at innovative models for addressing some of their current concerns.

Rotational Arrangements: Appealing, but Difficult within the EU Framework

Given how critical it is for all European TCCs to know the end date and have an exit strategy when they engage with a UN mission, rotational arrangements are appealing to them, particularly to smaller TCCs. The Irish-led proposal from the defense ministers of Ireland, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Sweden on increasing the contributions of EU member states to UN peacekeeping has raised the political profile of such arrange-

ments.²⁴ It suggests developing an informal information-sharing and planning tool that interested EU member states could use to plug into, rotate with, or piggyback on other TCCs.

The biggest challenge with rotational arrangements is that they require a lead TCC to play the time-consuming and expensive role of a framework country, something few countries are willing to do. The only example of a TCC-led rotational arrangement in a peacekeeping mission in Africa to date was not done within the EU framework but was instead led by Norway, which was willing to spearhead the multinational rotation contribution

(MRC) of a C-130 aircraft to MINUSMA. Norway built and maintained the camp where the aircraft is based with nine staff (and paid for it until the UN developed a separate statement of unit requirement in coordination with Norway). Norway's partner countries (Belgium, Denmark, Portugal, and Sweden) rotated their C-

130s for an average of six months each, including flight crews, support staff, force protection, and in some cases national support elements. The initial full rotation of three years was renewed for a second rotation to last through 2021. Lessons from this arrangement were captured in a detailed study in 2017 (see Box 7).²⁵

Joint Deployments between Europeans and Other TCCs

Another model that is attractive to many European TCCs, especially smaller ones, is joint deployments. This model has been used in peacekeeping for many years already, mostly with units from European and South American states. A 2015 study identified four types of such partnerships, which differ based on their command structure and the degree of integration of the operational sub-units:²⁶

- Attached: an independent operational unit

²⁴ Irish Department of Defence, "Food for Thought on Increasing Contribution of EU Member States to UN," November 20, 2018.

²⁵ Boutellis and Karlsrud, "Plug and Play."

²⁶ Donald C. F. Daniel, Paul D. Williams, and Adam C. Smith, "Deploying Combined Teams: Lessons Learned from Operational Partnerships in UN Peacekeeping," August 2015.

working alongside and under the operational command of a larger unit from another country

- Embedded: troops integrated with existing operational units of another country to form mixed units
- Co-deployed: distinct operational units operating under a multinational command structure involving officers from both countries
- Composite: troops from two or more countries in binational or multinational mixed units that serve under a multinational command structure

Joint deployments offer different benefits to different European TCCs but are a draw for most of them. Such partnerships allow smaller TCCs to deploy when they could not necessarily do so alone, as in the case of Belgium's two helicopters and ISR platoon deployed as part of the German ISR task

force (to benefit from German logistics and maintenance) or small numbers of Danish and Czech special forces deployed as part of the larger Dutch special operations land task group (SOLTG). They allow larger TCCs to delegate force protection tasks, as Germany did with Lithuania and the Netherlands did with the Czech Republic, or tasks they may not be willing or able to carry out themselves, as Germany did with the Dutch long-range reconnaissance patrol as it took over from the larger Dutch task force in Gao.

While most of these joint deployments are based on longstanding bilateral arrangements (including joint training) between these European countries, some can be an opportunity to develop relationships with newer European contributors. This was arguably the case with the Norwegian-Serbian level II hospital in the UN Mission in CAR and Chad (MINURCAT), which paved the way for Serbia's

Box 7. Lessons from the C-130 multinational rotation contribution in MINUSMA

- The lead nation or the UN itself should include a significant infrastructure component, such as hangars or accommodations, as part of any multinational rotation contribution (MRC), whereas troops and equipment should come and go as new TCCs rotate in and out.
- MRCs should be planned and coordinated based on a statement of unit requirement (SUR) prepared by the UN Office of Military Affairs and good knowledge of operational and technical capabilities offered by partner countries, including rotation durations and operational limitations.
- Longer rotations for each country in the arrangement are desirable (at least six months for a C-130, longer for other assets).
- Since regional organizations like the EU, the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) already have economic and political ties to groups of small, like-minded contributing countries, it can be easier for them to assemble MRCs as a single, sustainable contribution.
- MOU/LOA negotiation processes should be mainstreamed; it would be desirable to develop a "joint negotiation model" whereby MRC partner countries could negotiate as one with the UN to limit transaction costs while still signing separate MOUs and LOAs.
- The UN should consider playing a greater role in "matchmaking" among TCCs for MRCs by identifying partner countries once a lead country has come forward.²⁷
- MRCs should be considered only in instances where the specific military capability could not have been generated for a longer period through other means.
- Other MRC models should be explored, such as using TCC-provided or UN-procured infrastructure and equipment and rotating military personnel only from partner countries.

²⁷ This recommendation is revised from the original study.

current deployment to MINUSCA (where it is contributing equipment to a UN-provided medical facility). Such arrangements can help newer European TCCs gain experience with UN peacekeeping.

Several interviewees suggested it would be most useful to have joint deployments between European and African TCCs, as the latter possess language skills that Europeans often lack but have less training and equipment. Although few European TCCs have been willing to consider this option due to concerns about duty of care and command and control, the UK expressed interest (including in joint pre-deployment trainings with non-European TCCs deploying to the same mission). In general, European TCCs need to find a *modus operandi* for working closer together with African TCCs.

Triangular Partnerships

European countries already provide extensive pre-deployment training to several non-European TCCs. While welcomed, this training is not always well coordinated, accompanied by the provision of equipment, or followed up with mentoring. However, some European interviewees pointed out that their participation in peacekeeping helps them assess the pre-deployment training they have provided to units and personnel from other TCCs that are deployed in the same peacekeeping mission.

One of the best practices in terms of training and equipping was the UK's collaboration with Vietnam on medical care (see Box 8). Interviewees from the UK were the only ones who clearly indicated their interest in further pursuing a "train-

advise-assist-accompany" approach with non-European TCCs, either in peacekeeping missions where they already have contingents deployed or through an operational mentoring liaison team. Another innovative model employed by the UK to support African TCCs was the "UK 70 Team" in Mogadishu (see Box 9).

Europeans could also help units from other TCCs meet the requirements of the UN Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System's rapid deployment level, which would require an investment in both equipment and training. Although much of the focus of pre-deployment training delivered by Europeans has been on sophisticated technical training (such as counter-IED), what is often needed is training on basic soldiering. The German model of focusing its training on TCCs deploying to the five highest-risk peacekeeping missions has been deemed useful. However, European countries face legal and budgetary limitations to providing needed equipment in addition to training.

The UN's Role in Coordinating and Matchmaking

For all three models discussed above—rotational arrangements, joint deployments, and triangular partnerships—a central question is what role the UN should play in helping coordinate among TCCs by matching those in need of support with those that can offer training and equipment. Many European TCCs have repeatedly suggested that the UN play a greater role. The light coordination mechanism set up by the UN in the summer of 2019 to organize trainings for TCCs would seem to be a step in that direction. This would make it easier for European TCCs to know who is training whom and to avoid duplication. However, most

Box 8. The UK's partnership with Vietnam on a level II hospital in UNMISS

The UK's transition of its level II hospital out of Bentiu can be considered a best practice. After reviewing possible partner TCCs to take over, the UK settled on Vietnam, which had never before deployed a hospital to a peacekeeping mission. Over the course of two years, the UK provided the Vietnamese an "advise, assist, and mentor" package. The US provided equipment, and Australia provided language training and flew the Vietnamese medics to UNMISS. Although the handover was delayed, which required the UK to bring in additional medical resources, the clinic continued operating throughout. The Vietnamese officially took command of the hospital in October 2018.

Box 9. The “UK 70 Team” in Mogadishu

From 2016 to 2019, the UK deployed a team of up to seventy military personnel (nicknamed the “UK 70 Team,” though the number of personnel never reached seventy and averaged around forty). This team provided medical, logistical, and engineering support to the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM). Not explicitly requested by the UN, this initiative was part of a broader UK reengagement with Somalia under Prime Minister David Cameron, including the reopening of its embassy in 2013.

This is a unique model, whereby a European TCC was contributing to the UN to support its partnership with a regional organization. The UK contingent was attached to the UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS), a UN office mandated to provide logistical field support to AMISOM, the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), and Somali federal security institutions. Although limited in their movement by security considerations, UK personnel acted as individual mentors shadowing key AMISOM staff officers rather than as a formed unit.

While the experience seems to have been worthwhile for individual UK officers and their African counterparts, the UK has not received much credit from the UN for this hybrid contribution. Lessons from this experience—beyond its logistical aspects—may be worth studying carefully, since this is something the UN may be called on to replicate in support of other African forces.

non-European TCCs do not want their weaknesses to be broadly revealed. Similarly, although European TCCs could make known to the UN what trainings they are able to provide, many of them want to direct these to specific TCCs for political reasons. Therefore, although a clearing-house mechanism would be ideal, this level of transparency seems unrealistic. To equip less developed TCCs to UN standards, the UN tried to launch the concept of equipment-contributing countries at a side event at the May 2017 force-generation conference, but issues such as liability and maintenance have stymied progress.

As for rotational arrangements and joint deployments, the UN has started to play a larger role as it operationalizes the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System, and it often suggests potential partnerships between TCCs. However, it is a national prerogative to choose partner TCCs based on national interests and alliances, and some TCCs might not want to share information on their capabilities, especially when it comes to air assets. Moreover, historically, the UN has disseminated requests to TCCs individually, making it difficult for them to know which other TCCs may be interested in contributing similar capabilities. The UN also may not want to encourage rotational arrangements, which carry higher transactional

costs. Nonetheless, for capabilities in very short supply, the UN’s role in helping to identify and encourage potential lead TCCs and others who could “plug in” to these arrangements could be more acceptable to European TCCs. As one interviewee put it, “We may not see the opportunity; the UN may see it.”

Nine Recommendations for More and Better European Engagement

The following nine recommendations are aimed at overcoming some of the remaining barriers to entry or sustained engagement of European TCCs and Canada in peacekeeping in Africa, as well as at improving their future contributions.

1. Build peacekeeping operations around first-class medical systems

Since medical guarantees remain the main concern of European TCCs, the UN should consider building future peacekeeping operations around at least one high-quality level II or III hospital. For level II hospitals, the UN should seek member-state support to upgrade its standards, which are below those for European level II hospitals (e.g., they cannot conduct CT scans or MRIs). Such upgrades

to hospital equipment would also require professional operators and adequate systems for maintenance and spare parts. Alternatively, missions could contract commercial level II hospitals that meet European standards. Part of the challenge is that upgrading to such equipment would also require professional operators and setting up adequate maintenance and spare-parts systems, which come at a cost.

The UN should also increase missions' medical capabilities as a whole so they adhere to the 10-1-2 rule in all sectors. While military utility helicopters (MUHs) with aerial medical evacuation teams (AMETs) may be a plus, this standard can also be met with professional civilian helicopter AMETs, which are acceptable to most European TCCs. The UN should continue communicating to TCCs the importance of deploying medical staff who are experts in military healthcare at all levels (including doctors, surgeons, and nurses).

The Healthcare Quality and Patient Safety Standards the UN is currently working on should go some way in addressing European concerns about medical guarantees but may take two to three years to have a visible impact. The Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)'s European Medical Command project could also become central to this endeavor to raise UN standards for medical care, and the UN Secretariat should be invited onto the PESCO board as an observer.

2. Focus on improving processes for casualty evacuation

While giving the director of mission support tasking authority for MUHs may not be as problematic as some European TCCs believe, they remain distrustful of UN command-and-control processes, particularly for casualty evacuation (casevac). This seems to be primarily because they perceive the process for approving and deploying civilian or military helicopters as complex and slow.

To overcome this lack of trust, the UN should continue engaging with European and other TCCs to improve implementation of its command-and-control processes and potentially change the casevac or command-and-control policies (both of

which are being reviewed this year). The focus should be on the decision-making process for authorizing casevac, building on some improvements already made. This could include shifting the process to a lower level of decision making and involving fewer people. In any event, the UN needs to dispel the perception among some TCCs that budgetary concerns rather than the safety of peacekeepers drive decisions on tasking helicopters for casevac.

3. Strengthen the UN's capacity to foster partnerships among TCCs

The UN should play a greater role matchmaking among TCCs, particularly for high-end capabilities in short supply (notably air assets). The UN should continue to engage the EU on rotational arrangements but make clear that all costs for these must be up-front and shared by the participating TCCs. These arrangements should also remain open to the participation of non-EU countries (notably Norway and the UK after Brexit).

However, the UN may want to focus most of its efforts on facilitating and encouraging more partnerships between European TCCs and other TCCs. The UN should expand the light coordination mechanism beyond pre-deployment training to include advising, equipping, mentoring, and accompanying. Partnerships between European TCCs and non-European TCCs could be the focus of future force-generation conferences or peacekeeping ministerials. European TCCs could in some cases help other TCCs advance through the UN Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System while also filling gaps in capabilities by deploying jointly or embedding personnel in their contingents.

The overall aim of these partnerships should be to reduce TCCs' dependency on the UN or other partners and enable them to reliably deploy mission-ready contingents across multiple rotations. They should therefore also focus on building national systems for selection, training, lesson learning, and recycling of high performers into future deployments.

4. Engage Europe strategically and politically

Continued high-level engagement by the UN with political leaders in European capitals is essential.

This engagement could benefit from more compelling narratives about how contributions can demonstrate commitment to multilateralism in general and peacekeeping in particular, share the burden of peacekeeping, and serve their national interest. It should also emphasize the importance of political and financial support to specific countries and peacekeeping missions. European TCCs favor such informal confidential discussions over public statements or leaks to the press, which they feel can be counterproductive.

The UN and TCCs can also do much more in terms of public diplomacy to win over European citizens on the importance and value of UN peacekeeping. The UN should put in place a peacekeeping communications strategy for Europe, explaining how specific peacekeeping operations in Africa are making a difference and how they are benefitting or could benefit from advanced contributions from European TCCs. As part of this strategy, UN missions' public information offices should provide video footage and written narratives better explaining the contribution of specific units to the mandate (bringing peace and stability, protecting civilians, etc.) and how they work with other TCCs and the mission's civilian components. When deserved, the UN should also publicly recognize the contributions of European (and other) TCCs to a specific mission.

5. Be flexible and make European TCCs (and others) feel included in planning

The UN should make European TCCs (as well as other interested TCCs) feel part of the planning of the mission, where possible. This requires engaging them at least twelve months before deployment as they begin force preparations. During the planning process, European staff officers in key positions can also reassure European TCCs that their contingents will be properly used.²⁸

Without lowering qualifications, the UN should also be more flexible in terms of statements of unit requirements (SURs) and certification of personnel

(notably of medical personnel) for high-capability European units that may have a slightly different configuration than units from other TCCs. Greater involvement of the peacekeeping mission in negotiating SURs, memoranda of understanding (MOUs), and letters of assist (LOAs) could help in this regard.²⁹ The leaders of both the UN Department of Peace Operations and the UN Department of Operational Support should also make sure their own understanding of and flexibility on some of these issues is effectively translated to the working level, where resistance to change may be greater.

6. Continue educating European TCCs about UN peacekeeping

Much work remains to be done to educate European TCCs about UN peacekeeping and why and how it is different from NATO or EU operations. The UN can do this in part through assessment and advisory visits and pre-deployment visits. Instead of focusing only on verifying equipment and training, these visits could also focus on sensitizing personnel to UN peacekeeping operations and their integrated civilian-military nature, as well as issues surrounding European TCCs' higher consumption of fuel, food, and water. These visits could also build relationships and mutual understanding between the UN (including the mission) and European TCCs to avoid misunderstandings after deployment. TCCs planning to deploy to MINUSMA, for instance, should be aware of the risks and be ready to accept them politically.

Similarly, senior leadership training and induction briefings for European and Canadian force commanders and staff officers should emphasize the integrated civilian-military nature and political orientation of peacekeeping. This could help ensure that these officials do not act as if their military force is a separate entity from the civilian components of the mission and avoid clashes between force commanders and special representatives of the secretary-general. The UN should also

²⁸ It should be noted that the process of selecting staff officers needs to be strengthened, especially for key positions (e.g., force chief of staff, deputy chief of staff for operations, chiefs of the U3 and U5 branches) to include an assessment of both competence and mindset. Staff officers deploying to French-speaking missions should have mandatory pre-deployment language training, if needed. Finally, if European staff officers are allowed to carry side arms in a mission like MINUSMA, staff officers from all TCCs should be similarly equipped.

²⁹ MOUs could also provide for a fixed reimbursement for military air assets, as is done for civilian aircraft.

strive to close the gap between military and civilian peacekeeping intelligence through more efficient and effective systems.

7. Do not limit engagement with European TCCs to high-end capabilities

The UN has been focusing its engagement with European TCCs on high-end capabilities such as air assets, ISR, and special operations forces, but these often exceed the needs of missions. The UN should avoid requesting capabilities that are not needed or would not integrate well with the rest of a mission. A long-range reconnaissance unit, for instance, may be better suited than a “European-type” special operations unit. European infantry companies, engineering units, or medical facilities can make significant contributions to a UN peacekeeping mission and help lift the standards of the whole mission. Such units also tend to be more mobile by land.

8. Ensure European TCCs adhere to UN standards

One issue is a low-hanging fruit for European TCCs: painting their vehicles white and wearing blue helmets and patches—something European TCCs already do in peacekeeping missions in the Middle East but have gotten accustomed to not doing in missions such as MINUSMA. This is important to manage both external perceptions of peacekeepers (particularly when parallel counterterrorism operations are taking place in the same theater) and the peacekeepers of different contingents in the mission.

While it is understandable that European TCCs

want to satisfy their security standards, this should not be at the expense of overall UN camp security. European TCCs must agree that in addition to securing their own camp they are also—like every other TCC in the mission—responsible for the protection of all UN personnel and equipment within the larger UN camp. The practice of using separate ID cards for UN staff entering camps-within-camps should also be banned, and European TCCs should cooperate fully with UN investigations.

Similarly, Europeans cannot use their own rules of engagement and disregard those of the mission. Since rules of engagement can be the subject of legal interpretation, specific situations—particularly those involving armed helicopters—should be discussed and detailed to make sure there is a common understanding between the UN mission and the TCC before a situation arises.

9. Encourage European contributors to commit to longer deployments

While European TCCs have a strong preference to contribute air assets for a limited duration, they should commit to at least three years in a mission. In turn, the UN should give stronger assurances to TCCs that they will not be asked to extend beyond that time frame. Shorter deployments are costly to the UN, increase the risk of gaps, and do not allow European TCCs to learn and adapt. European TCCs should also be encouraged to deploy staff officers for at least a year, and missions should enforce selection standards for critical positions to ensure they are only filled by staff officers who can serve a minimum of ten to twelve months.

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777 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017-3521
USA
TEL +1-212-687-4300
FAX +1-212-983-8246

Freyung 3
1010 Vienna
Austria
TEL +43-1-533-8881
FAX +43-1-533-881-11

51-52 Harbour House
Bahrain Financial Harbour
P.O. Box 1467
Manama, Bahrain
TEL +973-1721-1344