

Contributor Profile: Nepal

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Active armed forces ¹	Helicopters	Defense Budget	Uniformed Peacekeepers	UN Contribution Breakdown	Other Significant Deployments ²
95,750 World Ranking (size): 48 Army 95,750 Paramilitary: 62,000 (15,000 armed police, 47,000 police)	Multi-role: 9 Transport: 3 (1 medium, 2 light)	2012: US\$239m (1.23% of GDP) 2011: \$270m (1.42% of GDP) 2010: \$240m (1.52% of GDP)	4,495 (120 female) (30 June 2013) Ranking: 7 th 4 th largest Asian contributor	MINURSO 4 experts MINUSTAH 507 (145 police, 362 troops) MONUSCO 1,049 (20 experts, 1,029) UNAMI 79 (2 police, 77 troops) UNAMID 678 (18 experts, 297 police, 363 troops) UNIFIL 864 troops UNISFA 1 expert UNMIL 415 (2 experts, 395 police, 18 troops) UNMISS 892 (4 experts, 29 police, 859 troops) UNOCI 3 (2 experts, 1 troops) UNTSO 3 experts	77 troops UNGU-II, Kirkuk, Iraq
Defense Spending / Troop: ³ US\$2,490 (compared to global average of approximately US\$68,000)					

Part 1: Current Trends

Nepal became a member of the United Nations (UN) in 1955 and first contributed military peacekeepers in 1958, sending five observers in the UN Military Observation Group in Lebanon. As of April 2013, Nepal had contributed 94,000 peacekeepers to 43 UN missions overall (see Table 1). Since late 2006 it has consistently provided at least 3,000 or more peacekeepers, making it one of the UN's largest Troop-Contributing Countries (TCC). In recent years Nepal's participation has declined almost 20 percent from its 2010 peak of nearly 5,500. In February 2013, the Nepal Army deployed to two new missions, bringing its total to 11 operations, most of which are in Africa.

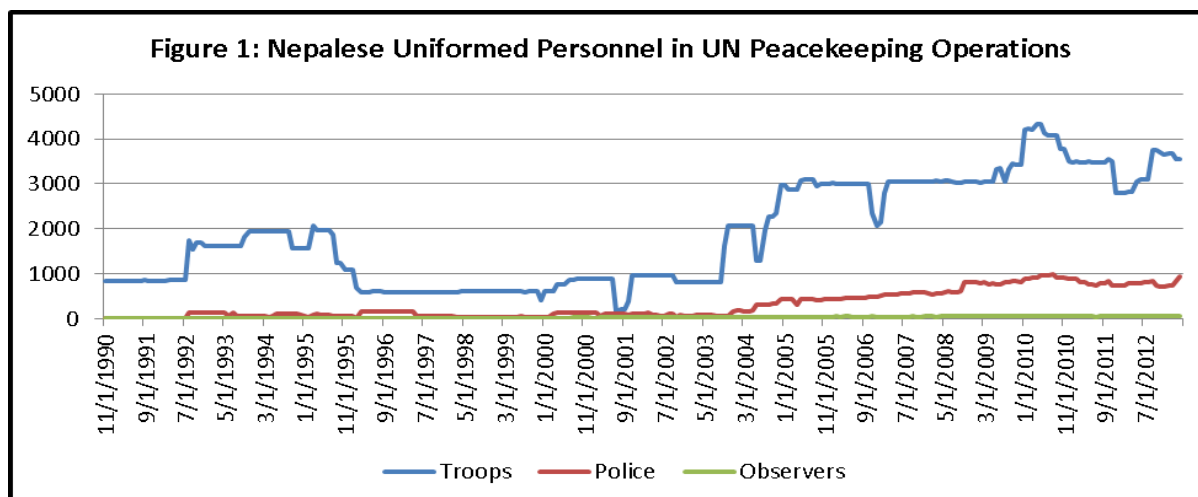


Table 1: The Nepalese Army in UN Peacekeeping Operations

Mission (Contribution Type)	Year	Mission (Contribution Type)	Year
UNOGIL, Lebanon (Military Observers)	1958	UNFICYP, Cyprus (Force Commander)	1999
UNIPOM, India/Pakistan (Military Observers)	1966	UNMEE, Ethiopia/Eritrea (Military Observers)	2000
UNEF II Sinai, Middle East (Troops)	1974	MINUCI, Ivory Coast (Military Observers)	2003
UNIFIL, Lebanon (Troops)	1978	UNOCI, Ivory Coast (Military Observers)	2003
UNMOT, Tajikistan	1989	UNMIL, Liberia (Troops)	2003
UNGOMAP I/II, OSGAP I/II/III (Military Observers)	1989	UNDOF, Israel/Syria (Force Commander & Staff)	2004
UNIKOM Kuwait/Iraq (Force Commander)	1991	MINUSTAH, Haiti (Troops)	2004
UNMIH, Haiti (Troops)	1991	ONUB, Burundi (Troops)	2004
UNTSO, Israel, Middle - East (Chief of Staff)	1992	UNMIS/UNMISS, Sudan (Troops)	2004
UNISOM, Somalia (Troops)	1993	UNIFIL, Lebanon (Troops)	2006
UNPF/UNPROFOR, Former Yugoslavia	1994	UNOMIG, Georgia (Military Observers)	2007
UNGCI, Iraq (Troops)	1995	MINURCAT, Chad (Military Observers, Staff & Troops)	2008
UNTAES, Eastern Slovenia (Military Observers)	1996	UNAMID, Sudan (Military Observers to be followed by troops)	2008
UNPREDEP, Macedonia (Military Observers)	1996	UNAMI, Iraq (Staff)	2008
UNOMIL, Liberia (Military Observers)	1996	UNMIT, Timor-Leste	2008
UNMOP, Prevlaka (Military Observers)	1998	MINURSO, Western Sahara	2010
UNMIK, Kosovo (Military Observers)	1999	UNSMIS, Syria	2012
UNOMSIL/UNAMSIL, Sierra Leone (Troops)	1999	UNISFA, Sudan	2013
MONUC, DR Congo (Troops)	1999		
UNAMET/UNTAET/UNMISSET, East Timor (Troops)	1999		

Nepal's three main security agencies – Army, Armed Police Force and Police – all contribute to UN peacekeeping. Civilian administrators and technical staff from Nepal also participate in UN peace operations both on an individual basis and when seconded from the government. The [Nepal Army](#) is regarded as disciplined and professional, maintaining international standards and qualifications. Almost all Army personnel take part in a UN mission at least once in their military career, with officers typically deploying more than once. To manage the increasing demand for Nepali troops in UN missions, the Nepal Army created a Directorate of Peacekeeping in the Army headquarters. It is responsible for managing the contribution process, including selection, pre-mission training and operational environment familiarization for complex peacekeeping situations.

In order to deploy suitably trained and qualified troops to international peacekeeping operations, the Government of Nepal established the [Birendra Peace Operation Training Centre \(BPOTC\)](#) in 1986 at Panchkhal in Kavre District, about one hour drive from Kathmandu. The BPOTC includes an Army Headquarters Element Training Unit, an Administration and Logistic Unit, a Research and Development Unit, and a Demonstration and Security Unit. The main intent behind establishing this center was to provide a nucleus of expertise within the Army, responsible for the development of Peace Support Operations based on lessons learned, training methodologies, training standards and the provision of training and training support.⁴ Recently, the BPOTC has also served as a regional training center. With the partnership of US Pacific Command, it organized a three week training known as *Shanti Prayas 2* (“Peace Endeavour”) in which 875 soldiers from 23 countries from different regions participated.

With regard to police officers, as of April 2013, Nepal had deployed 5,795 police to 21 UN peacekeeping missions. Nepal Police made their first contribution in 1992 to UNPROFOR in the former Yugoslavia. Nepal has deployed formed police units (FPUs) to Haiti and Darfur, Sudan in 2004 and 2008 respectively, and Nepal Police have served as individual police

experts in Haiti, South Sudan, Sudan, Liberia and Iraq. Since October 2011, the Armed Police Force (APF) has joined with the Army and Nepal Police to begin sending its personnel to UN missions, with the first group deploying to UNGCI (Iraq).

Until recently Nepal was also the host of a UN political mission. The UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN), a special political mission in support of the peace process there, was in place from January 2007 to January 2011. The mission provided support to the elections for a new Constituent Assembly in 2008 and monitored the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the government of Nepal and the Maoist party.

Part 2: Decision-making Process

Nepal's Permanent Mission in New York plays the main role in facilitating communication between the Government of Nepal and the UN. Apart from the mission's civilian staff, the Permanent Mission has an Army liaison officer to communicate with the UN secretariat on peacekeeping issues. The officer represents the Nepal Army, Armed Police Force and the Nepal Police in the mission and advises the Permanent Representative of Nepal. The Nepali Permanent Mission forwards requests from the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a carbon copy to Nepal Army, Nepal Police and Armed Police Force so that the concerned security agencies can start immediate preparations. After receiving the requests, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also sends it to the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Home Affairs depending on the nature of the request. If the request is for army personnel, the Ministry of Defense would take the decision, and if the request is for Nepal Police or Armed Police Force, then the Home Affairs Ministry makes the necessary decision. The head of government is not directly involved in the decision-making, but is well informed by the relevant ministries.

Part 3: Rationales for Contributing

Political and Security Rationales: Within its region, Nepal is one of the oldest countries and one of the first to obtain UN membership. As a comparatively small country located in a sensitive geopolitical environment, Nepal has adopted a neutral international stance since it became a member of the UN, including as an active, original member of the Non-Aligned Movement. Its foreign policy advocates adherence to the UN Charter and its principles, particularly emphasizing the importance of maintaining international peace and security. Nepal practiced this principle by being one of the few countries to contribute troops to the UN during the Cold War. Nepal was also for a time a contributor to the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, established in 1948. Successive Nepali governments viewed the regular contribution of Nepali troops to UN missions as a contribution to good international citizenship and a way to raise Nepal's international profile.⁵ Additionally, the country's policymakers expected that being a UN TCC could also help protect and strengthen Nepal's sovereignty and independence.⁶ As such, UN peacekeeping operations have become an important aspect of Nepal's foreign policy, helping Nepal project a favorable international image and simultaneously pursue its national interests. It is said that Nepal's election as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council on two occasions, 1969-70 and 1988-89, was aided by its peacekeeping contributions.⁷

Economic Rationales: Nepal is one of the least developed countries in the world with a per capita income of \$742.⁸ The country's economy is characterized by poverty and stagnation, while inflation is one of the highest in the region at 11.9 percent. A Nepali soldier receives four to five times higher pay on a UN peacekeeping mission than the standard salary in Nepal.⁹ Nepal's contributions assist not only individual soldiers, but also the Nepal Army

welfare program funded by the money saved from the UN allowance and from UN remittances. The welfare program includes medical, educational facilities and humanitarian support to veterans and their families.

Institutional Rationales: The Nepal Army's long involvement in peacekeeping missions has changed its nature and working methods, including bridging a gap with the civilian community. The regular participation of the Nepal Army and Nepal Police in UN peacekeeping has helped participants understand the universal values and norms of human rights, rule of law and increase professionalism. Moreover, the pre-deployment training at the world-class training center, BPOTC, has helped Nepali troops succeed in the complex operational environments of modern peacekeeping. This, in turn, has provided opportunities for professional development. Similarly, the Nepal Police and Armed Police Force have gained knowledge and experience during their missions abroad. The activities Nepali police conduct during UN peacekeeping missions are much broader than the responsibilities they have on the domestic front.

Part 4: Barriers to Contributing

Unstable domestic politics: Nepal's unstable domestic political situation represents the major challenge for deploying its troops as UN peacekeepers. For almost two decades Nepal has faced political instability and a Maoist insurgency. The frequent change of government became the main obstacle to developing a coherent and effective domestic policy on peacekeeping. Successive governments have therefore given a low priority to peacekeeping issues. Even when a government has taken the initiative to develop or revise its peacekeeping policy, it has not had sufficient time in office to make a substantial contribution. This situation, as well as a lack of vision, coordination and supervision, has kept the issue less prioritized.

Logistical and management challenges: The Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Home Affairs, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs have not been sufficiently active in managing peacekeeping efforts.¹⁰ Among those ministries, the Ministry of Defense is critical to promoting and managing the Nepal Army, but during much of the last two decades it has lacked a dedicated defense minister, being headed instead by the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister, however, has typically paid less attention to defense and peacekeeping issues, allowing them to remain largely under the Army's domain. Intra-governmental coordination on peacekeeping issues – a responsibility of the Army's Directorate of Peacekeeping – has been lacking, hindering the effectiveness and efficiency of Nepali peacekeeping efforts. In general, the lack of civilian oversight of the Army's peacekeeping efforts has impeded necessary changes to Nepal's peacekeeping policies.

Scandal: The scandal known in Nepal as the "Sudan Scam" has tarnished the image of the Nepal Police as well as the country. In 2007, Nepal Police sent a Formed Police Unit to the UN peacekeeping operation in Darfur, Sudan (UNAMID). The Government of Nepal procured the logistics support, including Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs), expecting to receive reimbursement from the UN. However, the selected contractor had manipulated the process and supplied inferior materials and second-hand APCs. None of the APCs were functioning from day one and the supply of low-grade materials for housing construction and others led to poor living conditions for the personnel. The UN repeatedly asked Ministry of Home Affairs to ensure the functioning of the APCs and other equipment and even threatened to withdraw the contingent if this was not done. When the issue became public, the Nepalese Parliament set up a sub-committee to investigate: in mid-2011, it found that the entire purchase system and its implementation lacked professional quality, competence, honesty,

and vigilance. The issue was then taken up by a [Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority](#), which charged 34 police officers, including the Inspector General and two businessmen, with the embezzlement of Rs280 million. The case shocked the country, and reduced confidence in the entire institution both internally and internationally.

Cholera and Human Rights Controversies: Although various official reasons have been given for this decline, one explanation is Nepali peacekeepers' involvement in multiple controversies. Most significant among these was the cholera outbreak in Haiti, where Nepal had been providing 1,075 troops, close to 10% of the UN mission's forces. In October 2010, those Nepali peacekeepers were blamed for a devastating cholera outbreak, which killed nearly 7,000 people in Haiti. Although the UN has denied legal responsibility for the outbreak, the episode has tarnished the image of the UN mission in Haiti as well as that of Nepal's soldiers. Almost the entire Nepali contingent has since withdrawn from Haiti.

Instances of human rights violations by Nepali security personnel, committed in Nepal during the ten-year internal conflict with the Maoists, have also been raised by various human rights organizations. The UN, including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, has also been concerned with this issue. In particular, the UN repatriated two Nepali security personnel, an Army Major and a Deputy Superintendent of Police, serving with the UN in Chad and Liberia respectively, in 2011 for their suspected involvement in human rights violations. Another Nepali peacekeeper was arrested while visiting the UK from Sudan.

Part 5: Current Challenges and Issues

Complexity of contemporary peacekeeping: With the support of US Pacific Command, Nepal hosted a [training seminar of the Asia Pacific Peacekeeping Leaders](#) in March 2013 to address the modern challenges in UN peacekeeping operations. More than 30 participants from 23 countries of the Asia and Pacific region took part in the seminar where they recognized that UN peacekeepers are facing very complex challenges and are often required to implement intricate mandates. Protection of civilians, preventing sexual and gender based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and human security are all matters of great concern for the UN. A number of other issues that TCCs, including Nepali troops on UN missions, have to deal with better include: understanding the culture of the local population, the often vast areas covered by small numbers of peacekeepers, the complexities of multi-national military operations, coordination with the police and humanitarian components of peacekeeping missions, dealing with transnational crimes, violation of human rights and the need to provide timely and accurate information.

Need for enhanced coordination: There is a need to strengthening coordination among the relevant government agencies to promote Nepal's role in UN peacekeeping, particularly, the Ministries of Defense, Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs, and Finance need to enhance their coordination and instructions to the respective security agencies such as the Nepal Army, Nepal Police and the Armed Police Force. The line ministries should get involved in developing policy in line with the UN's guidelines, specifically the recent [Infantry Battalion Manual](#) (Volumes I and II). There is also a need to formulate plans, develop programs – including pre-mission trainings – and provide assistance to the security forces to fulfill their tasks as mandated by the UN and accepted by the Government of Nepal.

Strengthening relevant capabilities: In general, Nepal must focus on improving the Nepali forces' competency and efficiency in implementing their peacekeeping duties. In particular, the Government of Nepal has to focus on enhancing the capabilities of Nepali security forces in areas such as language proficiency, logistical support and equipment, and gender balance.

Such improvements would require, in part, the appropriation of sufficient resources to improve the training facilities at BPOTC.

Upgrading the Permanent Mission of Nepal to the UN: The Government of Nepal should upgrade the capabilities of its official representation to the UN. The Permanent Mission could more widely promote the extensive experience of Nepali peacekeepers in UN missions to the UN Secretariat and other Member States. Additionally, lessons from the scandals mentioned above could help to improve health and other pre-deployment requirements for future deployments. The mission should also be equipped with sufficient, qualified staff and other required facilities such as sufficient office space and financial support.

Part 6: Key Champions and Opponents

The Nepal Army organizes visit programs of Nepali media on a regular basis as a part of its efforts to provide them first-hand information about the Nepali peacekeeping activities in the field. Although Nepal has contributed UN peacekeepers for the last six decades, there are no civil society organizations or think tanks that work exclusively on peacekeeping issues in Nepal. All political parties, regardless of their ideological position, support sending security forces to UN missions. In the last 60 years, successive governments have praised the role of Nepalese personnel in the UN, and the Nepalese people maintain positive attitudes towards the UN which, in their view, works for peace, stability, and protects the interests of the small and weaker states.

Part 7: Capabilities and Caveats

Due to its long involvement in the UN missions, Nepalese security agencies, particularly the Nepal Army, have gained extensive experience and understanding of UN peacekeeping. Recently, the government has provided support for establishing an international-standard training center known as [BPOTC](#) to strengthen training. Given its overall level of economic development, Nepal's ability to contribute high-tech or expensive military equipment, such as helicopters, is limited. However, the Nepalese government has committed to contributing up to 5,000 Nepalese Army personnel if the country is so requested by the UN.

Part 8: Further Reading

Arturo Sotomayor, "Nepal" in A.J. Bellamy & P.D. Williams (eds.), *Providing Peacekeepers: The Politics, Challenges, and Future of United Nations Peacekeeping Contributions* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

Maskey, Bishwa Keshar, Dahal, Dev Raj (eds.), *Nepal's Participation in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Reports of the Round Table* (Institute of Foreign Affairs and UN Association of Nepal, 1995).

Sharma, Balananda (Rt.Gen.), "Peace-Support Operations and Nepal: Past Experiences and Future Perspectives" in Sushil Raj Pandey and Pushpa Adhikari (eds.), *Nepalese Foreign Policy at the Crossroads* (Sangam Institute, 2009).

Notes

¹ Unless otherwise stated, data is drawn from the IISS, *The Military Balance 2013* (London: IISS/Routledge, 2013).

² Data obtained from the official website of Nepal Army, accessed May 10, 2013, http://www.nepalarmy.mil.np/na_un

³ Defense Spending/Troop is the total defense budget (in USD) divided by the total number of active armed forces. Uses latest figures available from IISS, *The Military Balance 2013*.

⁴ Author's interview with Rt. Lt. Gen. Balananda Sharma, Kathmandu, May 2, 2013. Gen. Sharma served as a Force Commander of the UN Disengagement Force in the Golan Heights.

⁵ Pyar Jung Thapa, "The UN Peace Keeping in the New World Order and the Role of Royal Nepal Army" in Bishwa Keshar Maskey and Dev Raj Dahal (eds.), *Nepal's Participation in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Reports of the Round Table* (Institute of Foreign Affairs and UN Association of Nepal, 1995).

⁶ Bishwa Keshar Maskey asserts that, "For a small state like Nepal, the UN has proved not only a sounding board but a last resort to articulate national aspiration. The legitimacy of the UN comes from its role performance, where Nepal in many ways is in a better position, especially in the area of peacekeeping." Bishwa Keshar Maskey, *Nepal and United Nations: 1995-1996* (United Nations Association of Nepal, 1996).

⁷ Khand, Jitendra Dhoj, "National Interest and Foreign Policy" in Sushil Raj Pandey and Pushpa Adhikari (eds.), *Nepalese Foreign Policy at the Crossroads* (Kathmandu: Sangam Institute, 2009).

⁸ The Economic Survey of 2011/12, Ministry of Finance, Government of Nepal, accessed May 2013, http://www.mof.gov.np/ajw/uploads/uploaded_image/Chapter%20All-Final-Edited.pdf.

⁹ Gurung, Deepak, "Success of Nepali Peacekeepers," *Republica*, 18 November 2010, <http://www.epapers-hub.com/nepal/kathmandu-republica.html>.

¹⁰ Hamal, Suresh, *UN Peacekeeping Operation as an Instrument of National Policy* (Tribhuvan University, Department of Strategic Studies, unpublished Master's Thesis, 2007).