

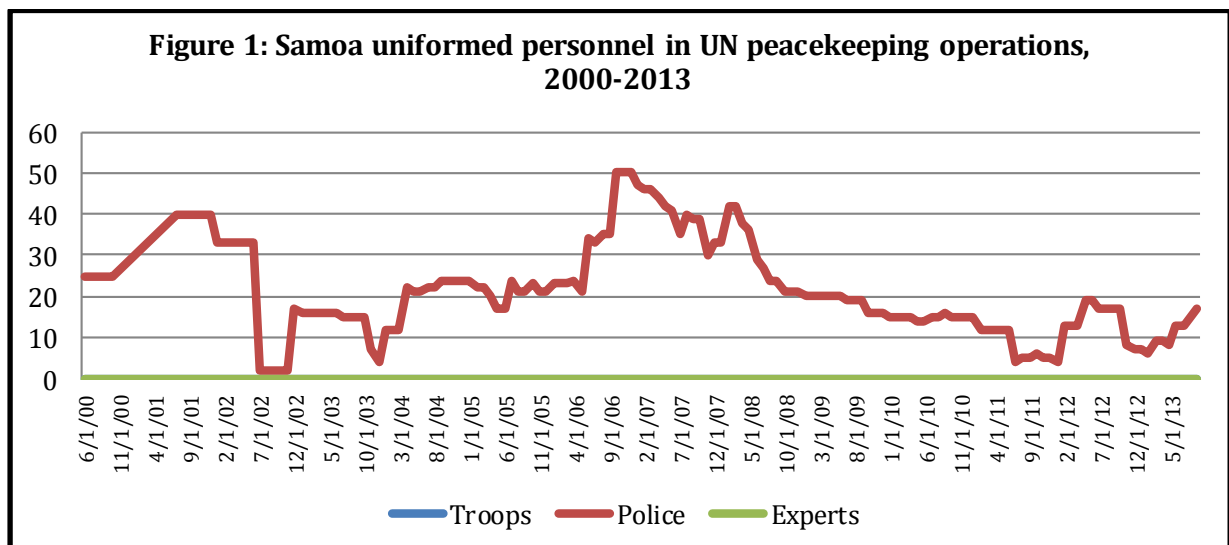
Contributor Profile: Samoa

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Active armed forces ¹	Helicopters	Defense Budget	Uniformed Peacekeepers	UN Contribution Breakdown	Other Significant Deployments
Samoa does not have a military. The Samoa Police and Prison Service (SPS) is responsible for defense and overseas peacekeeping deployments. It has more than 500 officers.	0	0	17 (6 women) (31 Oct 2013) Ranking: 91st	UNMISS: 17 police	RAMSI (Solomon Islands): Approx. 5 police
Defense spending/troop: n/a.					

Part 1: Recent Trends

In February 2000, Samoa and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) signed an agreement. This facilitated Samoa's first deployment of UN peacekeepers in June 2000 to the UN mission in East Timor (UNTAET). Since Samoa has no military or ministry of defense, its peacekeepers are drawn from its police force. The number of Samoan uniformed personnel engaged in UN-led peacekeeping operations has varied depending on UN requests, although Samoa has never refused any UN requests for peacekeepers.² Samoa's contribution to UN operations peaked between October and December 2006, when 50 peacekeepers deployed to Liberia (UNMIL), Sudan (UNMIS) and Timor Leste (UNMIT). Between late 2006 and July 2011, however, there was a steady reduction in Samoan contributions reaching as low as 4 personnel in July 2011. The fluctuations correlate with UN requests. The only non-UN mission to which Samoa has provided police is the [Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands](#) (RAMSI).



In recent years, more women have participated in Samoan peacekeeping deployments. In 2010, the [first all-women Samoan police contingent](#) was sent to Timor Leste to join the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). In 2012, [more than 30% of Samoan peacekeepers were women](#). In 2012, eight police officers, four men and four women, were deployed to South Sudan (UNMISS).

Part 2: Decision-making Process

The UN sends its request to the Government of Samoa through the Samoa Mission in New York, and from there it goes to the Samoa Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which then passes it to the Ministry of Policy and Prisons (MPP). The request is then taken to Cabinet, which makes the final decision. Aside from cabinet discussions, there is no formal decision-making process. There may, however, be some input into the decision-making process from the Samoan Police Commissioner, or other high-ranking police officers. The relevant legislation is the [Samoa Police Service Act 2009](#), but this does not appear to “govern” the decision. [Part II, Section 5\(2\)](#) of the Act simply states that, “The Samoa Police Service may, with the approval of Cabinet, participate in regional or international peace keeping or policing programs or roles which have the same or similar functions as those” specified for domestic law enforcement. There are no white papers or other government documents that relate to peacekeeping, although it is mentioned tangentially in documents such as the [Ministry of Police and Prisons Annual Report](#).

The political opposition does not have any direct influence on decisions about peacekeeping contributions. In 2000, for example, 25 Samoan policemen were sent to East Timor amidst claims by the opposition that there were insufficient police numbers to deal with domestic crime. Their criticism [had no impact on the decision](#).

Part 3: Rationales for Contributing

There are four key rationales for Samoa’s deployment. The government treats it as a contribution to the UN, as a means to improve the careers and financial situation of Samoan police officers, and a means of strengthening regional security. Samoa welcomes opportunities to provide police peacekeepers.³

Political rationales: The Government of Samoa is proud of its peacekeeping contributions and is keen to highlight its commitment to international peacekeeping efforts at the UN.⁴ National prestige is likely to be a contributing factor, but given the relatively small number of peacekeepers from Samoa, it is unlikely that they are intended to strengthen the country’s international influence. The UN makes requests for peacekeeping contingents, [such as in 2003 when it asked Samoa to send personnel to assist operations in Liberia](#). However, there is no evidence that the Government of Samoa was or is under any political pressure to contribute peacekeepers. As mentioned above, Samoa has responded positively to all UN requests.

Economic rationales: There is a financial incentive for individual peacekeepers. The Government of Samoa does not interfere in the payment of salaries/allowances: once police officers are accepted and deployed the UN pays them directly, which is done once they arrive in their mission. It is important to understand these payments in relation to Samoa’s economic position. The UN designates Samoa as a Least Developed Country. Although it is set to graduate to Developing Country status in 2014, Samoa is still beset by poverty.⁵ The UN reimbursement standard rate of US\$1,028 per uniformed peacekeeper per month is

significantly higher than the wage a Samoan police officer can be expected to receive at home.

However, although it makes a significant difference to individual incomes and some difference to the government's foreign exchange holdings, UN compensation payments probably do not factor significantly into supporting national budgets. The number of peacekeepers from Samoa is very small, averaging approximately 20 per year over the last 12 years. Since 2008, the Government of Samoa has appropriated an estimated WST\$200,000 ([US\\$88,082.45](#)) per annum towards peacekeeping expenses.⁶ These expenses cover both UN peacekeeping and RAMSI.

Security rationales: Samoa has contributed to peacekeeping out of concern for regional political stability. This can be seen in its deployment to UNMIT, and the Solomon Islands as part of the RAMSI. The latter, in particular was prompted by concerns about disorder and instability in the Solomon Islands and the potential for these to become regional.⁷ Samoa was one of the original eight states to contribute immediate help to the Solomon Islands.

Institutional rationales: Samoa does not have a military force; hence members of the Samoan police force carry out all its peacekeeping missions. The police force gains invaluable experience from peacekeeping duties and this is an important rationale to deploy. To some extent, Samoa has developed a peacekeeping habit. Since Samoa's first deployment of UN peacekeepers in June 2000 it has maintained a continual presence in UN operations. The [mission statement of the Ministry of Police and Prisons](#) is twofold, one of which is the promotion and provision of law enforcement to "Nominated overseas communities in support of Government's foreign policies" (p.5). Therefore, international peacekeeping is considered a core role of the police force.

Normative rationales: Normative rationales play an important role in Samoan peacekeeping. Samoa is an outspoken supporter of regional and international order and a strong critic of authoritarianism, as exemplified in the Samoan Prime Minister's criticism of the coup government in Fiji (December 2006). Samoa is also critical when regional governments and organizations fail to address political crises in the region, stemming from undemocratic processes. This was exemplified in Samoa's criticism of the Pacific Islands Forum's lack of immediate response to the 2000 Fiji coup.⁸ Samoa is keen to provide peacekeepers whenever needed, in support of regional and international efforts to achieve peace and security.

Part 4: Barriers to Contributing

Alternative institutional preferences for crisis management: There are no barriers stemming from alternative institutional participation in crisis management. Samoa participates in RAMSI, which is not a UN peacekeeping mission. But since Samoa was not instrumental in establishing this mission, participation in it does not suggest an alternative institutional preference.

Alternative political or strategic priorities: Samoan peacekeeping forces are drawn entirely from the Samoan police force. As stated above, the force has an international peacekeeping dimension in its mission statement; to promote and provide law enforcement and safety services to "Nominated overseas communities in support of Government's foreign policies."⁹ This is secondary to promoting and providing law enforcement and safety services domestically. The political opposition has criticized the government for deploying police to peacekeeping operations when domestic law enforcement needs were not met. This is a

reasonable objection given Samoa's small police force; there is clearly a limit to how much Samoa can contribute.¹⁰

Financial costs: There is no evidence of financial barriers to deploying Samoan police to peacekeeping missions. As stated above, UN compensation payments are an incentive to participate.

Discomfort with the expanding UN peacekeeping agenda: There are no cases of the Samoan government objecting to the UN peacekeeping agenda.

Exceptionalism: There is no evidence of this being a barrier to Samoan peacekeeping deployments.

Absence of pressure to contribute: There is no pressure on Samoa to contribute to peacekeeping missions, but this is not a barrier.

Difficult domestic politics: There is no evidence of this being a barrier to Samoan peacekeeping deployments.

Damage to national reputation: In 2008, a Samoan policeman, who was part of RAMSI, drove into and killed a Solomon Islands nurse. He was sentenced to three and a half years in prison. The [Government of Samoa publicly noted its "embarrassment"](#) over the incident.¹¹ However, there is no evidence that the incident damaged Samoa's wider national reputation especially since the matter was dealt with. This was probably helped by the fact that the Samoan Government did not assert its jurisdiction over the matter, which it could have under the Facilitation of International Assistance Act (FIAA). The FIAA provides the legal framework for RAMSI's "presence in the Solomon Islands," and gives participating countries "the option of prosecuting its personnel charged with an offence in Solomon Islands in its own courts".¹²

Resistance in the Military: This does not apply to Samoa as the country has no military.

Lack of fit with legislative, procurement and operational timelines: There is no evidence of this being a barrier to Samoan peacekeeping deployments.

Legal obstacles: This does not apply to Samoa.

Part 5: Current Challenges and Issues

In addition to the barriers discussed above, the UN quota for peacekeepers from participating members also limits Samoa's contributions. Furthermore, the UN guidelines for peacekeepers can restrict the number of police officers that are eligible for peacekeeping deployments. The key factors that will impact on future Samoan peacekeeping contributions are those discussed above, but in particular the financial benefits accrued from participation.

Part 6: Key Champions and Opponents

The Government of Samoa itself and the Ministry of Police and Prisons champion peacekeeping. This is demonstrated by the Government's support for peacekeeping in general, and that peacekeeping is central to the strategic vision of the latter. There are no foreseeable opponents to an increase in peacekeeping contributions. Although the Samoan police is small, UN demand and the extent to which police officers are qualified present the

key restricting factors to greater participation. As mentioned above, Samoa has never refused a UN request for peacekeepers. Although the political opposition has voiced its criticism over one UN peacekeeping deployment, this can probably be attributed to grandstanding more than anything else. Because peacekeeping is important financially, it is unlikely that a change in government would result in a change of approach. There has been no public opposition to peacekeeping. The fact that there have been no deaths or controversies associated with Samoan peacekeeping contributions, except the Solomon Islands incident noted above, has played a part in this. There are no think tanks and training institutes in Samoa that encourage or discourage peacekeeping deployments.

Part 7: Capabilities and Caveats

The Samoan police force is committed to regional and international missions. However, they have limited capability. Samoan police officers cannot be armed “in the daily performance of their duties”. They can only be armed under the approval of the Minister responsible for the Samoa Police Powers Act 2007, and this can only be done under “exceptional circumstances” that must be “in accordance with relevant police internal orders and rules.”¹³ They are restricted to police work, given that there is no Samoan military. There are no Samoans in the UN DPKO or DFS, as least insofar as the Samoa Ministry of Foreign Affairs is aware.

Part 8: Further Reading

None.

Notes

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

² Personnel Correspondence, Samoa Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 15 November 2013.

³ Personal correspondence, Samoa Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 5 December 2013.

⁴ See, for example, [Statement by The Honorable Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Independent State of Samoa](#), New York, 26 September 2003.

⁵ Lanuola Tupufia, “Opposition Doubts Samoa LDC Status Change In 2014; Tautua members say Samoa will still face many challenges”, *Samoa Observer*, 25 September 2013; Mata’afa Keni Lesa, “Of Hunger and Poverty in Samoa”, *Samoa Observer*, 19 April 2013.

⁶ Government of Samoa, [Approved estimates of receipts and payments of the government of Samoa \(2008-2014\)](#).

⁷ Radio Australia, [Samoa PM Backs RAMSI Presence](#), 30 August 2007; [Government of Samoa, Main Address By Hon. Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi – Opening Ceremony of the Partners in Pacific Peace Exhibition](#) (27 May 2004).

⁸ [Main Address by Hon. Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi Opening Ceremony of the Partners in Pacific Peace Exhibition](#), 27 May 2004.

⁹ Government of Samoa, [Ministry of Police and Prisons Annual Report 2006-2007](#) (Samoa 2007), p.5.

¹⁰ Personal correspondence, Samoa Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 5 Dec. 2013.

¹¹ [“Samoan PM says Solomons Accident is ‘an embarrassment’](#),” Radio Australia, 2 July 2008.

¹² [“Samoan RAMSI Officer Charged](#),” *Solomon Times Online*, 2 September 2008.

¹³ Samoa Police Powers Act 2007, Part 3, Section 13 & 13A.