

Lesson 1.0



Introduction to Module One



Minimum lesson duration: 20 minutes

Welcome to Module One: An Overview of UN Peacekeeping

Module 1 covers the principles of UN peacekeeping, what UN peacekeeping operations are, how they are set up and how they work.

Module One Structure

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1.0 Introduction to Module One 

Module One

Introduction and Overview	Working in UN Peacekeeping
1.0 Introduction to Module One	1.5 Implementing Security Council Mandates
Defining UN Peacekeeping	1.6 How Peacekeeping Operations Work
1.1 UN Peacekeeping – Strategic Level	1.7 Working as One in a UN Mission
1.2 Peace and Security Activities	1.8 Mission Partners
1.3 Principles of UN Peacekeeping	
1.4 Legal Framework for UN Peacekeeping	

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UN peacekeeping has a tradition of more than 75 years. Over that time, the international norms and laws that guide UN peacekeeping have evolved, just as violent conflicts and the reasons for peacekeeping operations have changed.

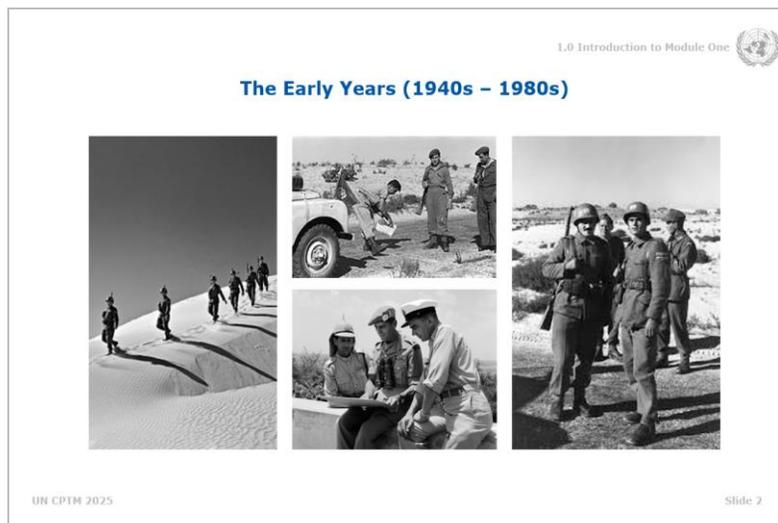
The following introduction offers a brief history of UN peacekeeping to set a background for Module One lessons.

A Brief History of UN Peacekeeping

In 1948, the Security Council authorized the deployment of UN military observers to the Middle East. Since then, the UN has managed more than 70 peacekeeping operations involving hundreds of thousands of military personnel, tens of thousands of police officers and numerous civilian personnel, all representing more than 125 countries. UN peacekeeping has changed significantly over that 75-year timespan.

The Early Years (1940s–1980s)

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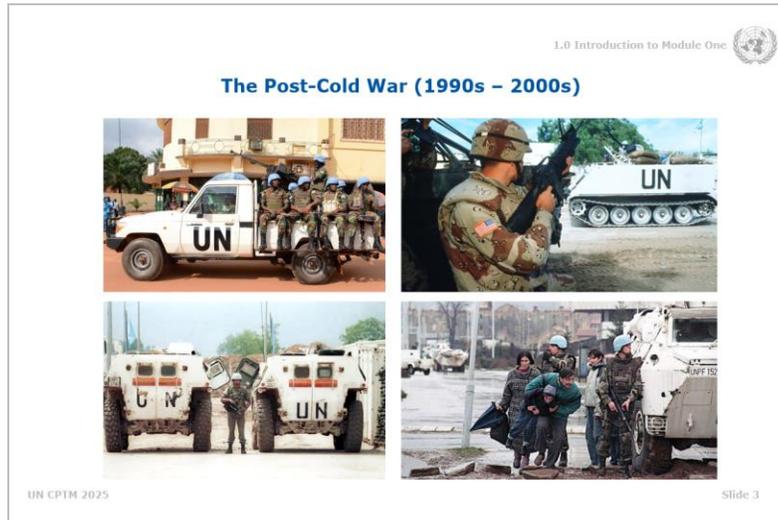
The first UN peacekeeping operation was mandated in 1948, when the Security Council authorized the deployment of UN military observers to the Middle East to monitor the Armistice Agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbours. It was called the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO). This operation involved observation and monitoring by unarmed military personnel. A second UN peacekeeping operation was deployed the following year – the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP).

These early missions, which are still in operation, were mostly limited to maintaining ceasefires. They consisted of unarmed military observers whose primary roles were monitoring, reporting on and building confidence in the peace process.

The first armed peacekeeping operation was deployed in 1956 to address the Suez Crisis (UNEF I), while the first large-scale armed UN peacekeeping mission was sent to the Congo (ONUC) in 1960 and consisted of nearly 20,000 military personnel at its peak. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the UN set up several short-term missions. In 1988, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to UN peacekeepers for their service in the cause of peace.

The Post-Cold War (1990s–2000s)

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At the end of the cold war in the early 1990s, the strategic context of UN peacekeeping shifted from traditional observational missions to more complex, multidimensional operations. These multidimensional missions were designed to ensure the implementation of comprehensive peace agreements and assist in building foundations for sustainable peace.

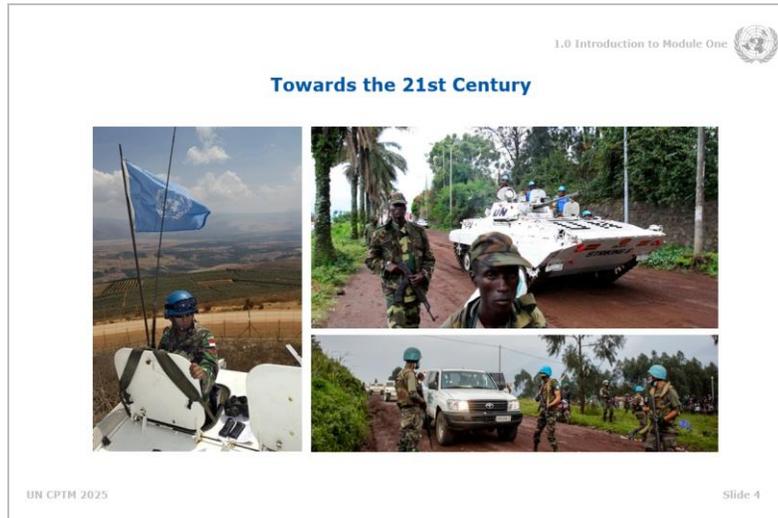
Peacekeepers – military, police and civilian – were asked to undertake a broad variety of complex tasks, such as building sustainable institutions of governance, human rights monitoring, security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants.

The number of UN peacekeeping operations dramatically increased in this period, as did the number of deployed military, police and civilian personnel. Between 1989 and 1994, the number of peacekeepers increased from 11,000 to 75,000. The mid-1990s brought a period of reflection and reassessment following challenges experienced in peacekeeping, most notably in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Somalia.

Peacekeepers faced situations where warring parties failed to stick to peace agreements, or where peacekeepers themselves were not provided with adequate resources or political support, leaving them unable to prevent mass killings of civilians. These setbacks led the Security Council to limit the number of new peacekeeping operations and begin a process of self-reflection, hoping to prevent such failures from happening again. However, throughout this period peacekeepers continued their long-term operations in the Middle East, Asia and Cyprus.

Towards the Twenty-First Century: New Operations, New Challenges

Slide 4



At the turn of the century, the UN undertook a major review of its peacekeeping programme to address these many issues and challenges. This review identified reforms to manage and sustain field operations more effectively. The resulting *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations* – known as the Brahimi Report – was issued in 2000 and played a significant role in subsequent UN reforms.

The new century brought with it requests for even more complicated and challenging UN peacekeeping operations. These requests resulted in the Security Council setting up large and complex peacekeeping operations in the following African countries:

- Burundi (ONUB)
- Chad and the Central African Republic (MINURCAT)
- Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI)
- Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC and MONUSCO)
- Eritrea/Ethiopia (UNMEE)
- Liberia (UNMIL)
- Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL)
- South Sudan (UNIFSA and UNMISS)
- Sudan (UNMIS and UNAMID in Darfur)
- Syria (UNSMIS).

Peacekeepers also returned to resume vital peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations where fragile peace had frayed, in:

- Haiti (MINUSTAH)
- Timor-Leste (UNMIT).

Many of these operations have completed their mandates, such as MINURCAT, MONUC, ONUB, UNAMSIL, UNMEE, UNMIS, and UNOCI. By 2010, UN peacekeeping had entered a phase of consolidation, which led to a reduction in personnel and peacekeeping operations in the intervening years.



Reference

- General Assembly, Security Council, Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations [The Brahimi Report], A/55/305-S/2000/809 (2000).

The Present

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The Present

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Today's multidimensional peacekeeping continues to support political processes; protect civilians; assist in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants; support the organization of elections; and protect and promote human rights. It also supports the extension of State authority and the reestablishment of the rule of law, and has expanded mandated responsibilities to include gender mainstreaming and promoting women, peace and security; protecting and helping children in a way suited to their needs; making it possible for people, goods and humanitarian assistance to move and be moved; and providing humanitarian and mine action assistance.

Additionally, some more recent peacekeeping operations have also focused on stabilization. For example, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) was set up to support the country’s political process, and the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) was set up to protect civilians and provide support to peace processes.

In 2023, MINUSMA ended following a withdrawal of host country consent, signifying a new period of challenges and contraction in UN peacekeeping.

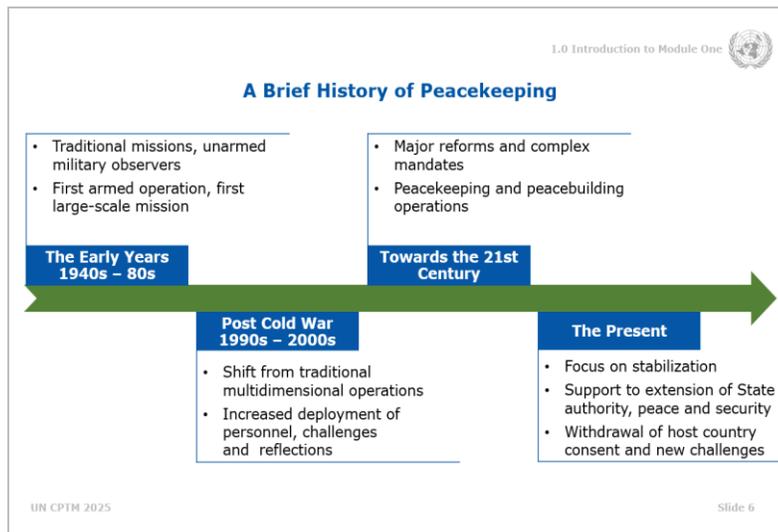


Trainer Tips: For current data on peacekeeping operations, trainers are advised to consult the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) website.

Module 2 lessons delve deeper into the current challenges of UN peacekeeping and specific initiatives to meet these challenges.

A Brief History of UN Peacekeeping

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Lesson Closing

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Trainer Tips: *If you have time, summarize the lesson, recalling the aim and learning objectives. Mention that the key messages support the learning objectives. Ask participants if they have questions. Ensure you distribute the Handout – Summary of Key Messages to all participants.*