

**Security Council**

Distr.: General
7 March 2025

Original: English

**Letter dated 6 March 2025 from the Permanent Representative of
Denmark to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

For more than 75 years, United Nations peace operations have been a unique and indispensable tool for the maintenance of international peace and security. As today's world is becoming increasingly fragmented and volatile, and conflict dynamics increasingly complex, the need for United Nations peace operations to adapt to new realities is evident. Denmark, in its capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of March, wishes to bring attention to this need, and invites Member States to contribute to building a forward-looking vision for United Nations peace operations.

To this end, Denmark will organize a high-level open debate in the Security Council on the maintenance of international peace and security, on the theme "Advancing adaptability in United Nations peace operations: responding to new realities". The open debate will be chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Lars Løkke Rasmussen, and take place on 24 March 2025.

In order to guide the discussions on this topic, Denmark has prepared a concept note contained in the annex to the present letter.

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Christina Markus **Lassen**

Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 6 March 2025 from the Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the Security Council high-level open debate on the theme “Advancing adaptability in United Nations peace operations: responding to new realities”, to be held on 24 March 2025

Introduction

For more than 75 years, United Nations peace operations have been a unique and indispensable tool in the maintenance of international peace and security. United Nations-led and United Nations-mandated peace operations have worked to support peace agreements, protect civilians, reinforce the rule of law and bolster inclusive governance structures in every region around the world. They have encompassed military, police and civilian components and addressed evolving threats and changing political realities. Put simply, they were, are and remain a unique and indispensable multilateral tool for conflict management. Yet United Nations peace operations have also experienced setbacks and been challenged in delivering mandates. As today’s world is becoming increasingly fragmented and volatile, and conflict dynamics increasingly complex, the need for United Nations peace operations to adapt to new realities is evident. This was clearly stated in the Pact for the Future, adopted by the General Assembly in September 2024.

This call for change is not new. In 2015, the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations pointed to the need for essential shifts in the design and delivery of United Nations peace operations. Key among these were the need for peace operations to be clearly anchored in and guided by people-centred and situation-specific political strategies, and to use the full spectrum of tools available to the United Nations in a more flexible manner as part of a comprehensive approach to sustaining peace. Reform efforts driven by Member States and the Secretary-General have since included a persistent focus on the need for clear, sequenced and prioritized mandates: mandates that match realities on the ground, that are achievable and that are conceived with exit strategies and viable transition plans, in full compliance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

This also underlines that adaptation and transition should not be viewed as linear processes, nor as something that comes into play only when a peace operation is departing. As reflected in Security Council resolution [2594 \(2021\)](#), transitions should rather be understood “as a strategic process which builds towards a reconfiguration of the strategy, footprint, and capacity of the United Nations in a way that supports peacebuilding objectives and the development of a sustainable peace”. At the same time, resolution [2594 \(2021\)](#) emphasized the need to prevent a deterioration of the protection environment during peace operation transitions. For more adaptable and modular approaches to emerge, fresh thinking, leadership and political will for innovation are required. As the United Nations body with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council is key to shaping the future of United Nations peace operations – both by design and by default.

More than 10 years have passed since the Security Council established a multidimensional peacekeeping operation. Yet the Security Council has asked the United Nations to undertake other, more limited deployments, such as removing chemical weapons from Syria and monitoring local ceasefires in Yemen. The Security Council has also continued to make use of civilian special political missions as a highly flexible and diverse tool for conflict management. The United Nations has provided logistical and administrative support for peace support operations undertaken by other actors, including the African Union. As we look to the future of

United Nations peace operations, it is helpful to keep these examples in mind. They demonstrate the many areas in which the United Nations holds unparalleled comparative advantages and capabilities, including mediation and civilian political capacities and military, logistical and administrative structures, along with a broad range of specialist technical expertise, including rule of law.

Against this backdrop, it is timely for the Security Council to advance fresh thinking on how to ensure adaptability and smoother transitions between phases of United Nations peace operations, including within the life of such peace operations, across the full peace continuum, to better respond to both existing needs and new realities. This discussion will take place at a pivotal moment, ahead of the United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial in Berlin in May 2025, in the context of the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and with a view to the review on the future of all forms of United Nations peace operations as requested in the Pact for the Future.

Member States are invited to provide a forward-looking vision for how the Security Council can support more adaptable approaches to United Nations peace operations. Member States are encouraged to reflect on lessons learned from past peace operations to chart a path forward towards a more agile, responsive and effective United Nations approach to today's threats to peace and security.

Guiding questions

- How can the Security Council support more adaptable peace operations across the full peace continuum – from preventive measures and diplomacy to peacekeeping and post-conflict recovery – in a coherent, focused and complementary manner? What innovative approaches could be pursued?
- How can the Security Council better ensure that mission mandates reflect the need for agility and flexibility throughout the life of peace operations, taking into account evolving security situations, changing political dynamics and actors, as well as the potential threats of violence against civilians?
- How can the Security Council cooperate more effectively across the United Nations system, and with other stakeholders, to maximize comparative advantages throughout the lifespan of missions and ensure a comprehensive approach to peace and security, including with regard to protection of civilians?
- How can the Security Council support the “primacy of politics”, ensuring that peace operations are focused on and geared to political solutions, with diplomacy, inclusive dialogue and multi-tiered negotiations at the core of its efforts?
- What are the asks and core recommendations for the Secretary-General to consider in the forthcoming review of United Nations peace operations?

Briefers

The Secretary-General

Other speakers to be confirmed

Format

The Security Council high-level open debate under the item entitled “Maintenance of international peace and security” will be chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Lars Løkke Rasmussen.

Member States wishing to participate should inscribe their names on the list of speakers through the e-Speakers module of e-deleGATE+. The list of speakers will open for inscription on Wednesday, 19 March at 9.30 a.m. A letter addressed to the President of the Security Council, duly signed by the Permanent Representative or the Chargé d'affaires, a.i., requesting to participate in accordance with rule 37 of the Security Council's provisional rules of procedure must be uploaded with the request for inscription. To facilitate participation by as many delegations as possible, interventions should not exceed three minutes.
