International Social Research Nexus (ISRN)
ISSN (Online): 3105-0069

Review Article

Reframing United Nations Peacekeeping as Global Policing: Conceptualizing the 'Blue Police' Paradigm in Contemporary Security Governance

Noor E Alam Mina

PhD Fellow, Department of International Relations, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka-1342, Bangladesh.

***Correspondence**
Noor E Alam Mina
Email: nalammina76@gmail.com

Article History
Received: January 22, 2026
Accepted: April 27, 2026
Published: May 5, 2026

Citation
Mina, N.E.A. (2026). Reframing United Nations Peacekeeping as Global Policing: Conceptualizing the 'Blue Police' Paradigm in Contemporary Security Governance. *International Social Research Nexus (ISRN)*, 2(2), 1-20.
https://doi.org/10.63539/isrn.2026008

Copyright
© 2026 The Author (s). Published by Scholar Cave. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Abstract

United Nations Peacekeeping has undergone a significant transformation in response to the changing nature of contemporary conflict, shifting from traditional military-based ceasefire monitoring toward multidimensional systems of security governance. While existing literature acknowledges mandate expansion and the growing role of policing functions, it remains theoretically fragmented and lacks a unified framework to explain the structural convergence between peacekeeping and policing. This study addresses this gap by examining whether United Nations Peacekeeping is evolving into a form of global policing governance. Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative and conceptual research design based on secondary data, including United Nations reports, UNPOL policy documents, and academic literature. A thematic analytical approach is used to examine the expansion of policing functions within peace operations and the institutional role of the UN Police in contemporary missions. The findings indicate that UN Peacekeeping has undergone a structural transformation in which policing logic has become increasingly dominant. UNPOL has emerged as a key operational actor responsible not only for supporting host-state police but also for contributing to institutional reform, governance, and population security. This reflects a broader shift toward a hybrid model of security governance combining military stabilization with policing and institutional development functions. The study concludes that contemporary United Nations Peacekeeping can be understood as an evolving system of global policing governance. The Blue Police Paradigm provides a new analytical framework for understanding this transformation and highlights important implications for mandate clarity, institutional capacity, and accountability in international peace operations.

Keywords

United Nations Peacekeeping, Global Policing, Blue Police Paradigm, United Nations Police (UNPOL), Security Governance, Peacekeeping Transformation.

1. Introduction

Over the past three decades, the international security landscape has witnessed a shift in armed conflict and forms of intervention in pursuit of international peace. Contemporary armed conflicts are more likely to be intrastate, hybrid, or non-interstate in nature, with weak governance and institutional capacities, rather than interstate in nature. These challenges are compounded by the rise of transnational armed gangs, asymmetric warfare, urban criminality, and climate change, which complicate international peace operations (Aneshensel & Mitchell, 2014; de Coning, 2021; Kisangani &

Mitchell, 2021; Walter et al., 2021). In turn, international peace interventions have evolved from static, militarized containment to increasingly sophisticated and governance-focused interventions. In this context, UN Peacekeeping has grown in scale and complexity. Today, there are 17 active UN Peacekeeping missions (MINURSO, MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, UNIFIL, UNMISS, UNFICYP, UNMIK, UNISFA, UNMIL, UNMHA, UNSOM, UNSMIL, BINUH, UNIOGBIS, UNOCA, and UNOAU), creating a global network of interventions in different geopolitical settings. This growth reflects a broader institutional transformation from classical ceasefire monitoring to complex peace and security governance, which includes civilian protection, rule-of-law promotion, and institutional reform. As such, United Nations Peacekeeping is no longer merely a form of interposition between warring parties. Today's operations encompass a broad array of activities, such as governance assistance, institutional reform, and civilian protection (Otto et al., 2024; United Nations, 2024). This has been conceptualized as a process of "mandate broadening" where peace operations increasingly operate at the nexus of security, development, and governance (Hunt, 2019; Walter et al., 2021). This has led to the emergence of a hybrid peacekeeping force with military, civilian, and administrative functions.

One key element of this shift is the enhanced role of the United Nations Police (UNPOL). Some 9,000 UNPOL members are currently serving in peace operations, assisting host governments with issues including civilian protection, election security, investigation of sexual and gender-based violence, organized crime prevention, and institutional reform of national police forces (United Nations, 2024). This growth marks a significant departure towards policing-focused security governance, where policing logics are increasingly integrated (and sometimes even substituted) for military stabilization. But this shift raises a conceptual and analytical problem. Peacekeeping is traditionally premised on principles of impartiality, consent, and limited use of force, whereas policing is inherently about enforcement, surveillance, and regulation (Lamb, 2022). The shift of peace operations to carry out tasks like crowd management, community policing, intelligence services, and cooperation with local police forces blurs the distinctions between peacekeeping and policing. This blending prompts a critical question about the status of contemporary peace operations: should they still be defined as military forces or as part of a global police state? (Howard, 2026; Walter et al., 2021). While current research mentions the broadening of peacekeeping functions and the increasing importance of policing, it tends to be descriptive and isolated. Existing research tends to be descriptive and focuses on operational developments without providing a coherent analytical framework to explain the structural integration of peacekeeping and policing. As a result, there is a significant analytical deficit in explaining the operation of current peace operations as hybrid systems of enforcement, governance, and institutional development.

This study seeks to fill this gap by asking two key questions: (i) Is United Nations Peacekeeping transforming into global policing? and (ii) What are the conceptually and operationally distinctive features of the "Blue Police Paradigm"? To answer, the study seeks to provide a new analytical framework that deconstructs UN Peacekeeping as a hybrid system of governance, which combines military stabilization, policing functions, and institutional development. The study employs a qualitative and conceptual research approach using secondary data sources such as United Nations reports, UNPOL policy documents, and academic literature. The study adopts a comparative and thematic analysis to understand the incorporation of policing functions in modern peace operations. At the theoretical level, the study is informed by Constructivism, Foucauldian governance theory, and Global Policing Theory, which provide an explanation of the normative, disciplinary, and transnational aspects of this shift.

This study has two contributions. First, it contributes to the theoretical debate by linking International Relations with policing studies in a single framework. Second, it yields policy-relevant findings for better mandate design, UNPOL capacity building, and mechanisms for accountability in peace operations. Through this analysis, the study convincingly shows that all 17 current UN missions are not simply military operations but also a global policing system. The paper suggests that United Nations Peacekeeping is being recalibrated towards policing the world. The Blue Police Paradigm provides a holistic approach to grasp the shift and its implications for global security governance.

2. Literature Review

The literature on United Nations Peacekeeping increasingly converges on the idea that modern peace operations represent a significant shift from their traditional military roots toward a multifaceted system of global security governance. This shift is intrinsically linked to the evolving nature of armed conflict, especially intrastate wars, weak and failing states, and non-traditional security challenges that undermine traditional interstate conflict paradigms (de Coning, 2021). In this changing environment, peacekeeping is no longer limited to monitoring truces or interposing its forces; it is now engaged in a multidimensional approach that includes the protection of civilians, institutional reform, and governance intervention. This transformation is well recognized in the literature, but remains piecemeal in its assessment of the full

structural consequences of this development. When this process is systematically analyzed across the 17 current United Nations Peacekeeping operations (MINURSO, MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, UNIFIL, UNMISS, UNFICYP, UNMIK, UNISFA, UNMIL, UNMHA, UNSOM, UNSMIL, BINUH, UNIOGBIS, UNOCA, UNOAU), a more profound and integrated process of transformation emerges, which implies not just an expansion of operations but a transformation of peacekeeping into a hybrid system of global security governance. This section reviews the literature through a set of thematic debates to show both unity and disunity in the existing body of literature, and to identify the need for a more holistic approach.

2.1. Transformation of Peacekeeping Mandates into Multidimensional Governance Systems

One key theme in the literature relates to the transformation of peacekeeping mandates. Traditional peacekeeping operations were once premised on the principles of impartiality, consent, and limited use of force, largely limited to ceasefire monitoring and the delineation of buffer zones. But today's United Nations missions, across all 17 current operations, show a marked shift towards civilian protection, rule of law, governance reform, and institutional building (Otto et al., 2024). This expansion is described as "mandate broadening", referring to the blurring of peacekeeping, governance, and development. Rather than neutral military observers, missions like MINUSCA, MONUSCO, and UNMISS are active governance actors involved in fragile state-building processes. This shift suggests that peacekeeping has become a complex system that integrates security, institutional, and political building. Yet, while the literature is successful in capturing this expansion, it tends to consider mandate transformation as an extension of peacekeeping roles and responsibilities, rather than as a shift in peace operations. This means that the theoretical implications of this shift are not well explored.

2.2. Expansion of Policing Functions and the Rise of UNPOL-Centric Operations

A second theme relates to the growing role and integration of policing functions. In all 17 current missions, United Nations Police (UNPOL) have become pivotal in training, mentoring, and assisting host state law enforcement agencies. UNPOL is actively involved in crowd control, prevention of crime, investigation of sexual and gender-based violence, and electoral security (United Nations, 2024). This growth marks a qualitative evolution whereby policing has become a critical function, no longer an ancillary activity. Peacekeeping operations like MINUSMA, UNMIL, and UNISFA show that maintaining public order and policing are central operational focuses. As a result, peacekeeping increasingly resembles domestic policing arrangements, especially in its focus on managing public order and populations, as well as complementing justice processes. Yet, the literature tends to separate policing as a technical or operational aspect of peacekeeping operations, rather than placing them in the context of a shift in global security governance. This constrains a more profound understanding of the role of policing in refashioning the whole of peacekeeping.

2.3. Hybrid Security Governance Across UN Peace Operations

Third, contemporary peacekeeping is seen as hybrid security governance. Contemporary peace operations are conceptualized as complex adaptive systems with a range of actors, including United Nations agencies, regional actors, and host-state security forces (de Coning, 2021). In operations like UNOCA, UNOAU, and UNSOM, peacekeeping occurs within networked governance arrangements co-producing security, political, and institutional reform. Otto et al. (2024) also refer to it as “experimental governance,” with an emphasis on the context-specific adaptive nature of such interventions. This view emphasizes that peacekeeping is no longer an individual institutional process, but rather a networked governance system that involves multiple actors and functions. But although hybridity captures the complexity of actors and practices, it does not fully address the persistence of a logic that orders these systems. Specifically, the role of policing as an integrating operational logic in this hybrid governance system remains under-theorized.

2.4. Emergence of Policing Logic as the Dominant Operational Framework

A fourth theme highlights the increasing dominance of policing logic in peace operations. Traditionally, peacekeeping emphasized neutrality and separation of forces; however, contemporary missions now prioritize population protection, surveillance, and preventive security strategies. Across missions such as MINUSMA, MONUSCO, and UNMISS, operational practices increasingly resemble domestic policing, including intelligence gathering, patrol-based deterrence, and community engagement (Greener, 2011; Lamb, 2022). Civilian protection mandates require proactive enforcement strategies that resemble policing rather than traditional peacekeeping. Thus, across the 17 missions, policing logic has become structurally embedded within peacekeeping mandates.

2.5. Institutional Expansion of UNPOL and Networked Mission Architecture

A fifth theme concerns the institutional growth of UNPOL and the increasing integration of policing components within mission structures. Across all 17 active operations, UNPOL has evolved from an advisory unit to a core operational pillar responsible for law enforcement support and institutional reform. Missions such as UNMIK, UNMIL, and BINUH illustrate the growing role of police reform, capacity building, and governance support in post-conflict environments. Duursma (2022) emphasizes that stabilization missions increasingly depend on policing expertise for sustaining internal security. This institutional expansion reflects a shift toward a global policing architecture embedded within UN peace operations.

2.6. Conceptual Tension and Research Gap: Peacekeeping vs Policing Convergence

Although there is much empirical evidence to support the functional convergence of peacekeeping and policing, the literature continues to separate these two functions. Peacekeeping is normatively proscriptive in nature (neutrality and consent), while policing is prescriptive (coercive and enforcement-oriented (Bush & Dodson, 2014; Duursma, 2022). This generates a conceptual ambiguity in peace operations. This ambiguity is evident in the blurring of roles and responsibilities across all 17 missions, where peacekeepers must balance their legitimacy in the eyes of citizens while performing enforcement-oriented tasks. Scholars also point to the dangers of this convergence, including policing militarization and peacekeeping neutrality erosion. But current research tends to be confined to the recognition of this paradox. They do not offer a consistent theoretical approach to explain how and why this convergence takes place, nor do they theorize its systemic implications. It is therefore underdeveloped how the evolution of peacekeeping into a policing-oriented governance system is conceptualized.

2.7. Research Gap and Analytical Need for a New Framework

While the literature offers many insights into mandate expansion, policing integration, and hybrid governance, there are three key gaps. First, there is no coherent theoretical framework that links peacekeeping and policing. Second, there is a lack of theory to support the notion of peacekeeping as global policing, despite overwhelming empirical evidence from the 17 UN missions. Third, there is no explanation of how normative, institutional, and operational changes interact to reshape the nature of peace operations. These shortcomings result in a gap between empirical evidence and theoretical understanding, which restrains a holistic understanding of contemporary peacekeeping. To overcome these challenges, this research offers the Blue Police Paradigm as a new analytical framework that conceptualizes United Nations Peacekeeping as a hybrid system of global policing governance. By drawing together Constructivism, Foucauldian governance theory, and Global Policing Theory, the framework offers a multi-faceted explanation of the evolution of peacekeeping into a hybrid system of military stabilization, policing, and institutional governance. Crucially, this theoretical contribution meets the aims of the study by (i) evaluating whether United Nations Peacekeeping is transforming into a system of global policing, and (ii) highlighting the conceptual and operational characteristics of the transformation. In so doing, the study goes beyond a descriptive analysis of change and provides a theoretical explanation of the structural convergence in contemporary peace operations.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study develops a multi-layered theoretical framework to explain the transformation of United Nations Peacekeeping into a policing-oriented system of global security governance. Rather than treating theoretical perspectives as competing explanations, the framework integrates Constructivism, Foucauldian governance theory, and Global Policing Theory as complementary analytical lenses that collectively capture the normative, disciplinary, and structural dimensions of this transformation. Through this integration, the study conceptualizes the emergence of the "Blue Police Paradigm" as a coherent analytical model that explains how evolving norms, power relations, and transnational security practices converge across the 17 active UN peace operations. This approach moves beyond traditional military-centered interpretations and conceptualizes peacekeeping as a dynamic system of global order maintenance operating across fragile and conflict-affected environments. In doing so, it provides a theoretically grounded explanation of how peacekeeping has evolved into a hybrid governance system that integrates security enforcement, institutional reform, and population-centered regulation.

3.1. Constructivism: Norms, Identity, and Legitimacy in Peace Operations

Constructivist theory provides the foundational normative lens for understanding the evolution of United Nations peacekeeping. It posits that international institutions are shaped not only by material capabilities but also by socially constructed norms, identities, and legitimacy expectations (Aksu, 2003). In contemporary peace operations, particularly across the 17 active missions, evolving norms such as human security, civilian protection, and Responsibility to Protect (R2P) have significantly redefined operational mandates. These normative transformations are evident in missions such as MINUSCA, UNMISS, and BINUH, where civilian protection has become a central operational obligation rather than a peripheral task. Furthermore, legitimacy constitutes a critical dimension of peacekeeping effectiveness. Unlike traditional military operations, United Nations missions derive legitimacy from a combination of international authorization, host-state consent, and local societal acceptance. As policing functions expand within these missions, legitimacy becomes increasingly contingent upon perceptions of impartiality, accountability, and community trust. This shift indicates that peacekeeping is no longer evaluated solely in terms of conflict containment but also in terms of its ability to generate normative acceptance within local populations. From a Constructivist perspective, therefore, the transformation of peacekeeping reflects a broader redefinition of its institutional identity from a neutral interposition force to an active governance actor engaged in population-centered security practices. This normative evolution provides a crucial foundation for understanding the emergence of policing-oriented interventions across all UN missions.

3.2. Foucauldian Governance: Surveillance, Discipline, and Population Management

Foucauldian governance theory offers a critical perspective on how power is exercised within contemporary peace operations. Drawing on Foucault's concept of governmentality, this approach emphasizes that modern power operates through surveillance, regulation, and the management of populations rather than through direct coercion alone. When applied to United Nations peacekeeping, this perspective reveals that missions increasingly function as mechanisms of disciplinary governance embedded within fragile and conflict-affected environments (Doucet, 2017). Across missions such as MONUSCO, MINUSMA, and UNISFA, peace operations extend beyond military stabilization into practices of data collection, intelligence support, risk assessment, and civilian monitoring. These practices reflect a broader transformation in which peacekeeping operates as a system of population management, regulating everyday security conditions and shaping behavioral patterns within local communities. Rather than merely separating armed groups or maintaining ceasefires, contemporary missions actively engage in the governance of social order through preventive and regulatory mechanisms (Merlingen, 2011). This Foucauldian lens thus highlights the micro-level dynamics of power within peace operations, demonstrating how surveillance, discipline, and risk management become embedded in their operational logic. It reveals that modern peacekeeping increasingly functions as a form of regulatory governance that manages insecurity through continuous monitoring and intervention. In this sense, peacekeeping is transformed into a system that not only responds to conflict but also actively structures the conditions of security and stability within fragile states.

3.3. Global Policing Theory: Transnational Enforcement and Security Network

Importantly, Global Policing Theory Complements Constructivist and Foucauldian perspectives by explaining how normative transformations and disciplinary mechanisms are embedded within broader institutional structures. It provides the macro-level explanation of how security practices are coordinated across global networks, thereby situating peacekeeping within a wider system of transnational governance. Through this lens, the transformation of peacekeeping can be understood as part of a broader shift toward globalized policing practices that transcend traditional state boundaries.

3.4. Conceptual Model: Peacekeeping–Stabilization–Policing–Governance Continuum

Building on the integration of these theoretical perspectives, this study conceptualizes the evolution of United Nations Peacekeeping as a dynamic continuum that captures its progressive transformation across interconnected domains of security and governance. Rather than viewing peacekeeping as a static institutional category, it is understood as an evolving process that moves from traditional military-centered functions toward increasingly complex governance-oriented roles. At its initial stage, peacekeeping was characterized by ceasefire monitoring, neutrality, and interposition deployment between conflicting parties. This gradually evolved into stabilization-oriented missions focused on preventing conflict relapse and ensuring basic security enforcement. Over time, policing functions became increasingly central, encompassing civilian protection, crime prevention, crowd control, and law enforcement support. These developments ultimately extend into governance-oriented interventions involving institutional reform, rule-of-law development, and state

capacity building. This continuum illustrates that contemporary peace operations operate across overlapping domains of security, enforcement, and governance, reflecting increasing levels of intervention and institutional engagement. It also demonstrates that the transformation of peacekeeping is not merely additive but structural, reshaping its operational logic and institutional identity. Across the 17 active UN missions, this progression highlights the emergence of a hybrid system in which military, policing, and governance functions are deeply interconnected.

3.5. The Blue Police Paradigm: Definition and Conceptualization

Against this integrated theoretical foundation, this study introduces the Blue Police Paradigm as a novel conceptual framework for understanding contemporary United Nations peacekeeping. The Blue Police Paradigm conceptualizes peacekeeping as a form of global policing governance in which international missions simultaneously perform functions of military stabilization, policing enforcement, and institutional governance in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Unlike traditional peacekeeping, which is grounded in neutrality and minimal use of force, this paradigm reflects a shift toward proactive security management, population regulation, and transnational norm enforcement. It captures the empirical reality that across all 17 active UN peace operations, the boundaries between military and policing roles have become increasingly blurred, giving rise to a hybrid system of global security governance. By integrating normative change, mechanisms of power, and transnational institutional structures, the Blue Police Paradigm provides a comprehensive analytical framework that explains the structural convergence between peacekeeping and policing. It thus offers a theoretically grounded basis for understanding how contemporary peace operations function as an emerging system of global policing governance.3.6 Core Dimensions of the Blue Police Paradigm the Blue Police Paradigm is operationalized through four interrelated analytical dimensions:

(a) Authority

Authority refers to the legitimacy basis of peace operations derived from international mandates rather than state sovereignty. UN peacekeepers operate under multilateral authorization, yet increasingly exercise authority in policing-like roles within domestic security environments.

(b) Legitimacy

Legitimacy depends on international legal frameworks, human rights compliance, and local acceptance. As policing functions expand, legitimacy becomes more fragile and contested, particularly in coercive operational environments.

(c) Use of Force

This dimension reflects the shift from minimal force to calibrated and sometimes robust enforcement, particularly in civilian protection mandates. Force is increasingly used preventively rather than reactively.

(d) Civilian Engagement

Civilian engagement reflects population-centric security approaches, including community policing, trust-building, and local cooperation. These practices increasingly mirror domestic policing systems and are central across all UN missions.

3.7. Conceptual Model

The conceptual model of the Blue Police Paradigm illustrates a causal progression beginning with global security transformations, including fragile states, intrastate conflicts, and hybrid threats. These conditions drive the evolution of UN peace operations from traditional military roles toward multidimensional stabilization and governance functions. At the center of the model lies the Blue Police Paradigm, which conceptualizes peacekeeping as global policing. This paradigm is operationalized through the interconnected dimensions of authority, legitimacy, and use of force, which collectively shape mission behavior. These dimensions are reinforced by civilian engagement, reflecting a shift toward population-centered security governance. Ultimately, the model culminates in a global policing governance outcome, where UN peace

operations function as hybrid systems integrating military stabilization, policing enforcement, and institutional governance. Across the 17 active UN missions, this structure demonstrates a systemic transformation of peacekeeping into a global security regulation mechanism.

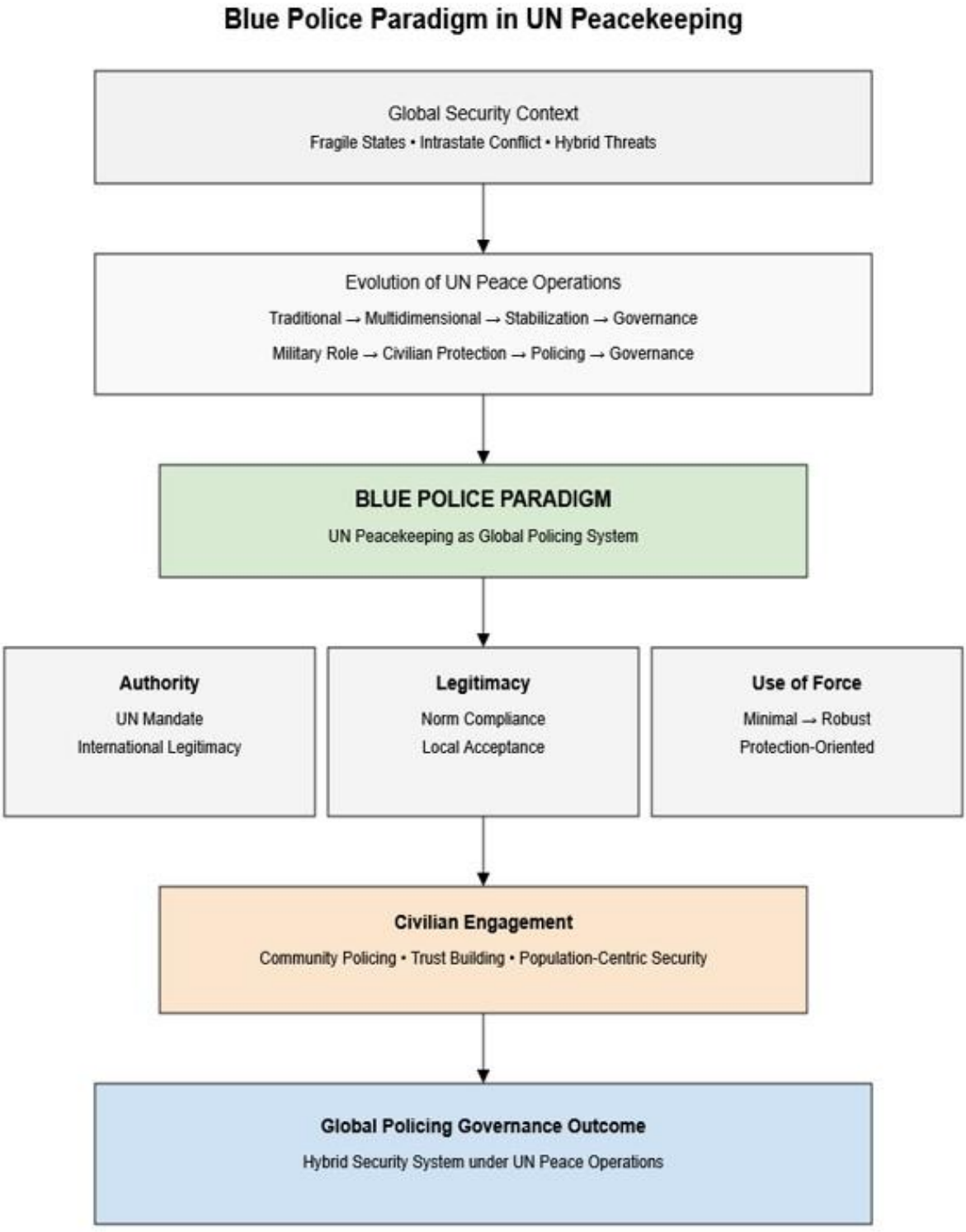


Figure 01: Blue Police Paradigm in UN Peacekeeping

4. Methodology

4.1. Research Design

This paper employs a qualitative, conceptual, and comparative research design to analyze the evolution of United Nations Peacekeeping into a policing-oriented framework of global security governance. The qualitative approach is suitable as the study concentrates on elucidating institutional transformation, normative evolution, and operational practices, rather than quantifying statistical causality or evaluating hypotheses. The study formulates the Blue Police Paradigm as a conceptual framework for elucidating the convergence of peacekeeping and policing functions. The research is fundamentally theoretical, seeking to redefine peacekeeping as a hybrid model of global security governance. In addition, the study incorporates a comparative dimension across all 17 active UN peace operations, including MINURSO, MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, UNIFIL, UNMISS, UNFICYP, UNMIK, UNISFA, UNMIL, UNMHA, UNSOM, UNSMIL, BINUH, UNIOGBIS, UNOCA, and UNOAU. This system-wide comparison allows the study to capture variations in mandate design, policing integration, and governance roles across different conflict environments. Overall, the design aligns with interpretivist methodology, emphasizing meaning-making, institutional change, and normative transformation over statistical generalization.

4.2. Data Sources

The research utilizes a triangulated array of secondary data sources to guarantee empirical validation and theoretical precision. The main sources are official United Nations documents, especially those from the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) and the United Nations Police (UNPOL). These include Security Council resolutions and mandate frameworks, mission-specific operational and performance reports, strategic policy papers on peacekeeping reform and civilian protection, and reports on rule-of-law initiatives and security sector reform. These institutional documents give us reliable and consistent information about how the mandates, operational priorities, and governance structures of modern peace operations are changing. The study integrates a diverse array of academic and policy-oriented materials, including peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly texts on peacekeeping, policing, and global security governance, as well as policy papers and research reports generated by international organizations, alongside institutional sources. The amalgamation of these varied sources facilitates methodological triangulation, thereby enhancing the study's validity, reliability, and analytical profundity. The research integrates official documentation with academic scholarship, thereby encompassing both the formal institutional viewpoint and the wider theoretical and critical analyses of peacekeeping transformation.

4.3. Case Selection and Analytical Scope

Even though the study is mostly about ideas, it uses a system-wide analytical approach by looking at all 17 active United Nations peace operations as its empirical universe. The study does not consider these missions to be separate or independent cases; instead, it sees them as parts of a single governance system that is becoming more complex and adapting to changing security needs. This method helps us understand structural change in peacekeeping better by focusing on patterns of convergence and systemic change across missions. The study's analytical scope concentrates on investigating the manifestation of the Blue Police Paradigm across all missions through various interconnected dimensions. These encompass the evolution and expansion of mandates, the integration of policing functions within mission frameworks, transformations in the application of force, the formulation of civilian protection strategies, and the institutional coordination between military and police entities. The study comprehensively analyzes these dimensions, revealing both variability and uniformity in the implementation of peacekeeping functions across various geopolitical and conflict contexts. This approach enables analytical generalization instead of statistical inference, allowing for the identification of overarching structural patterns that characterize the evolution of United Nations peacekeeping.

4.4. Validity and Reliability

The thorough triangulation of several data sources, including official United Nations documents, peer-reviewed academic literature, and policy papers, ensures the study's validity. By enabling cross-verification of important findings and arguments, this multi-source method reduces the possibility of single-source bias and improves the credibility of interpretations. The study obtains a fair and solid picture of the evolution of peacekeeping operations by utilizing both institutional

data and academic assessments. The utilization of uniform and consistent institutional data—particularly mission reports, Security Council documents, and UN policy frameworks—further enhances reliability. These sources include standardized and similar data from all 17 peace operations, allowing for consistent analysis in a variety of situations. Furthermore, the study's coherence in interpretation and analytical consistency are guaranteed by the use of a single theoretical framework that incorporates constructivism, Foucauldian governance theory, and global policing theory. By using a methodical lens across all data sources and situations, this theoretical alignment strengthens the validity of conclusions.

4.5. Methodological Restrictions

The study has a number of drawbacks despite its analytical strengths. First, it is more difficult to directly witness field-level dynamics or record the micro-level experiences of players involved in peacekeeping operations due to the reliance on secondary sources. As a result, the study might not accurately reflect some operational subtleties and context-specific behaviors. Second, the results are meant for theoretical and analytical generalization across United Nations peace operations rather than statistical generalization because the study was qualitative and conceptually driven. Third, even though all 17 ongoing missions are included in the analysis, the degree of direct comparability across cases may be limited because these missions differ greatly in terms of operational intensity, geographic location, and mandate complexity. However, these drawbacks are lessened by the application of system-wide comparative analysis, methodological triangulation, and structured thematic interpretation, all of which strengthen the study's conclusions. The Blue Police Paradigm, a coherent analytical framework that methodically analyzes the evolution of United Nations Peacekeeping into an emergent system of global policing control, is the research's overall methodological contribution. The study provides a robust and cohesive methodological approach appropriate for high-impact academic inquiry by fusing conceptual depth with thorough empirical coverage.

5. Findings

This part provides a summary of the conceptual, theoretical, and comparative findings of the paper to assess the possibility of conceptualizing contemporary United Nations Peacekeeping as a type of global policing according to the Blue Police Paradigm. Based on the combined theoretical background and empirical examples of United Nations Peace Operations, the results indicate that the change in the pattern, role, and logic of work of the peacekeeping has been observed uniformly. These changes are examined in relation to thematic dimensions, connected, and which substantiate the main argument of the paper.

5.1. Structural Change of Peacekeeping Mandates

One of the key observations of this paper is that the United Nations Peacekeeping has experienced a radical structural change from a modest military surveillance system to a multidimensional security governance. Early peacekeeping operations were mainly aimed at overseeing the ceasefires and keeping buffer zones amid warring factions. But the modern operations are more and more based on requirements to protect civilians, build the rule of law, reform the institution, and stabilize it (de Coning, 2021). This change is indicative of a wider normative shift of human security and governance-based intervention, which is highlighted in the Constructivist theory. Peacekeeping expansion indicates that it is no longer passive but rather a tool of active governance, functioning in the area of domestic security. This change is especially evident in missions such as 17 United Nations peace operations, namely, MINURSO, MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, UNIFIL, UNVMC, BINUH, UNMHA, UNFICYP, UNISFA, UNMIK, UNIOGBIS, UNMISS, UNSMIL, UNOCA, UNOAU, and UNSOM, where peacekeepers are involved in enforcement-focused operations and in institutional support roles. As a result, peacekeeping is currently carrying out functions that have historically been the prerogative of domestic policing systems, such as maintaining order, preventing violence, and assisting local security structures. Such a structural development is a solid empirical basis for the argument that peacekeeping has shifted to a hybrid policing-security paradigm.

5.2. Merging Peacekeeping and Policing Roles

A second major observation is that there is a growing functional overlap in peacekeeping and policing functions. Modern peace operations have shown a reflection of explicit incorporation of the activities related to law enforcement in their operational mandates. The United Nations Police (UNPOL) have become a key player in the mission structures and are significant in the training of local police forces, criminal justice systems, and keeping the public in order (Naidoo &

Liebenberg, 2022). Moreover, civilian protection mandates presuppose proactive and preventive modes of engagement that are similar to domestic policing, such as patrol-based security, crowd management, and risk prevention (Walter et al., 2021). This overlap is most evident in United Nations Peace Operations, where peace officials are involved in intelligence assistance, stabilization missions, and in direct contact with civilian groups in high-insecurity situations. In terms of Global Policing Theory, this convergence signifies the spread of policing to national borders to transnational systems of governance. Consequently, the boundary between military peacekeeping and policing functions has been more and more obscured, which supports the inferential applicability of the Blue Police Paradigm as a scheme of interpreting this change.

5.3.1. Hybrid Security Governance is Emerging

The third key observation is the development of hybrid security governance arrangements in modern-day peace operations. UN missions are no longer acting as military interventions, but they incorporate various institutional logics, such as military, policing, humanitarian, and governance aspects (Diehl et al., 2024). This is similar to what de Coning (2021) defines as complex adaptive systems, in which security is co-produced by a series of international, national, and local actors. In United Nations Peace Operations, the enforcement, protection, and institutional support functions are integrated to prove the hybridity of modern peacekeeping. Such missions are run using coordinated frameworks that comprise military forces, UNPOL forces, civil agencies, and host-state bodies. This change is consistent with the wider trends in international security governance, where authority and responsibility are decentralized across multiple levels as opposed to being vested in a single actor. Thus, peacekeeping can be interpreted as a networked governmental framework that breaks the traditional dividing line between the military and civilian functions (Schroeder et al., 2014). The finding is a good empirical confirmation of the existence of the Blue Police Paradigm, which theorizes peacekeeping as a hybrid governance mechanism.

5.4. Policing Logic as a Hegemonic Framework of Operation

All 17 of the United Nations' peace operations—MINURSO, MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, UNIFIL, UNVMC, BINUH, UNMHA, UNFICYP, UNISFA, UNMIK, UNIOGBIS, UNMISS, UNSMIL, UNOCA, UNOAU, and UNSOM—have found that policing logic is becoming the dominant operational framework of modern peacekeeping. This represents a significant departure from traditional peacekeeping ideals, which were traditionally based on impartiality, party consent, and the least use of force. Modern operations, on the other hand, place a greater emphasis on maintaining order, preventing violence, protecting civilians, and implementing population-centered security governance. The civilian protection mandates for all 17 missions are now more proactive and intervention-focused, requiring peacekeepers to perform deterrence, quick response, and preventive security measures that are very similar to domestic policing duties. In stabilizing and high-risk missions like MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, and UNMISS, where peacekeepers work in settings with asymmetric threats, fragmented armed groups, and ongoing civilian vulnerability, this shift is most evident. A policing-oriented security reasoning is reflected in these circumstances, where security operations increasingly depend on risk assessment, preemptive deployment, and community-focused protection measures. Policing functions, including crowd control, community involvement, and public order support, have become essential parts of mission practice, even in relatively stable or long-standing operations like UNFICYP, UNIFIL, and UNMIK. From the standpoint of Foucauldian governance, this development shows the growth of population control, discipline, and surveillance methods in peace operations, where security is increasingly created through ongoing observation and behavioural control as opposed to sporadic military action. Therefore, peacekeeping is no longer limited to reactive conflict management across all 17 missions; rather, it increasingly serves as an active system of social ordering that regulates risk settings, stabilizes fragile government systems, and influences civilian conduct. All things considered, the results show that policing logic has emerged as the primary organizational element of modern UN peace operations. This hegemonic shift confirms that peacekeeping is no longer primarily a military or neutral interposition mechanism but is increasingly structured around a global policing rationality, thereby reinforcing the analytical validity of the Blue Police Paradigm.

5.5.1. UNPOL and Hybrid Mission Institutionalization

The fifth finding concerns institutional change in the United Nations' peacekeeping architecture, especially the growth of UNPOL and the emergence of integrated mission structures. Traditionally, policing elements had a passive advisory role, though modern missions are more and more based on UNPOL as a key operational participant. Police elements are instrumental in the implementation of security mandates in fragile settings, through stabilization missions (Hunt, 2019). UNPOL units now actively participate in training, mentoring, coordination, and, in certain instances, direct operational

assistance to the local law enforcement institutions. This institutional development is indicative of a larger change towards hybrid mission frameworks that combine military, police, and civilian elements into a single structure. That kind of integration strengthens the ability of peace operations to respond to complex security threats as well as solidifies the integration between peacekeeping and policing roles. Thus, the development of UNPOL and hybrid missions presents solid institutional facts of the appearance of the Blue Police Paradigm.

5.6. Blue Police Paradigm Validation

All the results confirm the theoretical framework constructed in this study. As a Constructivist, the metamorphosis of peacekeeping is an indication of the changing international standards that emphasize human security, civilian protection, and active involvement in unstable environments. These normative changes have broadened the mandate and expectations of peace operations beyond the traditional roles of neutrality. According to the Foucauldian view, modern peacekeeping is a form of governance that is defined by surveillance, discipline, and management of the population. The growing utilization of data, surveillance, and intelligence-led activities reveals how power is imposed by regulatory and preventive approaches instead of purely by coercion. As illustrated in Table 1. the operational dimensions of the Blue Police Paradigm are consistently reflected across multiple UN missions.

Table 01: Blue Police Paradigm: Theory–Practice–Policy Nexus Across United Nations Peace Operations

UN Mission	Theoretical Lens (Blue Police Paradigm)	Operational Practice (Policing Function)	Governance Role (Security Transformation)	Policy Implication (Global Policing Shift)
MINURSO	Minimal force legitimacy under consent-based peacekeeping	Monitoring ceasefire, limited civilian interaction	Low-intensity stabilization governance	Need a clearer mandate for civilian protection integration
MINUSCA	Constructivist human security framework	Civilian protection, public order support	State authority reconstruction	Strengthen UNPOL operational autonomy
MINUSMA	Foucauldian security governance	Intelligence-led patrols, convoy protection	Population surveillance in asymmetric conflict	Improve intelligence and risk governance capacity
MONUSCO	Hybrid enforcement policing logic	Robust stabilization, armed group containment	Security enforcement governance	Clarify use-of-force accountability
UNIFIL	Interposition + regulatory policing	Border monitoring, conflict deterrence	Regional security stabilization	Enhance coordination with host-state forces
UNMISS	Human security policing model	Civilian protection, community patrols	Protection-centric governance system	Expand community policing frameworks
UNFICYP	Neutral buffer zone governance	Patrols, conflict prevention monitoring	Territorial stability maintenance	Maintain neutrality while expanding mediation capacity
UNMIK	Transitional policing governance	Institutional policing reform	State-building and rule-of-law construction	Strengthen institutional transition mechanisms
UNISFA	Resource-conflict containment model	Area security, oil-region protection	Conflict-resource governance	Improve resource-based conflict policing
UNMIL	Post-conflict institutional policing	Large-scale police reform support	State rebuilding and law enforcement restructuring	Enhance post-mission sustainability
UNMHA	Limited mandate policing framework	Ceasefire monitoring in localized conflict	Conflict de-escalation governance	Expand monitoring to preventive policing
UNSOM	Capacity-building policing model	Advisory policing, training support	Institutional capacity strengthening	Increase training investment for local police

UNSMIL	Transitional governance policing	Security coordination and advisory roles	Fragile state stabilization	Improve mandate flexibility and resilience
BINUH	Civil security governance model	Advisory policing and institutional reform	Democratic policing support	Strengthen rule-of-law enforcement mechanisms
UNIOGBIS	Reform-oriented policing model	Police reform and training assistance	Governance stabilization	Enhance long-term institutional support
UNOCA	Regional security coordination model	Early warning, coordination support	Regional security governance network	Improve cross-border policing cooperation
UNOAU	Continental security advisory model	Strategic policing guidance	African security governance integration	Strengthen AU–UN policing synergy

Note: Across all 17 active United Nations peace operations, the Blue Police Paradigm demonstrates a clear structural shift from traditional military peacekeeping toward a multi-layered global policing system. Theoretical perspectives (Constructivism, Foucauldian governance, and Global Policing Theory) reveal that peace operations increasingly function through normative legitimacy, disciplinary surveillance, and transnational security networks. Operationally, missions now integrate policing tasks such as intelligence-led patrols, civilian protection, institutional reform, and crime prevention. Policy implications consistently point toward strengthening UNPOL capacity, clarifying mandates, and enhancing accountability mechanisms, confirming that modern peacekeeping operates as an evolving system of global security governance through policing logic. In terms of Global Policing Theory, peacekeeping is explainable as a transnational security network that expands the policing functions across states. The merging of military, police, and governance functions in the UN missions is an indication of how a global architect of policing has emerged. These theoretical views, when combined, lead to the main thesis of the study, namely, that the United Nations Peacekeeping is being transformed in its structure and functions to a form of global policing. The Blue Police Paradigm, therefore, offers a unified and holistic approach to comprehending this change, to fill the gap between International Relations theory and the study of policing, and to encapsulate the empirical reality of modern peace operations.

5.7. Peacekeeping Global Policing

Another major finding of this paper is that the modern-day peacekeeping of the United Nations is taking the shape of global policing. The experience of United Nations Peace Operations shows that peace operations have assumed a core policing role, including enforcement, surveillance, and civilian protection and population management. This change is part of a broader shift in global governance, in which security is no longer confined to the national level but is regulated by international institutional frameworks. UN Peacekeeping is a transnational system of security regulation, as a global governance that goes beyond the state in its policing functions. Thus, the shift of the Blue Helmets to the Blue Police is not just a theoretical concept but can be observed empirically, which supports the main thesis of this paper (see Table 2).

Table 2: Comparative Evolution of UN Peacekeeping Models

Dimension	Traditional Peacekeeping Model	Multidimensional Peacekeeping Model	Stabilization Model	Blue Police Model (Contemporary Global Policing)
Core Objective	Ceasefire monitoring and conflict containment	Support peace agreements and post-conflict recovery	Stabilize fragile states and prevent relapse into conflict	Maintain order, regulate security, and manage populations in fragile environments
Operational Logic	Neutrality, consent, minimal force	Mixed civilian-military governance approach	Robust engagement and conflict management	Policing-oriented logic: prevention, deterrence, enforcement, and population security
Use of Force	Strictly limited, self-defense only	Conditional use for civilian protection	Proactive and robust use under Chapter VII mandates	Calibrated enforcement resembling law enforcement practices, including deterrence and coercion

Institutional Composition	Primarily military observers and troops	Integrated military, police, and civilian components	Strong military presence with supporting police and civilian actors	Fully hybrid structure: military + United Nations Police + governance actors
Role of Police (UNPOL)	Minimal or absent	Advisory and capacity-building role	Expanding role in stabilization and institutional reform	Central operational actor in law enforcement, training, public order, and justice support
Nature of Security Engagement	Passive monitoring	Supportive and facilitative	Active stabilization and conflict deterrence	Direct involvement in public order, crime prevention, surveillance, and risk management
Civilian Protection	Indirect and limited	Increasingly mandated responsibility	Core mandate with proactive engagement	Central priority using policing tools (patrols, intelligence, community engagement)
Governance Role	None or very limited	Institutional support and rule-of-law promotion	State-building and governance strengthening	Deep governance involvement: regulation, discipline, and population management
Type of Conflict Addressed	Interstate conflicts	Post-conflict and intrastate conflicts	Fragile states with ongoing violence	Hybrid threats: insurgency, terrorism, organized crime, urban insecurity
Geographical Scope (Examples)	Early missions (e.g., UNEF, UNTSO)	Broad missions across Africa, the Balkans, and Asia	Missions like MONUSCO, MINUSMA (earlier phases)	Reflected across 17 active missions, including MINURSO, MINUSCA, MONUSCO, UNMISS, UNSOM, etc.
Theoretical Foundation	Realist and liberal institutionalist peacekeeping	Liberal peacebuilding and governance theory	Stabilization and complex adaptive systems	Constructivism + Foucauldian governance + Global Policing Theory
Security Governance Model	State-centric	Transitional governance support	Hybrid stabilization governance	Transnational policing governance system
Legitimacy Basis	Consent of parties and neutrality	International norms and peace agreements	Mandated authority with mixed legitimacy	Norm-based legitimacy + performance-based acceptance (often contested)
Overall Characterization	Passive military buffer	Multidimensional peace support	Robust stabilization mechanism	Global policing system ("Blue Police Paradigm")

Although the Blue Police Paradigm is quite explanatory, it also exposes its underlying contradictions and limitations. A significant issue is related to legitimacy because strong enforcement functions can be incompatible with the conventional peacekeeping laws of neutrality and consent. When the peacekeeping operations become more like policing, host-state resistance and the issue of sovereignty tend to arise. Moreover, accountability is one of the major challenges, especially when peacekeepers are able to use coercive power in the context when there are no evident legal frameworks similar to the local police systems. This brings about conflicts between the global and the local governing structures. In critical International Relations terms, these contradictions point to the fact that the transfiguration of peacekeeping into global policing is not only powerful, but also contentious. Thus, although the Blue Police Paradigm is an excellent analytical framework, its application in practice is still subject to political, legal, and normative limitations.

6. Challenges of the Blue Police Model

The Blue Police Paradigm provides a convincing conceptual framework of how modern peace operations can be reformed; however, when applied to the real-life setting of a United Nations Peacekeeping operation, it brings up several important issues. All these issues are indicative of structural tension between the old peacekeeping values and the developing policing-driven logic of new global security governance.

6.1. Legitimacy Crisis

The rise of a legitimacy crisis of contemporary peace operations is one of the biggest challenges to consider. The traditional peacekeeping was legitimized by the lack of neutrality, the agreement of the parties, and the absence of intervention

into the internal affairs. But as missions tend to play more of an enforcement-oriented and policing-like role, their perceived impartiality is challenged. According to scholars, local communities can view peacekeepers as usurping or coercive forces when they participate in proactive use of force or population control operations, instead of considering them as impartial protectors (Bellamy & Hunt, 2015; Hunt, 2019). Furthermore, de Coning (2021) adds that legitimacy in complex settings requires not only legal requirements, but also acceptance on the ground, which is proving harder to sustain under strong mandates. The growth of policing functions as a result may lead to the erosion of the legitimacy of peacekeeping operations.

6.2. Sovereignty Concerns

The other significant issue concerns state sovereignty and political sensitivity. The growing role of UN missions in internal security governance is one of the issues that causes host states to fear outside intervention into their domestic affairs. Although mandates are mandated by an international agreement, their practical application tends to be highly interactive in nature, regarding policing, justice, and governance systems. According to Naeem (2025), stabilization missions tend to work in politically fragile settings where state power is challenged, and the issue of assistance and interference is extremely delicate. Consequently, the Blue Police Model will be seen as an indirect rule or external regulation, which is likely to provoke opposition on the part of national governments and local political forces.

6.3. Policing Functions Militarization

Another obstacle is the militarization of policing activities in peacekeeping processes. With the strengthening of the mandates of the peace operations, there is an increasing trend of the components of the military to carry out activities that were originally related to civilian policing. The operational confusion and the loss of definite functional boundaries may arise because of the blending of military and policing functions. Likewise, Allen & Yuen (2014) believe that the execution of policing activities by the military, armed with heavy weapons, can affect the relationship between communities and decrease confidence in security institutions. As a result, the Blue Police Model runs the risk of producing a hybrid force with no identity and a lack of specialization in operations.

6.4. Accountability Gaps

Also, any expansion of peacekeeping to policing functions poses huge accountability issues. The UN peacekeepers are also deployed in a complicated international commanding structure that incorporates various actors, unlike domestic law enforcement agencies, which include troop-contributing states, the UN Secretariat, and governments of host countries. This decentralized responsibility system frequently complicates trying to attribute blame to misbehavior, operational deficiencies, or human rights abuses. Bellamy & Hunt (2015) stress that the lack of accountability may threaten the effectiveness of operations and moral legitimacy. Thus, the lack of transparency and supervision of hybrid peacekeeping missions is a severe problem that has not been solved yet.

6.5. Resource Constraints

Lastly, the success of the Blue Police Model is limited by the consistent shortage of resources. Peace operations today are supposed to execute a broad spectrum of duties such as the protection of civilians, support of policing, institutional reform, and stabilization of highly volatile environments. Nevertheless, the expanded mandates are frequently not accompanied by sufficient financial resources, logistical resources, or human resources. De Coning (2021) claims that the disjuncture between mandates and capabilities is among the most long-standing structural flaws of modern peacekeeping. In addition to this, inadequate training on policing-specific functions also diminishes mission effectiveness, especially in intricate urban/asymmetric-conflict settings.

Table 3: Challenges of the Blue Police Model in UN Peace Operations

Challenge Dimension	Core Issue	Manifestation Across 17 Missions	Theoretical Explanation	Implication for Blue Police Paradigm
Legitimacy Crisis	Erosion of neutrality due to enforcement-oriented policing roles	Stronger in MONUSCO, MINUSCA, MINUSMA, UNMISS; moderate in UNIFIL, UNFICYP	Constructivism (norm tension between neutrality vs protection)	Weakens the perceived neutrality of UN missions

Sovereignty Sensitivity	Host-state resistance to external policing influence	Evident in UNSMIL, UNSOM, BINUH, UNMIK, MINUSCA	International relations and state sovereignty logic	Creates political constraints on mandate execution
Militarization of Policing	Blurring of military and police roles in field operations	High in MONUSCO (robust force), MINUSMA (security operations), MINUSCA	Foucauldian governance (security, militarization of social control)	Distorts traditional policing identity in missions
Accountability Fragmentation	Complex command structures reduce responsibility clarity	Across all missions due to the UN–TCC–host–state structure	Global governance complexity theory	Weakens transparency and legal accountability
Resource and Capacity Gaps	Mismatch between expanded mandates and available resources	Universal across all 17 missions, especially UNMISS, MINUSMA, MONUSCO	Institutional capability gap theory	Reduces the operational effectiveness of policing tasks
Operational Ambiguity	Unclear boundary between peacekeeping and enforcement policing	Prominent in MINUSCA, MONUSCO, UNISFA, and UNMIL legacy structures	Role theory (functional overlap and ambiguity)	Creates confusion in field-level decision-making
Security Risk Exposure	Peacekeepers face higher direct threat environments	High in MINUSMA, UNISFA, MONUSCO, UNMISS	Conflict environment escalation theory	Increases casualties and mission vulnerability
Coordination Complexity	Difficult coordination between military, police, and civilian actors	Across hybrid missions (UNMIK, MINUSCA, UNSMIL)	Network governance theory	Slows decision-making and operational response

The analysis of challenges demonstrates that while United Nations Peacekeeping is evolving toward a policing-oriented global governance system, its implementation is constrained by structural tensions involving legitimacy, sovereignty, militarization, accountability, and resources. Collectively, these challenges reveal a central paradox of the Blue Police Paradigm: as peace operations become more powerful and functionally expanded, they simultaneously become more politically contested, institutionally fragmented, and operationally complex. Therefore, while the Blue Police Paradigm provides a useful framework for understanding the evolution of United Nations peacekeeping, its implementation is constrained by multiple interrelated challenges. These include legitimacy deficits, sovereignty tensions, militarization risks, accountability gaps, and resource limitations. Collectively, these challenges highlight a central paradox: as peacekeeping becomes more operationally powerful and functionally expansive, it also becomes more politically contested and institutionally complex. This tension lies at the heart of contemporary debates on the future of global peace operations.

7. Discussion

The results of this research give solid grounds to believe that the work of the United Nations Peacekeeping is fundamentally changing and becoming a hybrid of the traditional military system of operation into a global security governance system that more and more tends to approximate the logic of transnational policing. The change is not just an operational adjustment but a more fundamental structural reorganization of the architecture of international security, with the lines between military intervention and policing functions, and governance mechanisms increasingly blurred (de Coning, 2021). From a theoretical perspective, the combination of Constructivism, the Foucauldian theory of governance, and Global Policing Theory provides a holistic and multi-dimensional explanation for this change. Constructivism emphasizes the way in which the new international norms, especially those that address human security, civilian protection, and responsibility to protect, have redefined the expectations and mandates of the peacekeeping operations (Bellamy & Hunt, 2015b; Otto et al., 2024). These normative changes have increased the functions of the peacekeepers towards active participation in the internal security areas rather than mere monitoring based on neutrality. Simultaneously, Foucaultian views unveil the dynamics of how modern peacekeeping is done by means of surveillance, discipline, and managing population, thus serving as a control mechanism that gets extended into the daily regulation of the social order in societies affected by conflict (Walter et al., 2021). To add to these insights, Global Policing Theory places peacekeeping within a more transnational framework of security architecture when the functions of law enforcement are not limited by state boundaries but operate through international institutional networks.

Notably, the results indicate that such military, policing, and governance convergence is not accidental but a systematic and structurally ingrained aspect of modern peace operations. The growing centrality of UNPOL, the growth of enforcement-based mandates, and the introduction of intelligence-led and preventive security practices all point to the fact that policing logic has become a prevalent model of operation (Coning, 2024). In these regards, the Blue Police Paradigm is not merely a theoretical construct, but rather a model that is based on empirical evidence and reflects the changing nature of peacekeeping in the 21st century. Nevertheless, this shift is also accompanied by considerable theoretical and practical conflicts that make it difficult to legitimize normatively and to sustain operations. The growth of enforcement-based functions questions the very fabric of peacekeeping, especially its neutrality, consent, and minimal use of force (Bellamy & Hunt, 2015b). The more peacekeepers adopt coercive and controlling actions, the more they may be viewed no longer as neutral players but as foreign agents of security, which harms the local level of trust and acceptance. Moreover, the fact that policing activity has expanded into the areas of domestic governance provokes essential considerations concerning the sovereignty of states, since such activities can be seen by the host governments as a means of indirect external domination. Through these tensions, a central paradox of the processes that make peacekeeping effective and relevant in complex security environments is that they create deficits of legitimacy and political contestation at the same time. In addition, the institutional and accountability questions are significant with the hybridization of peacekeeping. In contrast to domestic systems of policing, which are entrenched within well-defined legal and institutional forms, global policing via UN Peacekeeping functions within fractured governance systems that entail many actors, mandates and jurisdictions. It leads to the ambiguity of responsibility, oversight, and legal authority, especially in situations of the use of force or violation of human rights (de Coning, 2021) Consequently, although the growth of the policing functions increases the operational capacity, it also increases the necessity of the existence of strong accountability mechanisms and clearer institutional frameworks.

On the whole, the discussion indicates that the traditional military-oriented approaches cannot be sufficient to comprehend the work of the United Nations peacekeeping. Instead, it has to be re-conceptualized as a hybrid form of government that will be functioning at the cross-section of security enforcement, policing practices, and institutional regulation. The Blue Police Paradigm offers a theoretically consistent and empirically based understanding of how to capture this transformation, as well as uncovers its internal contradictions. As a result, a new era of peacekeeping will rely on its capacity to achieve the balance between the effectiveness of enforcing and the legitimacy, accountability, and respect of sovereignty in an ever-growing global security landscape (Coning, 2024; United Nations, 2024).

This study adds to the body of knowledge on international security and peacekeeping in a number of significant theoretical ways. By showing how changing standards for human security and civilian protection transform the institutional character of peacekeeping into a proactive governance mechanism, it first advances constructivist study. Second, by demonstrating how peace operations operate as systems of population control, discipline, and surveillance within unstable governments, it expands on Foucauldian governance theory. Third, by viewing United Nations Peacekeeping as a component of a growing transnational policing network that functions outside of conventional state borders, it advances Global Policing Theory. Above all, the study presents the Blue Police Paradigm as a new integrative framework that unites previously disparate peacekeeping and policing literatures. The paradigm offers a thorough explanation of how modern peace operations operate as hybrid systems of global policing governance by combining normative, institutional, and operational changes. This theoretical contribution provides a methodical framework for examining the future course of international security actions, going beyond descriptive assessments.

8. Policy Implications and Way Forward

Based on the conceptual and empirical results of this study, this part describes some main policy implications and future research directions for enhancing contemporary peace operations. The shift of United Nations Peacekeeping into a more policing-like framework should be accompanied by major institutional, operational, and normative changes to make it effective, legitimate, and viable in fragile settings.

8.1. Strengthening UNPOL Capacity

The main policy implication is that there is an urgent necessity to enhance the capacity of UN Police (UNPOL) in peace operations. As law enforcement roles increasingly integrate into peacekeeping, UNPOL needs to shift to a more operational posture in fragile and post-conflict contexts. Karlsrud (2021) highlights that policing capability is becoming an important aspect of stabilization missions to ensure internal security and defend civilians. Thus, it is necessary to improve the recruitment standards, deploy more specialized police, and enhance operational readiness. Furthermore, the

capacity-building should be done in the fields of crowd control, management of organized crimes, and strategies to protect civilians.

Table 4: Policy Implications and Way Forward: Blue Police Paradigm

Policy Area	Core Issue Identified	Theoretical Basis	Proposed Policy Action	Analytical Contribution to Blue Police Paradigm
Strengthening UNPOL Capacity	UNPOL remains under-resourced and often advisory rather than operational	Global Policing Theory (operational capacity gap)	Increase recruitment, specialized deployments, and operational training in crowd control, organized crime, and civilian protection.	Enables transition from support role to operational policing actor in peace operations
Community Policing Integration	Weak trust between peacekeepers and local populations	Constructivism (legitimacy through social acceptance)	Adopt community-oriented policing, dialogue mechanisms, and local engagement strategies	Enhances legitimacy by embedding peacekeeping in population-centered security governance
Clear Mandate Design	Overlapping and overly ambitious mandates reduce effectiveness	Governance complexity theory (mandate-capability gap)	Design context-specific, realistic mandates with clear rules of engagement and defined policing roles	Reduces ambiguity in military-police role convergence
Training & Professionalization Reform	Traditional military training insufficient for modern missions	Human security + capacity-building framework	Specialized training in human rights, intelligence analysis, conflict sensitivity, and policing skills	Supports the emergence of a hybrid peacekeeper identity (soldier-police-governance actor)
Coordination with Local Police	Weak institutional linkage with host-state law enforcement	Hybrid governance/network theory	Joint training, mentoring programs, and structured handover strategies	Strengthens the networked security governance system
Way Forward (Sustainability)	Rising tension between enforcement, legitimacy, and accountability	Foucauldian governance + normative legitimacy theory	Balance enforcement with human rights, enhance accountability, invest in technology and intelligence systems	Defines the future of peacekeeping as a sustainable global policing system

Note. UNPOL = United Nations Police. Policy recommendations are derived from a comparative analysis of United Nations Peace Operations mission frameworks within the Blue Police Paradigm theoretical model.

The policy analysis demonstrates that United Nations Peacekeeping under the Blue Police Paradigm requires a comprehensive transformation across institutional capacity, operational design, training systems, and local coordination mechanisms. Collectively, these reforms indicate that modern peace operations are evolving toward a hybrid global policing governance system, where effectiveness depends on balancing enforcement capabilities with legitimacy, accountability, and community trust.

8.2. Integrating Community Policing Approaches

A second key recommendation is the integration of community policing models into UN peace operations. The Blue Police Paradigm highlights the importance of civilian engagement and trust-building as core components of modern peacekeeping. Sustainable peace depends on strong relationships between security providers and local communities. Therefore, peace operations should adopt community-oriented policing strategies that emphasize dialogue, transparency, and collaboration with local populations. This approach can significantly enhance legitimacy and reduce tensions between peacekeepers and civilians.

8.3. Clear and Realistic Mandate Design

A critical structural challenge identified in this study is the persistent gap between mandates and operational capabilities. Consequently, there is a strong need for clear, realistic, and context-specific mandate design within United Nations Peacekeeping operations. De Coning (2021) notes that overly ambitious mandates often lead to implementation failures and reduced effectiveness in the field. Therefore, future mandates should clearly define the scope of policing functions, rules of engagement, and operational priorities. This will help reduce ambiguity and improve coordination between military and police components.

8.4. Training and Professionalization Reforms

Another important policy direction is reforming the training and professional development systems for peacekeepers. As missions increasingly involve policing and governance tasks, traditional military training is no longer sufficient. Bellamy & Hunt (2015) highlight the need for specialized training in civilian protection, human rights law, conflict sensitivity, and community engagement. Similarly, UNPOL officers require advanced preparation in crisis management, intelligence analysis, and cross-cultural communication. Strengthening training frameworks will enhance operational effectiveness and reduce the risk of misconduct in complex environments.

8.5. Improved Coordination with Local Police Institutions

Finally, effective implementation of the Blue Police Paradigm requires strong coordination between UN peace operations and host-state policing institutions. Sustainable peace cannot be achieved without building the capacity of local law enforcement agencies. Mentoring and institutional support to national police forces are essential for long-term stability. Therefore, peace operations should prioritize joint training programs, institutional partnerships, and structured handover strategies to ensure continuity after mission withdrawal. Moreover, coordination mechanisms must be strengthened to avoid duplication of efforts and to ensure coherence between international and domestic security actors.

8.6. Way Forward: Towards a Sustainable Blue Police Model

Looking ahead, the evolution of United Nations Peacekeeping suggests a continued convergence between military stabilization and policing governance. However, for the Blue Police Paradigm to be sustainable, it must be supported by stronger institutional legitimacy, clearer operational boundaries, and enhanced accountability frameworks. Future peace operations should aim to balance security enforcement with human rights protection, ensuring that increased policing functions do not undermine neutrality or local trust. In addition, greater investment in technology, intelligence systems, and inter-agency coordination will be essential for adapting to increasingly complex security environments. Ultimately, the success of the Blue Police Model depends on its ability to maintain legitimacy while effectively responding to evolving forms of violence and instability in the 21st century.

9. Conclusion

This paper aimed to explore how peacekeeping by the United Nations is changing in the 21st century using the analytical concept of the Blue Police Paradigm. The main thesis that is being promoted throughout the paper is that modern peacekeeping is also in the process of a radical change that would turn it into a hybrid of a traditional military-controlled, ceasefire-observing system into a global security governance system. More and more, the UN peace operations are ceasing to be confined to interposition military operations but are becoming increasingly involved in civilian protection, management of public order, policing, and institutional stabilization. Relying on theoretical integration and comparative reflections, the paper will show that this change is not just a matter of operational adjustment, but also a matter of structural change in the global security practices. Consequently, peacekeeping is increasingly becoming integrated with the logic of policing in the fragile and post-conflict settings. The theoretical contribution of the current work is mainly the creation of the Blue Police Paradigm that reinvents the concept of peacekeeping by the United Nations as a new variant of the global policing system.

This paper has shown that the modern-day United Nations peace operations are the result of a confluence of normative change, disciplinary forms of governance, and transnational networks of security. Specifically, the goals of peacekeeping

have also been redefined by the evolving international norms like human security and civilian protection, and Foucauldian insights demonstrate that surveillance, control, and management of people are becoming more important in operational practices in weak settings. Meanwhile, the emergence of hybrid military police collaboration indicates an even wider turn to networked global security governance. In this vein, this paper states that peacekeeping is no longer a tool of purely military intervention but is now a multi-layered governance system that controls security, order, and institutional development within fragile states; in that way, this reconceptualization not only fills the analytical gap between International Relations and policing studies but also provides a coherent framework for understanding the transformation of contemporary peace operations.

Although this study has given a detailed conceptual and comparative analysis, there are still areas of future research that are crucial. To begin with, the empirical fieldwork used in the future needs to support the empirical validation of the Blue Police Paradigm at the operational level, i.e., the interviews with the peacekeepers, the UNPOL officers, and the local security actors. Second, the model could be further refined and generalizability tested by comparative cross-regional studies that would entail various missions in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Third, future studies may discuss the ethical and legal considerations of turning peacekeeping into a form of global policing, especially regarding the issue of sovereignty, accountability, and respect for human rights. Lastly, quantitative methods may also be implemented to evaluate the impact of policing-oriented peacekeeping to reduce violence, enhance institutions, and enhance improved outcomes in civilian protection.

To sum up, this paper has shown that contemporary peacekeeping cannot be sufficiently described through conventional military models. Rather, it is becoming an increasing feature of the logic of global policing governance where security, order, and institutional stability are collectively produced in the form of hybrid international interventions. The Blue Police Paradigm, hence, offers a new, analytically strong conceptual framework of how peace operations will take shape in the future in a more complex global security environment. The Blue Police Paradigm thus redefines the future of United Nations Peacekeeping as an institutionalized form of global policing governance within the evolving architecture of international security.

Declarations

Author(s) Contributions

The paper was conceptualized, researched and written by the sole author.

Funding

No funding was received for this research.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest for the publication of this paper.

References

Aksu, E. (2003). *The United Nations, Intra-state Peacekeeping and Normative Change*. Manchester University Press. https://doi.org/10.7228/manchester/9780719067488.001.0001.

Allen, S. H., & Yuen, A. T. (2014). The Politics of Peacekeeping: UN Security Council Oversight Across Peacekeeping Missions. *International Studies Quarterly*, *58*(3), 621–632. https://doi.org/10.1111/isqu.12086.

Aneshensel, C. S., & Mitchell, U. A. (2014). The Stress Process: Its Origins, Evolution, and Future. In R. J. Johnson, R. J. Turner, & B. G. Link (Eds.), *Sociology of Mental Health: Selected Topics from Forty Years 1970s-2010s* (pp. 53–74). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-07797-0_3.

BELLAMY, A. J., & HUNT, C. T. (2015). Twenty-first century UN peace operations: Protection, force and the changing security environment. *International Affairs*, *91*(6), 1277–1298. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.12456.

Bush, M. D., & Dodson, K. D. (2014). *Police Officers as Peace Officers:*

Coning, C. de. (2024, June 6). The Future of UN Peacekeeping. *CPD Policy Blog*. https://policyblog.empowermentforpeace.org/2024/06/the-future-of-un-peacekeeping/.

de Coning, C. (2021). The future of UN peace operations: Principled adaptation through phases of contraction, moderation, and renewal. *Contemporary Security Policy*, *42*(2), 211–224. https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2021.1894021.

Diehl, P. F., Druckman, D., & Mueller, G. B. (2024). *When Peacekeeping Missions Collide: Balancing Multiple Roles in Peace Operations*. Oxford University Press.

Doucet, M. G. (2017). *Reforming 21st Century Peacekeeping Operations: Governmentalities of Security, Protection, and Police*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315675596.

Duursma, A. (2022). Non-state conflicts, peacekeeping, and the conclusion of local agreements. *Peacebuilding*, *10*(2), 138–155. https://doi.org/10.1080/21647259.2022.2032946.

Greener, B. K. (2011). The Rise of Policing in Peace Operations. *International Peacekeeping*, *18*(2), 183–195. https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2011.546096.

Howard, L. M. (2026). *UN Peacekeeping and civilian protection. International Organization*. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818320000123.

Hunt, C. T. (2019). Rhetoric versus reality in the rise of policing in UN peace operations: 'More blue, less green'? *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, *73*(6), 609–627. https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2019.1685936.

Kisangani, E. F., & Mitchell, D. F. (2021). The Impact of Integrated UN Missions on Humanitarian NGO Security: A Quantitative Analysis. *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations*, *27*(2), 202–225. https://doi.org/10.1163/19426720-02702005.

Lamb, G. (2022). *Policing and boundaries in a violent society: A South African case study*. Routledge. https://api.taylorfrancis.com/content/books/mono/download?identifierName=doi&identifierValue=10.4324/9781003159681&type=googlepdf.

Merlingen, M. (2011). From Governance to Governmentality in CSDP: Towards a Foucauldian Research Agenda. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *49*(1), 149–169. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2010.02133.x.

Naeem, S. A. (2025). *Analyzing the Evolution of UN Peacekeeping through Positive Peace (1948-2025)* (SSRN Scholarly Paper No. 5992914). Social Science Research Network. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5992914.

Otto, S., Kube, F., & Smidt, H. (2024). UN Peacekeeping upon deployment: Peacekeeping activities in theory and practice. *Cooperation and Conflict*, *59*(4), 488–509. https://doi.org/10.1177/00108367241235888.

Schroeder, U. C., Chappuis, F., & Kocak, D. (2014). Security Sector Reform and the Emergence of Hybrid Security Governance. *International Peacekeeping*, *21*(2), 214–230. https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2014.910405.

United Nations. (2024). *Reforming peacekeeping: New models and capabilities.* Https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/reforming-peacekeeping.