



Norway and UN Peacekeeping Trends

The number of UN peacekeepers is at its highest since the end of the Cold War. Norway has been a significant contributor to UN peacekeeping missions, but these contributions are now at their lowest since the 1990s. The focus has instead been on niche contributions, such as analysts and transport aircraft. Further, there has been an apparent shift in Norwegian prioritizations from UN to NATO operations. As Norway is currently ramping up its campaign for the UN Security Council candidature (2021–2022), external expectations and internal motivation can affect Norway's future UNPKO contributions.

Brief Points

- Peacekeeping remains a cost-effective instrument to prevent conflicts.
- From 1999 to 2015, the global number of peacekeepers increased from 12,000 to 107,000.
- From the mid-1990s to 2017, Norwegian UN uniformed personnel deployments decreased from around 1,500 to 69.
- Norway has continuously been active in 5 to 9 peacekeeping operations every year since 1990.
- Since 2000, there has been a definite shift in Norway's contributions from UN- to NATO-led operations.

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Peacekeeping Works

UN Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO) with civilian protection mandates have become an essential part of the international community's efforts to alleviate the consequences of armed conflicts and to end attacks against civilians. Organized as expansive civilian-military-political arrangements, UNPKOs address aspects of human security, including providing local health care, reporting human rights violations, and protecting civilians from physical violence using military force.

Norway has been a steady contributor to UNPKOs. However, Norway today contributes with far less personnel than previously, and focuses on deploying niche contributions. Since 2000, Norway has increased its contributions to NATO, while it has decreased its contributions to UN operations. As Norway is pursuing a seat at the UN Security Council table in 2021–2022, internal motivations and external expectations might alter these priorities.

Until recently, we did not know much about the overall effect of UN peacekeeping operations on human security across cases and time. Recent studies have found that the deployment of UNPKOs leads to a reduction in conflict intensity and an increase in the duration of post-conflict peace. UNPKOs are also found to reduce the propensity of conflicts for spreading across borders. In particular, research has found that large UNPKOs with robust mandates have a strong conflict-reducing effect.

Preliminary findings also suggest that the presence of UNPKOs improves local health conditions. Overall, without UN peacekeeping, research indicates that we would have seen considerably more deadly conflicts in the world. As such, measured along the most important criteria, UN peace operations appear to successfully improve human security in contemporary armed conflicts, and to stop conflicts from recurring.

Financially, the UN Peacekeeping budget is 7.87 billion USD, reflecting 0.47 percent of the global military expenditure. Peacekeeping remains a cost-effective instrument to prevent conflicts and to foster lasting peace. This is supported by research, showing that increased

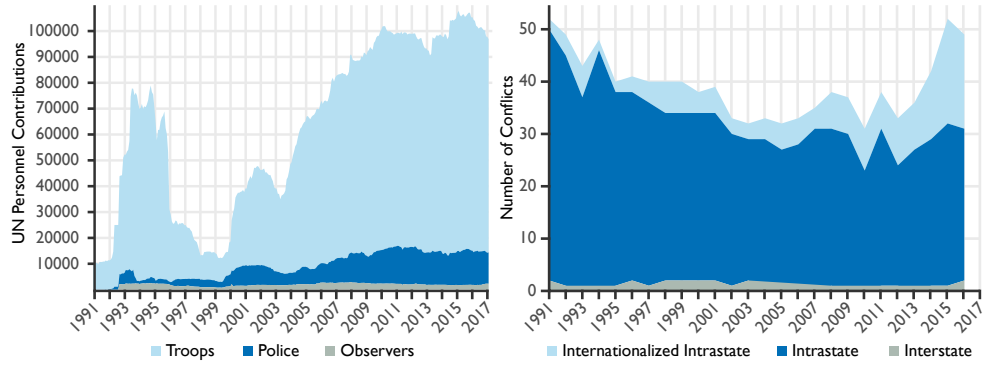


Figure 1: Left panel shows the number of deployed UN peacekeeping personnel per year. Right panel shows the number of ongoing armed conflicts per year.

spending on peacekeeping along with more robust mandates has a strong pacifying effect on conflict. Thus, it remains unknown how the 500 million USD cut in the 2017–2018 peacekeeping budget will impact operational capacity. While the United States proposed to cut 1 billion USD, a compromise was made, requiring the UN Security Council to assure that though some missions would be cut, operational capacity will be protected and preserved.

Conflict and Peacekeeping Trends

While the general trend in the number of armed conflicts has decreased following the end of the Cold War, the number of UN Peacekeepers has grown tenfold. Figure 1 (right panel) shows that the dominant form of conflict today is internal armed conflicts fought within the confined territory of a country. The graph reveals that, except during the last three years, the world has become more peaceful. It remains

to be seen whether the peak in recent years is the end of the general trend or an outlier from the downward trend. In the same post–Cold War period, the number of deployed personnel to UN Peacekeeping Operations has increased from 12,000 to 100,000, indicating increased willingness from UN member states to contribute more to UNPKO.

Figure 1 (left panel) shows that the total number of UN peacekeepers deployed globally increased sharply in the mid-1990s, primarily driven by significant contributions to former Yugoslavia, Cambodia, Somalia, Liberia, and Rwanda. In September 1994, an all-time high of 78,946 UN peacekeepers were deployed, which by April 1999 fell to 12,158. With the start of the new millennium, UNPKO received new mandates, and the budget grew, increasing the number of missions and troops deployed. This increase also came in the wake of significant reform activities in the UN, in particular, the

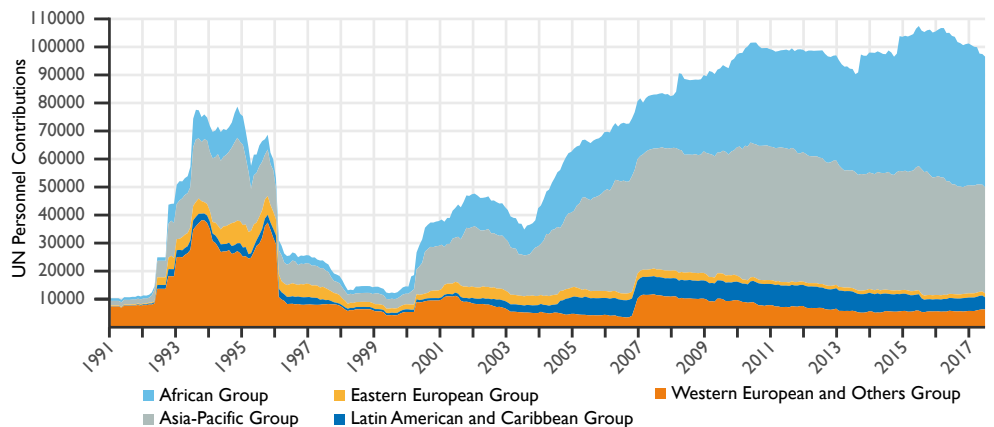


Figure 2: Number of deployed personnel by UN bloc.

2000 Brahimi report, recommending that future operations receive adequate resources and equipment if they are to succeed.

After growing steadily throughout the 2000s and 2010s, the number of deployed peacekeepers reached an all-time high in April 2015 with 107,805 deployed personnel. At the beginning of 2017, 100,231 uniformed UN personnel were deployed across 21 UNPKOs. However, by April 2017, the number had fallen to 96,865 distributed over 20 UNPKOs.

The number of troop contributions by country varies significantly, with member states in the Global South bearing the larger burden. As shown in Figure 2, the Western European and Others Group (WEOG) was a significant contributor to operations in the 1990s, but has now become a minor contributor to PKO troops. Following the turn of the millennium, the African and Asia-Pacific UN blocs have become by far the most dominant troop contributors. At the end of May 1991, the WEOG bloc contributed with 71 percent of the total number of deployed personnel to UNPKOs. After the start of 2012, the WEOG bloc has contributed with less than 7 percent of the total number of deployed personnel in every month. Meanwhile, the African and Asia-Pacific group now constitute over 87 percent of the deployed UN peacekeeping personnel. Financially, the WEOG bloc contributed with almost 60 percent of the 2016 UNPKO budget, while the remaining countries contributed with 40 percent. Thus, countries that provide substantial financial contributions and countries with significant personnel contributions rarely overlap.

Norway in International Operations Since 1945

Norway has been an active contributor to international operations since the Second World War. In total, Norway has contributed to 102 international operations, where the troop contributions have included everything from unarmed observers to robust combat units.

Figure 3 shows how Norway's UNPKO commitments changed character after the Cold War. The number of operations Norway participated in increased significantly: 86 percent of all Norwegian contributions to international

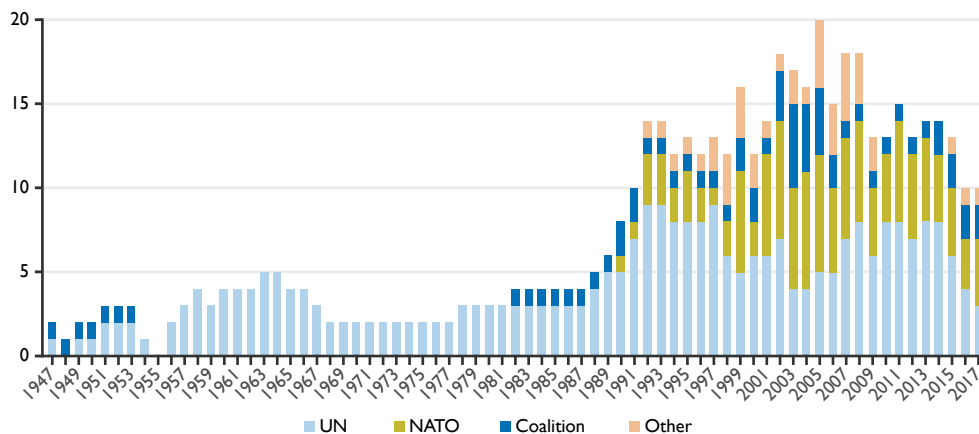


Figure 3: The number of international operations, by the type of operation, with Norwegian contributions since 1947.

operations started after 1990. Also, the diversity increased, both concerning the type of operation Norway contributed to (UN, NATO, Other), and the type of contributions Norway deployed. One of the reasons for this was the increased number of international operations in the world after 1990 – both UN and NATO operations – but also the broader spectrum of operations that required more diverse types of contributions. For instance, NATO conducted no operations during the Cold War. The first NATO operation, Operation Anchor Guard, took place in Turkey and started in August 1990.

Norway's most significant contribution to an international operation, regarding the number of personnel, was the Independent Norwegian

Brigade Group in Germany after the Second World War. Norway contributed with 12 brigades during the years 1947–1953. The two next most significant contributions were two UN-operations: UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and UN Emergency Force (UNEF I) in Egypt. Both were long-term commitments and resource intensive, with respectively about 22,500 and 11,000 Norwegian personnel in total. After that, the most significant contributions started after 1990 and were all commitments to NATO-operations: the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, and Kosovo Force (KFOR) and Stabilization Force (SFOR) in the Balkans.

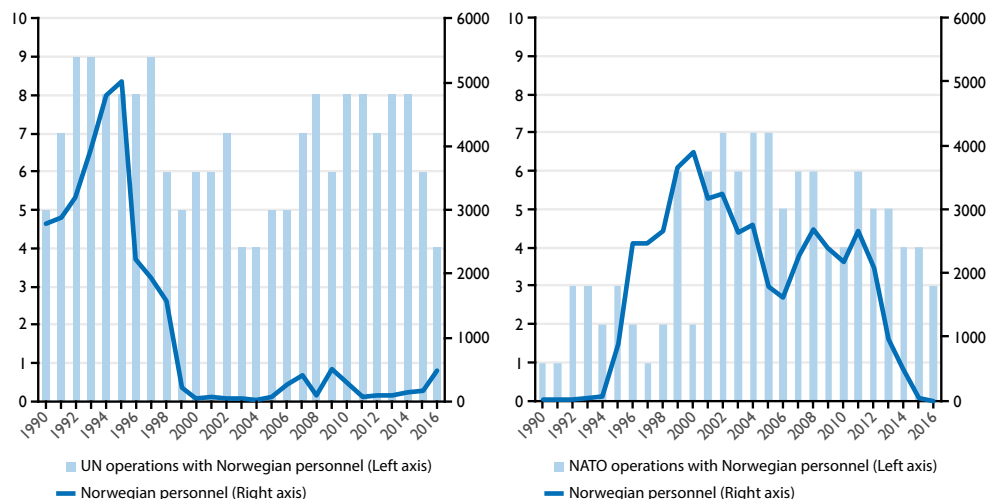


Figure 4: Norwegian participation in UN operations (left) and NATO operations (right) from 1990. The figure shows both the number of operations (columns) and the average number of Norwegian personnel (line) every year.

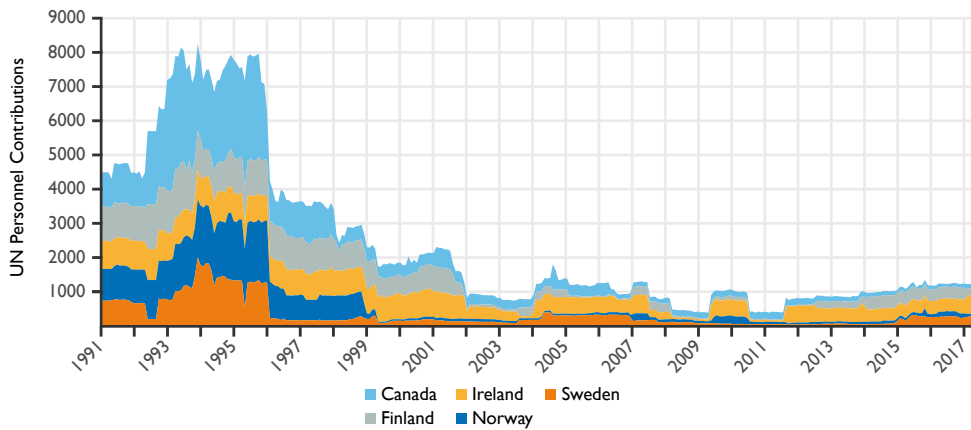


Figure 5: UN personnel contributions for Norway and a selection of other WEOG countries.

Norway and UN Peacekeeping Operations

Norway promotes itself as a peace-nation and contributes to a relatively stable number of UN operations. For every month between 2006 and 2017, Norway has consistently been active in six to nine operations. Figure 4 shows the sum of international operations with Norwegian contributions for each year since 1990, along with personnel contributions. The number of Norwegian personnel contributions to the UN was reduced drastically in the mid-1990s. This was both a consequence of the decreased number of deployed UN personnel (Figure 1) and as result of Norway's Defence Plan where NATO received priority as the cornerstone of Norwegian security and defence policy.

As can be seen in Figure 4, Norway's contributions shifted from UN operations to NATO operations around 1994. Although the majority of international operations Norway has contributed to have been UN-led, the most significant troop contributions have been deployed to

NATO operations, especially in the Balkans and in Afghanistan. Since 1990, Norway has on average deployed twice as many soldiers and officers per NATO operation compared to a UN operation.

Even though the UN significantly increased its number of deployed UN personnel after the year 2000 (Figure 1), Norway has not increased its personnel contributions. Norway slightly increased its participation in UN operations after 2005, both regarding the number of personnel and the number of operations Norway contributed to. However, unlike previous contributions, Norway now prioritized contributions with niche capabilities to the UN, consisting of a few personnel, but in critical positions. This involved the deployment of, for example, Hercules C-130 transport aircraft to Mali (MINUSMA) in 2016, analysts to Mali, a field hospital and well drilling engineers to Chad from 2009–2010, and in general the deployment of Norwegian officers to UN staff.

The Future of the Norwegian Peacekeeper

Following the end of the 1990s, Norway has contributed with less personnel to UNPKOs, reflecting a shift from UN- to NATO-led international operations. While Norway is still engaged in a relatively similar number of operations with the UN as in the 90s, Norway's contributions to UNPKOs now focus on logistical and technological contributions, rather than deploying ground troops. This reflects strategic priorities in the Norwegian Long-Term Defence Plan. As Norway is currently ramping up its campaign for the UN Security Council candidature in 2021–2022, this could change external expectations and internal motivation for Norway to increase its UNPKO contributions. Other countries that pursue the UN Security Council candidature for 2021–2022 are Ireland and Canada. Figure 5 shows that, in April 2017, Ireland had 530 deployed positions in UNPKOs. Canada, on the other hand, had 105 deployed personnel, but has signaled a renewed commitment to contribute more to UNPKOs.

If we compare Norway's contributions to those of Sweden and Finland, the trends are similar, showing a decrease since the start of the new millennium. However, in absolute numbers, Norway is contributing the least among the three neighbors. In April 2017, Norway had 66 deployed positions in UNPKOs. In comparison, Sweden had 254 and Finland had 202. ■

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THE PROJECT

The Conflict Trends project aims to answer questions related to the causes of, consequences of and trends in conflict through quality-based analysis. The DEAFIN project aims to investigate Inequalities in Conflict-Affected Societies and the effectiveness of development aid. The Norwegian MFA and the research council have funded this research.

PRIO

The Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) is a non-profit peace research institute (established in 1959) whose overarching purpose is to conduct research on the conditions for peaceful relations between states, groups and people. The institute is independent, international and interdisciplinary, and explores issues related to all facets of peace and conflict.