

Contributor Profile: Ukraine

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Active armed forces ¹	Helicopters	Defense Budget	UN Peacekeepers	UN Contribution Breakdown	Other Significant Deployments
204,000 World Ranking (size): 23 rd Army 145,000 Navy 6,000 Air 45,000 Airborne 8,000	133 attack (+ 8 anti-submarine) 72 medium transport 1 multirole	2016: \$4bn (5% of GDP) (estimated) ² 2015: \$3.9bn (4.34% of GDP) 2014: \$3.4bn (2.59% of GDP) World Ranking (defense spending): 39	493 (6 women) (31 July 2016) Ranking: 42 nd (4th in Europe after Italy, France and Spain)	MONUSCO 270 (256 troops; 11 experts; 3 police) UNMIL 167 (162 troops; 3 experts) UNMISS 34 (1 troop; 3 experts; 30 police) UNOCI 6 (3 troops; 3 police) UNISFA 6 (2 troops; 4 experts) UNFICYP 8 (6 police, 2 troops) UNMIK 2 experts	NATO KFOR: 33 NATO Resolute Support: 10 Joint Peacekeeping Forces Transnistria: 10
Defense Spending / Troop: ³ US\$19,196 (compared to global average of approximately US\$79,396)					

Part 1: Recent Trends

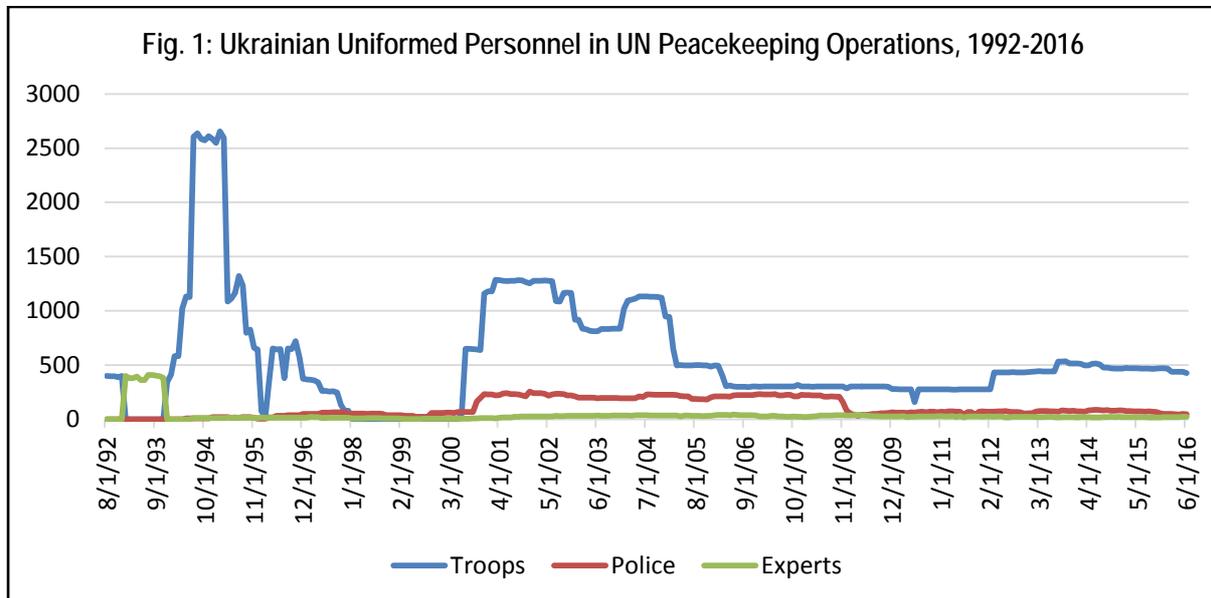
Ukraine first participated in UN peacekeeping operations several months after its 24 August 1991 independence when it deployed a battalion to UNPROFOR. Since then it has remained an active contributor to UN-led and UN-authorized operations, although its profile changed from a significant troop contributor to a provider of specialist equipment and associated expertise, such as helicopters and crews, in the mid-2000s. Until then, Ukraine was an important contributor of uniformed personnel (see Figure 1). In January 2001, for example, it was the 7th largest provider of military and police for UN operations. But these contributions declined during the presidency of Viktor Yushchenko (2005 - 2010) and increased only marginally under the presidency of Viktor Yanukovich (2010-2014).

While Ukraine's contributions of uniformed personnel declined in the mid-2000s, largely as the fallout from the unpopular Iraq deployment as a part of the US-led coalition, it has remained an important provider of MI-24 attack helicopters and Mi-8 transport helicopters. Ukrainian helicopters have been used in the missions in the former Yugoslavia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, and the DR Congo. The private company "Ukrainian Helicopters" has provided chartered services to the missions in Haiti, Sudan, South Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, and the DR Congo.

A Ukrainian formed police unit has participated in the UN mission in Kosovo and individual police officers have taken part in the operations in Liberia, East Timor, the DRC, South Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, and Cyprus. Overall, more than 34,000 Ukrainian troops have participated in 20 UN operations.⁴ If non-UN operations are taken into account, this number rises to 42,000. Thirty Ukrainians have lost their lives serving under the UN flag, half of them in the UN Protection Force in the former Yugoslavia.

The administration of Petro Poroshenko (in office since 2014) has committed itself to maintaining the existing level of contributions, despite the new national defense needs arising from the conflict with Russia. It decreased its contribution to KFOR in Kosovo in 2014 but continues to provide helicopters to UN missions in Africa. At the September 2015 Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping, the Ukrainian government pledged to continue making six helicopters available to UN missions following the drawdown of the operations in Liberia and Côte instead of having them returned to Ukraine for domestic use.

Ukraine has taken several initiatives to increase the effectiveness and raise the profile of UN peacekeeping, such as the Convention on the Safety of UN and Associated Personnel (1994) and the annual observation of the International Day of Peacekeepers (2003). As a nonpermanent Security Council member in 2000-2001, Ukraine promoted trilateral consultations between the Council, the Secretariat, and troop and police contributors. In 2012, eight Ukrainian military and police experts worked in the UN's Departments of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Field Support (DFS).⁵



Ukraine is both a security provider and consumer. It hosts two OSCE missions (monitoring the implementation of the Minsk agreements and the Ukrainian-Russian border) and two EU missions ([EUAM](#) security sector reform advisory mission and [EUBAM](#) on the Moldovan border). Ukraine has requested a UN mission to help observe the fragile ceasefire in eastern Ukraine, which is unrealistic due to Russia's opposition. Ukraine has called for Security Council reform and for restrictions on the permanent members' use of the veto.

Part 2: Decision-Making Process

Ukraine's participation in international peace operations is governed by the 1999 [Law of Ukraine on Participation in International Operations in Support of Peace and Security](#). The law stipulates that Ukraine can participate in three types of operations:

- 1) peace operations undertaken by the UN, OSCE, and other regional organizations;
- 2) UN-authorized operations; and
- 3) multinational high-readiness forces.

The law details the process of approving Ukraine's participation in such operations. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in consultation with the Ministry of Defense, presents a proposal to the National Security and Defense Council. If the Council decides affirmatively, the

proposal is forwarded to the president. If the president approves the deployment, a draft law is introduced in the parliament, which grants the ultimate authorization. The consideration of the draft is treated as a matter of priority. The government reports annually to the parliament on Ukraine's participation in international peace operations.

The 2009 [*Strategy for International Peacekeeping Activity of Ukraine*](#) defines four main areas in which improvements should be made: 1) increasing the quality of peacekeeping contributions (speeding up decision-making on deployments; improving command and coordination; training military and civilian specialists; procuring the necessary equipment; systematizing lessons learned); 2) enhancing the attractiveness of international service among the military (increasing salaries; providing better medical and psychological care; introducing additional welfare benefits for service-members and their families); 3) promoting Ukraine's interests during the planning and execution of operations (strengthening cooperation with secretariats of international organizations; increasing the number of Ukrainians in DPKO/DFS and among mission leadership); and 4) involving Ukrainian companies in post-conflict reconstruction.

Part 3: Rationales for Contributing

Political Rationales: After independence, Ukraine sought to establish an identity and foreign policy that were distinct from Russia's. Peacekeeping was considered an important instrument to that end. The current government places a premium on enhancing Ukraine's image: it believes that international support is essential for the resolution of the conflict with Russia. In the Ukrainian academic literature,⁶ peacekeeping is described as a means of strengthening European and international security, increasing Ukraine's authority and demonstrating commitment to peace, and developing economic ties with regions recovering from conflict. Peacekeeping contributions are believed to have helped Ukraine's 2000-2001 and 2016-2017 bids for a nonpermanent Security Council seat.

Security Rationales: In the early and mid-1990s, Ukraine's contributions to peace operations were oriented towards enhancing security in the ex-Soviet neighborhood, for example, through the UN mission in Tajikistan and the Joint Peacekeeping Forces in Transnistria,⁷ as well as the broader Southeastern European region, for example, through the missions in the former Yugoslavia. Since the 1996 deployment to Angola, the geographic focus of Ukraine's peacekeeping activity has begun to widen to include Africa, where most of its contributions are concentrated today.

Economic Rationales: Providing UN peacekeepers is a source of revenue for the government and individual service-members. This motivation was particularly important in the immediate post-independence period when Ukraine inherited large armed forces it struggled to sustain. Economic rationales became prominent again after the 2014 economic crisis caused by the conflict with Russia. In addition to the monthly reimbursements per peacekeeper, Ukraine is compensated per helicopter flying hour, although it expressed a preference for set monthly reimbursements for its helicopters. The reimbursements have been used by the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense to pay peacekeepers' salaries, procure equipment, and construct housing for service-members.

Participation in UN peacekeeping operations is also attractive for individual personnel, especially helicopter pilots, whose salary during international deployments is five times the army average and ten times the country average. Throughout the 1990s and the 2000s, the salaries of Ukrainian peacekeepers were among the lowest among all troop contributors.⁸ In

2012, the government raised peacekeepers' salaries two and a half times, which further enhanced the attractiveness of foreign deployments.

Institutional Rationales: Contributing to international peace operations is seen as a way of modernizing and Westernizing the Ukrainian military. Since Ukrainian service-members are keen on acquiring experience of operating alongside European and US militaries, participation in NATO and EU CSDP missions is especially valued. However, in the 1990s, when Western countries were major contributors to UN peacekeeping, Ukraine's participation was also sizeable. The Ukrainian armed forces are being reformed in line with NATO standards. As a step towards the professionalization of the army, compulsory conscription was abolished in 2013 but reintroduced in 2014 when the conflict in the east broke out. Participation in international peace operations is voluntary.

UN missions are seen as a source of operational experience for the military. Before 2014, helicopter pilots stationed in Ukraine were getting only a few dozens flying hours a year, while this number could rise to several hundreds in a UN mission. Since their career progression depends on the amount of flying hours, helicopter pilots are interested in taking part in UN missions. Many service-members also value the opportunity to contribute to the cause of peace.

During the conflict with Russia, the age limit for contract-based military service was increased to 60 years, which allowed volunteers with previous peacekeeping experience to enlist. Many did and served valiantly. However, it is unlikely that military and political leadership had anticipated that service-members with peacekeeping experience would be needed for national defense on the current scale.

Normative Rationales: As a founding member of the UN, Ukraine has always stressed its commitment to the principles and purposes of the UN Charter. It sees peacekeeping as an important instrument for the maintenance of international peace and security. Among the eleven priorities for Ukraine's 2016-2017 Security Council term, four concern peacekeeping and conflict resolution (strengthening UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding; boosting conflict prevention and mediation capacities; strengthening peace on the African continent; and taking forward the agendas on women, peace and security and children in armed conflict).

Part 4: Barriers to Contributing

Alternative institutional preferences for crisis management. Ukraine's goal of joining the EU and NATO has seen it participate actively in their crisis management activities. Ukraine prides itself in being the only partner country that has participated in all NATO operations, including maritime and training missions (albeit it contributed only a small medical team to ISAF). Ukraine also contributes to the NATO Response Force. The 2015 [*National Defense Strategy*](#) designates participation in NATO peace operations as a priority but makes no mention of UN peacekeeping.

Ukraine has taken part in OSCE missions in Kosovo, Georgia, Macedonia, and Kyrgyzstan. As for EU CSDP missions and operations, it has participated in the police missions in Bosnia and Macedonia and the anti-piracy operation off the Somali coast. Ukraine also contributes to EU Battlegroups. In 2016, it participated in three different EU Battlegroup formations led by Greece, Poland, and the UK. Ukraine is among the few non-EU partners that can take part in projects and programs of the European Defence Agency.

In contrast to UN missions, contributors to NATO and EU operations are expected to cover the costs of participation themselves, which is not an unimportant consideration for Ukraine. The US has helped Ukraine pay for its participation in KFOR in Kosovo. However, when Ukraine [offered to contribute](#) a military hospital to EUFOR Tchad/RCA on the condition that the EU would fund the purchase of additional equipment, it received no support and was unable to participate.

Alternative political or strategic priorities. The Ukrainian government faces numerous political, strategic, and economic challenges. Resolving the conflict in the east and preventing further Russian aggression will stay on the top of the agenda for years to come. However, this is unlikely to lead to a significant decrease in Ukraine's contributions to UN peacekeeping, since the current administration cannot afford to lose international support (which is quickly eroding due to the slow pace of reforms and rampant corruption). An increase in contributions is also unlikely because military aviation, including helicopters, is a valuable asset in containing the conflict. At the same time, the Ukrainian government understands that it cannot bring the conflict to an end by military means and therefore focuses on diplomacy. Economically, dealing with the consequences of the conflict-induced crisis, which has led the Ukrainian currency to lose 70% of its value, is another priority.

Financial costs. Contributing troops and helicopters to UN peacekeeping operations is profitable for the Ukrainian government. Contributing individual police officers, however, is more costly so there is a preference for deploying formed police units (whose deployment is reimbursed by the UN).⁹

Discomfort with the expanding UN peacekeeping agenda. Ukraine supports the expansion of the UN peacekeeping agenda (for example, it is one of the supporters of the [Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians](#)). Ukrainian helicopters have been used in robust operations [against DRC rebels](#) and during the [2011 Ivorian electoral crisis](#). Ukraine has [welcomed](#) “profound conclusions and ambitious recommendations” of the [High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations](#). During debates on peacekeeping, Ukraine aligns itself with EU's positions.

Absence of pressure to contribute. Both the UN Secretariat and Ukraine's partners encourage it to contribute personnel and assets to UN peacekeeping, especially in light of the shortage of military helicopters. For example, the US “intensely courted” Ukraine to contribute helicopters to the AU-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), which fell through due to difficult domestic politics (explained below).¹⁰

Difficult domestic politics. Participation in international peace operations became politicized when Ukraine joined the US-led coalition in Iraq in August 2003, a decision that was hugely unpopular domestically since only [4.6% of Ukrainians](#) approved of the war. The deployment has resulted in the highest number of Ukrainian fatalities among all the multinational operations in which the country has participated. The withdrawal of the Ukrainian contingent, at some point the third largest in the US-led coalition, had been Viktor Yushchenko's campaign promise, which he fulfilled in late 2005.

Four months after Ukrainians were sent to Iraq, the parliament, for the first time in Ukraine's history, voted down the president's proposal to contribute peacekeepers to a UN mission. Politicians cited different reasons for refusing to authorize Ukraine's participation in the UN mission in Liberia (UNMIL). The Communist party insisted that a pullout from Iraq was a

precondition for other foreign deployments, denounced the president for bowing to the US pressure, which was allegedly pressuring Ukraine to participate in the mission, and doubted that the West would allow Ukrainian companies to benefit fully from reconstruction contracts.¹¹

A representative of Yushchenko's party noted that there was an internal debate within the party about Ukraine's participation in UNMIL but in the end the decision to oppose it was made. He stressed that developed countries stopped sending peacekeepers to unstable conflict zones and that Ukraine should follow suit: he believed Ukraine should not try to "earn a quick buck" while risking the lives of its soldiers. He also noted that Ukraine was already a leading peacekeeping contributor in Europe.¹²

As for the abovementioned request to provide helicopters to UNAMID in Darfur, it was made after Yanukovich became prime minister in 2006 while Yushchenko remained the president (the two had been political and personal adversaries since the 2004 Orange Revolution). On a visit to Kyiv, US President George Bush persuaded Yushchenko, with whom the US maintained a very close relationship, to contribute helicopters to the AU-UN mission. However, the parliament, dominated by Yanukovich's party, voted against it, which was widely expected. The decision, supported by the Communist party, was motivated in part by the desire to make Yushchenko's presidency difficult and in part by the opposition to Ukraine's rapprochement with the US and NATO.¹³

While the anti-US sentiment has now largely disappeared from the political mainstream, the comparison with other developing countries reveals that Ukrainian policymakers use peacekeeping participation by other EU and NATO countries as the benchmark to assess the appropriateness of their contribution. At the same time, the case of Darfur demonstrates that Ukrainian politicians are opportunistic and susceptible to pressure from Western partners.

Damage to national reputation. Ukrainian service-members were involved in corruption scandals in 1994 in the UN mission in [Bosnia](#), in 2005 in the UN mission in [Lebanon](#) (which led to the repatriation of its engineering and demining battalion), in 2005 in the US-led coalition in [Iraq](#), and in 2010 in KFOR in [Kosovo](#). There seems to be no obvious correlation between these scandals and the level of Ukraine's participation in international peace operations.

Resistance in the military. For the financial and institutional reasons cited above, the Ukrainian military is favorably predisposed towards UN-led and UN-authorized peacekeeping operations.

Lack of fit with legislative, procurement and operational timelines. Decisions to send Ukrainian peacekeepers abroad can be taken quickly if they are uncontroversial. Delays are also possible, however, like in 2013 when the agreement to send a formed police unit to Liberia was cancelled because of delays in the Ukrainian government.

Part 5: Current Challenges and Issues

Ukraine's participation in UN peacekeeping is unlikely to increase in the foreseeable future. Since the conflict in eastern Ukraine shows no signs of resolution, national defense will remain a priority. Closer cooperation with NATO, which is seen as a safeguard against further Russian aggression, is another priority. For this reason, Ukrainian policymakers attach greater importance to NATO and EU operations, despite their costs. A significant decrease in

contributions to UN peacekeeping operations is also unlikely, as discussed above. In the medium term, after the conflict in the east abates, Ukraine's contributions to UN missions could increase, especially if [Europe's "return to peacekeeping"](#) turns out to be a sustainable trend. Considering that Ukraine has proclaimed strengthening peace on the African continent as one of the priorities for its 2016-2017 Security Council term, as well as the fact that Ukraine supplies weapons and related services to many African governments, its future peacekeeping contributions are likely to focus on this region.

Part 6: Key Champions and Opponents

Although the political landscape in Ukraine is extremely fluid and is based around personalities rather than ideologies, all parties in the political mainstream are supportive of UN peacekeeping. The parties described above that opposed peacekeeping deployments in the 2000s are no longer in the parliament: Yushchenko's party received 1,11% of the vote in the 2012 elections and no seats; Yanukovich's party effectively ceased to exist after its leader fled to Russia in 2014; and the Communist party was banned in 2015.

Peacekeeping has received mostly positive coverage in the media and the academic literature, especially before the conflict in eastern Ukraine. During the conflict, questions have been raised about the appropriateness of maintaining the pre-2014 level of contributions considering the new national defense needs. The council of the Lviv region in Western Ukraine has [called upon](#) the government to initiate the return of Ukrainian peacekeepers from UN mission to serve in Ukraine's east. Contingency plans have been [developed](#) for such a scenario but not considered necessary to carry out. The reasons cited by Ukrainian policymakers include the loss of prestige, the high costs of repatriating the troops (which are borne by the troop contributing country which request a return of its peacekeepers ahead of schedule), the financial gain from contributing helicopters to UN missions, and the training that helicopter pilots receive during peacekeeping deployments.¹⁴

Part 7: Capabilities and Caveats

While the Ukrainian military was in disarray at the beginning of the 2014 conflict, it has become better equipped and organized due to the support of Ukraine's Western partners and individual volunteers. The military has acquired significant operational experience in eastern Ukraine, especially in fighting irregular forces, which can be a valuable asset for UN missions conducting operations against rebels or criminal groups. Helicopter pilots who had served in eastern Ukraine have already been deployed to Liberia and the DR Congo. Besides helicopters, Ukraine has strategic airlift capabilities: its Antonov planes have been chartered to transport troops, cargo, and aid to and from the theaters of NATO, EU, and AU military and humanitarian operations.

In 2014, Ukraine disbanded the Internal Troops, a gendarmerie force that could be used both for riot control in peacetime and for national defense during wartime, over their role in the attempted suppression of the Euromaidan protests. The National Guard was formed to integrate the rump Internal Troops and citizens' self-defense groups that sprang up during the protests and went on to fight in the east as "volunteer battalions." Members of the [National Guard](#) can take part in international peacekeeping operations; some of them currently serve in South Sudan. In June 2016, the [Rapid Reaction Brigade](#), a special unit within the National Guard, was declared operational. Trained by US and Israeli instructors to conduct operations in situations of low-intensity warfare, it could become an asset for UN peacekeeping operations in the future after the end of the war in the east. The revamped [National Police](#) is

also envisaged to take part in peacekeeping, although it will become a priority only in 2017-2020 once the reforms are consolidated.

In addition, the joint Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian brigade ([LITPOLUKRBRIG](#)) now stands ready to deploy as a part of UN-led and UN-authorized operations. It builds on the experience of a Polish-Ukrainian battalion with a Lithuanian platoon that took part in the NATO operation in Kosovo in 2000-2010, where Polish and Ukrainian special forces and police received praise for their crowd and riot control skills.¹⁵

Ukraine has several training institutions for peacekeepers, such as the International Peacekeeping and Security Centre at the National Army Academy, the Training and Research Center of International Peacekeeping Activity at the National Defense University, and the Special Peacekeeping Centre at the National Academy of Internal Affairs (which the UN has certified to prepare police from other countries for missions by the organization). English-language training is increasingly provided.

Part 8: Further Reading

Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the UN, '[Ukraine's Participation in the UN Peacekeeping Activities](#)'.

Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, [White Book 2015](#), Chapter 7: International Cooperation, Peacekeeping Activity, Arms Control.

Sanders, Deborah, '[Ukraine After the Orange Revolution: Can It Complete Military Transformation and Join the U.S Led War on Terrorism](#)', *US Army War College*, 2006.

Chumak, Volodymyr & Alexandr Razumtsev, 'Ukrainian Participation in Peacekeeping: The Yugoslavian Experience' in J. Callaghan & M. Schönborn (eds.), *Warriors in Peacekeeping: Points of Tension in Complex Cultural Encounters. A Comparative Study Based on Experiences in Bosnia* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2004).

Notes

¹ Unless stated otherwise, the data is from IISS, *The Military Balance 2016* (London: IISS/Routledge, 2016).

² Ruben Grizian, '[Ukraine's Got a Real Army Now. But Is It Preparing to Fight the Last Battle?](#)', *The Atlantic Council*, February 2016.

³ This number is the defense budget divided by the number of active armed forces.

⁴ UNPROFOR, UNMOT, UNPREDEP, UNTAES, UNAVEM III, UNMOP, MINUGUA, UNIFIL, UNFICYP, UNMEE, UNMIK, UNAMSIL, UNOMIG, UNAMA, UNMIS, UNOCI, UNMIL, MONUSCO, UNMISS, UNISFA.

⁵ Vladimir Polischuk, '[Participation of the Armed Forces in the International Operations](#)' in Joanna Warchol (ed.), *The Polish-Ukrainian Bulletin* (Warsaw: Pracownia C&C, 2012), 98.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 95; Анатолій Суббот, 'Забезпечення особистої безпеки працівників правоохоронних органів України, які беруть участь у миротворчих місіях' [Personal Safety of Employees of the Law Enforcement Agencies of Ukraine Who Participate in Peacekeeping Missions], *Бюлетень Міністерства Юстиції України*, 5 (2013), 81.

⁷ The bulk of the forces are provided by the Russian army, the Moldovan army, and the forces of the Russian-backed breakaway republic of Transnistria, while Ukraine contributes ten military observers.

⁸ '[Зарплата українських миротворців виявилася на рівні Африки](#)' [Salaries of Ukrainian Peacekeepers Are at an African Level], *TCH*, February 2013.

⁹ МВС України, '[Міжнародна миротворча діяльність МВС України. Перспективи розвитку на 2015 рік](#)', [International Peacekeeping Activity of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine. Perspectives for Development in 2015].

¹⁰ Marina E. Henke, “Great Powers and UN Force Generation: A Case Study of UNAMID,” *International Peacekeeping*, 23:3 (2016), 470.

¹¹ Володимир Кім, ‘[Ліберійський синдром](#)’ [Liberian Syndrome], *Дзеркало Тижня*, December 2003.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Henke, *op. cit.*, 487-488.

¹⁴ Володимир Кравченко, ‘[Війна війною. а миротворчість - за планом?](#)’ [War is Just War, but Peacekeeping on Schedule?], *Дзеркало Тижня*, August 2014.

¹⁵ Patricia Taft, “Preparing Nations for Peace: Specialized Requirements of Complex Missions” in D.C.F. Daniel et al. (eds.), *Peace Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2008), 80.