

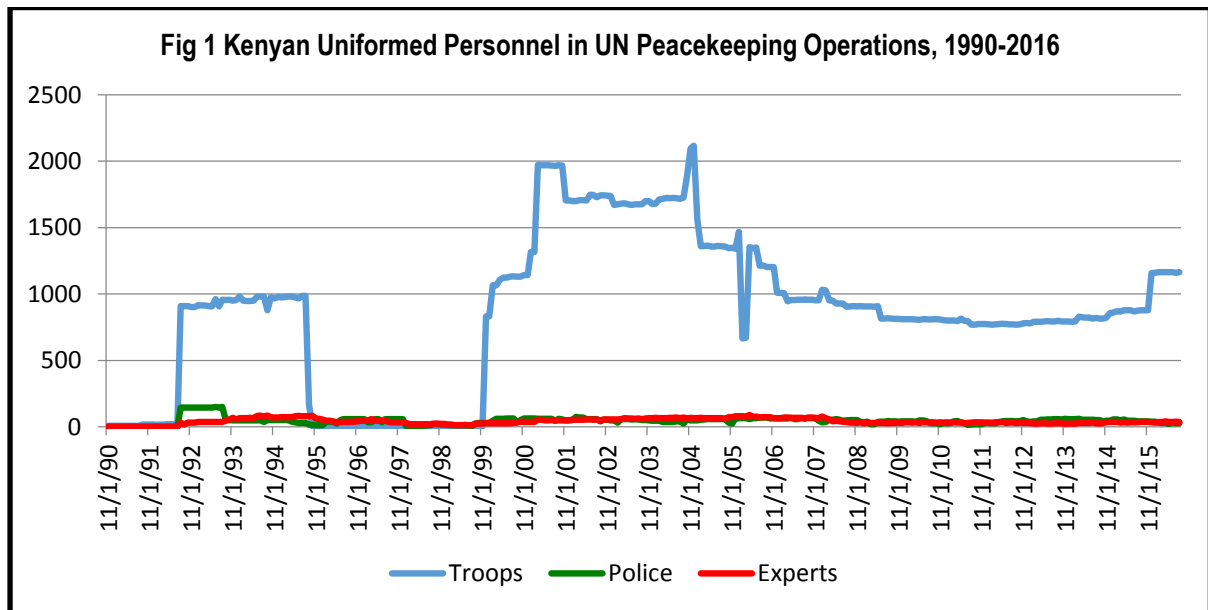
Contributor Profile: Kenya

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Active Armed Forces ¹	Helicopters	Defense Budget	Uniformed UN Peacekeepers	UN Contribution Breakdown	Other Significant Deployments
24,100	50	2016: \$1.24	1,229 (236 women) (31 Aug. 2016)	MINUSMA 7 (4 troops, 3 milex) MONUSCO: 26 (13 milex, 13 troops) UNIFIL: 1 troop UNMIL: 13 police UNMISS: 1,053 (1,027 troops, 12 milex, 14 police) UNAMID: 115 (112 troops, 3 milex) MINUSCA 14 (6 milex, 8 troops)	AMISOM: 4,112
World Ranking: 89 (size)	Multirole: 37	2015: \$942m (1.49% of GDP)	Ranking: 22 nd		
Army: 20,000 Air force: 2,500 Navy: 1,600	Transport: 13 (medium)	2014: \$1,018m (1.17% of GDP)	(13 th largest African Union contributor)		
Plus 5,000 Paramilitary		2013: \$971m (2.1% of GDP)			
		World Ranking: 64 (budget size)			
Defence Spending / Troop: ² US\$39,087.14 (compared to global average of approx. US\$79,396)					

Part 1: Recent Trends

Kenya is a key supporter of UN peacekeeping efforts in the international system. Kenya has over the years remained receptive to requests to contribute to peace operations based on the consent of the parties in the host state. Kenya has however remained cautious of involvement in peace operations that have had an enforcement element – the notable exception remains the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which Kenyan forces joined in 2012.



Until this latter deployment, Kenya had relatively little or [no experience](#) in peace enforcement operations. Kenya’s cautious approach towards peace operations could be due to

the entrenchment of the principle of non-interference during the era of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) combined with the fact that Kenya's foreign policy has remained slow to change even after the transition from the old OAU to the new African Union (AU). Kenya's contribution to peace operations regionally dates back to 1979 but in terms of support to UN operations, Kenya's first contributions were military observers for the UN Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG) from 1988-1990. Since then, Kenya has deployed troop contingents to among others, the UN Transition Assistant Group (UNTAG) in Namibia, the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Croatia, the two UN missions in Liberia (UNOMIL and UNMIL), the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the UN-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). It has also deployed military observers to a number of missions including those in Namibia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kuwait, Western Sahara, Mozambique, Rwanda and Angola.

Kenya's military officers have occupied several senior positions within UN peacekeeping operations, including two Chief Military Observers (UNOMIL), Force Commander (UNMIL), Force Commander (UNAMSIL), Force Commander UNMISS, a Deputy Force Commander (UNTAG), a Chairman of Joint Verification Committee (ONUMOZ), a Sector Commander (UNPROFOR), a Senior Military Liaison Officer (UNPROFOR), a Deputy Sector Commander (UNPROFOR), a Chief of Staff (UNPROFOR), and a Garrison Commander (UNPROFOR). Kenya also has a representative at the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in New York. Given the high costs of retaining diplomatic personnel in New York, Kenya's maintenance of constant representation at DPKO indicates the importance that the Government of Kenya has attached to remaining updated about developments there, as well as lobbying for or influencing decisions that would affect Kenya's current or future deployments.

Outside of UN peace operations, the most significant deployment of Kenyan troops to date has been in Somalia. The initial deployment occurred on 16 October 2011, when Kenyan troops entered [Somalia to launch a military offensive against al-Shabaab](#). In mid-2012, the Kenyan troops were re-hatted into AMISOM following [UN Security Council resolution 2036](#). The Kenyan forces deployed in southwest Somalia and from 2013 worked closely with the Sierra Leonean battalion in their sector. Kenya was also allotted one of the deputy force commander positions.

Part 2: Decision-Making Process

Article 240 of the [2010 constitution of Kenya](#) stipulates how peacekeepers can be deployed. The primary decision to deploy for regional or international peace support operations is made by the National Security Council (NSC). Based on the advice of the NSC, the President of the Republic of Kenya, who is also the Commander-in-Chief of the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF), remains the most crucial decision-maker regarding the deployment of troops for peacekeeping purposes. The law stipulates that deployments for regional and international peace support operations can only be done with the approval of the National Assembly (see [Section 18c of the Kenya Defence Act 2012](#)). The request for parliamentary approval will ordinarily be done by the President through motions moved by the Majority Leaders or their designates in Parliament. At home, the KDF has shown no inclination to challenge the civilian authorities.³ This is not expected to change.

The deployment of Kenyan officers to peace operations is done after fulfilment of rigorous peace operations training consisting of three months pre-deployment training for units and personnel. The importance of training the military in human rights is emphasized. International Humanitarian Law is therefore [built into all training programs](#) at all levels. Conducted by the KDF Headquarters, the training curriculum is dedicated to attitudinal re-orientation with an emphasis on impartiality, negotiation, and mediation, among others.

Part 3: Rationales for Contributing

Political rationales: Given its geo-strategic location in East Africa, Kenya is considered by Western powers as an important partner in the “global war on terrorism.” Kenya’s military cooperation, including deployment to peacekeeping missions, enhances the prospects of obtaining development aid and other forms of support from major powers and other bilateral donors. In spite of recent insecurity caused by *al Shabaab*-led terror attacks and the 2008 post-election violence, Kenya is still considered a luminary of peace efforts in a region that has been stalked by numerous civil wars and strife in recent decades. This is manifested by its investment in the facilitation of numerous peace processes in Africa, including those in Mozambique, Sudan, and South Sudan. Kenya has also been instrumental in the implementation of peace agreements and in doing so regularly deploys peacekeepers. In the cases of South Sudan and Somalia, the deployment of peacekeepers has enhanced Kenya’s international image as a stabilizer and solidified its influence in international diplomatic circles, especially with respect to matters of peace and security in Africa.

Economic rationales: UN peace operations offer Kenyan soldiers and police a rare opportunity to obtain UN allowances that are ordinarily not offered by the KDF. The hard currency remittances from UN peace operations contribute to the stabilisation of the local currency against major currencies. Due to the huge sums involved, remittances – including from peacekeepers – are now being recognized as an important contributor to the country’s growth and development. By participating in UN peacekeeping missions, the KDF’s budgets are supplemented by the reimbursements received from the UN, which cover pay rates for troops and costs for equipment. This enables the KDF to build, equip and train a significant proportion of its forces with support from the UN peacekeeping reimbursements.

Security rationales: Kenya is located at the heart of an intricate conflict system in the Horn of Africa. Most countries that are within close proximity to Kenya have gone through civil war, and these have had humanitarian consequences that have percolated into Kenya, especially related to Somalia since 1991. This has in turn internationalized these conflicts and brought negative impacts on security in Kenya, including through the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. A case in point is the escalation of armed cattle raids by communities in the North Rift of Kenya. Many of the weapons that are now in the hands of nomadic pastoralist communities and bandits have their source in South Sudan, which had long endured civil war and which saw a return to major violence in December 2013. Kenya has raised troops for peace operations in some of these countries (including Sudan/South Sudan and Somalia) as a proactive measure to prevent conflicts from escalating into Kenya.

Institutional rationales: Until its October 2011 incursion into Somalia, the KDF had not engaged in battlefield combat with an enemy force. UN peace operations therefore provides KDF soldiers with valuable first-hand operational experiences abroad. Kenya’s participation in peace operations also exposes the KDF to strategic partnerships with militaries from developed countries which assist in building structural capacities in the ever-evolving modern warfare (including asymmetric warfare currently employed by terrorist groups) as well as

opening avenues of access to training facilities and the latest hardware through grants. The International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC) in Kenya for instance, is a [primarily multi-donor funded asset](#) that provides multinational classroom and seminar instruction at the operational and strategic level. Kenya's bilateral agreements with the US have in the past covered *inter alia* support to UN-authorized peace keeping operations as well as [funding for major new arms deliveries](#) and increased military training.

Normative rationales: Kenya's foreign policy guidelines stipulate that the maintenance of peace is at the heart of the [five pillars](#) viz. economic diplomacy, peace diplomacy, environmental diplomacy, cultural diplomacy and diaspora diplomacy. To support the maintenance of peace Kenya participates in several international institutions, including the first and fourth committees of the UN General Assembly. At the continental level, the fact that the bulk of Kenyan troops have deployed to African countries signifies its focus on contributing to the stabilization of Africa. This contributes to the broad vision of the AU Agenda 2063 which envisions an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.

Part 4: Barriers to Contributing

Alternative institutional preferences for crisis management: Kenya is a major protagonist in regionalization processes both in economic and security terms. It is a key proponent of the [East African Community](#) as well as the [Inter-governmental Authority on Development \(IGAD\)](#). Inasmuch as Kenya has been a big contributor to UN peace operations in the past, there has been a decline in contribution in recent years. This decline correlates with Kenya's increasing important role within the Africa Peace and Security Architecture and may hint to shifting priorities with regard to contributing to the regional standby force rather than UN missions. As part of this regionalization process, Kenya hosts the Coordination Mechanism of the Eastern Brigade and is also home to the [International Peace Support Training Centre](#), one of the regional training centers for peacekeeping forces in Eastern Africa.

Alternative political or strategic priorities: Kenya is located in a volatile region of Africa. The percolation of these conflicts into Kenya has come with increased internal security challenges that have included terrorist attacks. This has stretched the country's security resources and it is highly likely that consideration of any new requests to Kenya for deployment to peace operations will be weighed against these domestic challenges.

Difficult domestic politics: The internal security challenges that have plagued Kenya in recent years have had an impact on the perceptions of the public as well as the politicians as far as deployment to peace operations is concerned. It is often the popular sentiment that rather than deploying troops in foreign lands, they should be used in maintaining law and order within Kenya and [preventing terrorist acts](#). For example, insecurity that is attributed to the very presence of Kenyan troops in Somalia has continued to rise and this has frequently led to [demands by sections of influential politicians](#) of the withdrawal of Kenyan troops from Somalia. These calls have mainly been because *al-Shabaab* has demanded that Kenya withdraws its troops from Somalia or face increased terror attacks at home. The increase of these attacks since KDF's deployment to AMISOM has been used by some politicians as the justification for a withdrawal. Similar demands have not been made for Kenya to withdraw from UNMISS.

Financial costs: With each deployment, Kenya spends significant amounts of money preparing troops, maintaining readiness and deploying expensive equipment to support given

mandates. Inasmuch as the UN can reimburse Kenya for authorized missions, such resources may not be immediately available especially due to the fact that they may not have been budgeted for in advance. The AMISOM deployment was one such case due to the protracted nature of [reimbursements negotiations](#). Kenya sought reimbursements from the UN Security Council for having supported AMISOM notably for the period before KDF was re-hatted into AMISOM (i.e. between February-June 2012).

Discomfort with the expanding UN peacekeeping agenda: Apart from the aforementioned difficult domestic politics, there is no discomfort with Kenya's participation in peace operations or the UN peacekeeping agenda. The UN is generally considered by the Kenyan public as an important entity in the de-escalation of civil wars.

Resistance in the military: The military establishment in Kenya has long been a staunch ally of the UN as evidenced by the support that it has offered in the past. UN peace operations provide KDF personnel with the opportunity to not only grow in their careers by participating in military operations but also obtain the prestige of being associated with the UN. The [KDF also prides itself](#) on being one of the consistent top contributors from Africa in UN peace operations. Kenya has used this accolade as [a selling point](#) when seeking a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council for two years from 2017-2018.

Legal obstacles: There are no legal hurdles that currently impede Kenya from deploying troops for UN, AU and other peace operations that conform to international law and UN Security Council resolutions.

Part 5: Current Challenges and Issues

Since the end of the Cold War, Kenya has often been a key contributor to UN peacekeeping operations. Until the mid-2000s, Kenya ranked in the top 10 troop-contributing countries. Notwithstanding the decline in deployments in the last decade, Kenya had until recently, provided a large contingent in UNMISS. Kenya's swift acceptance of the UN Security Council request to deploy additional troops (under the IGAD Protection Force) to UNMISS provided an indication that in principle, the country is open to continuation of support to the South Sudan peace process. Unlike the situation in Somalia where the KDF has lost soldiers, in mid-2014 Kenya's Senate approved the UNMISS deployment after considering among other reasons, that KDF ["... soldiers will not be a fighting force but ... mandated to defend civilians and provide a safe corridor for those seeking refuge in UN camps."](#) In March 2014 during the 25th extraordinary session of IGAD, a decision was reached to form the Protection and Deterrent Force (PDF) from the region to help restore peace and stability in South Sudan. Be that as it may, all the troops deployed under the IGAD protection force were integrated into UNMISS under one command structure backed by a reinvigorated UN Security Council resolution (no.2155, 27 May 2014). There is hence no distinction between the two forces on the ground.

However, the relationship between Kenya and the UN with regard to the country's deployment to UNMISS soured in 2016. The lowest point of this relationship was the [UN Secretary-General's dismissal of the Kenyan Force Commander](#) on 1 November 2016. This followed a damning report showing "a lack of leadership in the UN mission" in the failure to protect civilians during violence in Juba between 8-11 July of the same year. In a terse rejoinder a day after the sacking of its Commander, the Kenyan government disagreed, saying the responsibility to protect civilians could not be borne by an individual, given the complex nature of the conflict. The decision irked Nairobi so much that it announced [it will](#)

[no longer contribute to South Sudan's peace process and will be pulling out the 1,053 troops it sent to UNMISS](#), citing “disrespect” from the United Nations. Indeed, on 9 November 2016, the first 100 of its troops were [withdrawn by Kenya](#) with a promise to gradually withdraw the rest. This issue is bound to be one that will shape the future of UN's relations with Kenya's troop contribution especially since the release of an [investigative report by the International Policy Group \(IPG\)](#) supporting Kenya's assertions that her Commander had been turned into a sacrificial lamb to cover for UNMISS' systemic weaknesses given that the Commander had barely been one month into his job when the incidences in question happened.

Security challenges at home will also play a role in future deployments by Kenya. The consideration of further requests by the UN to Kenya to deploy is bound to be weighed against the current security challenges that have mainly stemmed from terrorist attacks by *al Qaeda* cells, *al-Shabaab*, and other groups sympathetic to it such as *al-Hijra*, also known as the Muslim Youth Centre (MYC). So serious had the situation become that in late 2013 the President created a new command for the KDF called the [Nairobi Metropolitan Command](#) that will deal with the emerging security threats in the country.

In light of the security challenges, the 2010 constitution requirement that parliament must approve all KDF deployments also poses potential challenges. Parliamentarians are likely to weigh any request of approval of deployment against the prevalent security challenges as well as any potential political fallouts that may result from approval of deployments. This is in light of the difficult domestic politics already alluded to earlier.

Part 6: Key Champions and Opponents

The military establishment in Kenya has long been a staunch ally of the UN as evidenced by the support that it has offered in the past. The past three presidents of the Republic have also sought to maintain Kenya's image as a respected contributor of peacekeepers to UN missions not just in Africa but also in Europe and Asia. Therefore, the two institutions of the Presidency and the KDF have remained the key champions of deployment over the years. This is likely to continue, even under the current constitutional dispensation.

The constitutional requirement of parliamentary approval for any KDF deployments has created room for more scrutiny from the public. In a national political system where exponential advancement in information communication technology has enhanced the use of opinion polling, politicians can easily measure the public mood on critical issues and then ride on them for political mileage or (rarely) to provide oversight over the (mis)use of Kenyan taxpayer resources. Security issues are key among these. Based on the public mood, members of parliament have queried deployments of troops while the insecurity in Kenya continued to escalate. The deployment in Somalia for example has [caused a lot of debate among opposition politicians](#), some of whom have demanded the immediate withdrawal of Kenyan troops due to increased insecurity in Kenya. The secrecy that shrouded (and still continues to shroud) the procurements of the KDF before the parliamentary oversight that came with the new 2010 constitution, also played a role in the public's appetite to scrutinize KDF spending. In the recent past, the [procurement of armoured trucks for the KDF which ended up in UNMISS](#) was queried due to allegations of flouting of procurement rules and purchase of assets that were deemed defective.

Part 7: Capabilities and Caveats

Kenya has recently invested more in modern hardware as the KDF seeks to package itself as a professional army that is not only well-trained in modern warfare but also boasts intellectual experts in various international peace and development fields. The KDF has also retained the confidence of the last three presidents who, in order to reform key areas of national security, have tended to appoint military personnel to posts that were initially held by civilians or police. Such appointments have for example extended to the [Cabinet Secretaries](#), [immigration](#), [national intelligence](#) and [the police](#) among other crucial sectors. The [modernization of the KDF](#) backed by the political confidence in the military by recent heads of state is bound to continue to make the KDF a viable option for the UN Security Council to make a deployment request should the need arise.

Kenya is likely to invest more in the operationalization of the African Union's Eastern Standby Force. This is due to the greater focus on the sub region as envisioned by APSA. This is likely to have an impact on how the country responds to requests from the UN as far as future peacekeeping deployments are concerned. In light of this, the closer a peacekeeping operation shall be to Kenya, the higher the likelihood that Kenya shall seriously consider honouring UN requests for deployment. The deployment to UNMISS is a case in point given the role that Kenya played in the South Sudan peace process as well as the potential for South Sudan's conflicts to contribute to insecurity in the border areas that the two countries share.

Part 8: Further Reading

- A. Adebajo, *UN Peacekeeping in Africa: From the Suez Crisis to the Sudan Conflicts* (Jacana Media, 2011).
- E. Berman and K.E. Sams, *Peacekeeping in Africa: capabilities and culpabilities* (UN Publications UNIDIR, 2000).
- M. Malan, W. Nhara and Bergevin Pol, [African capabilities for training for peace operations](#) (Pretoria: ISS, 1997).

Notes

¹ Unless otherwise stated, data is drawn from IISS, *The Military Balance 2014* (London: IISS/Routledge, 2016).

² Armed Forces Spending is a country's annual total defense budget (in US dollars) divided by the total number of *active* armed forces. Using figures from IISS, *The Military Balance 2016*.

³ M. Wato, *Walking a Tight Rope amidst Kenya Post Election Violence* (Raleigh, N.C.: Lulu Press, 2011).