

# India's Deployment of UN Peacekeeping Operations – Overview: @PKO Now! No.113

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Since 1956, India has continuously provided troops, material support, and training to UN peacekeeping operations (hereafter referred to as “UN PKO”)<sup>1</sup>. Although the number of personnel dispatched to UN PKO has been declining since 2007, India has long been one of the top five countries among the 120 countries<sup>2</sup> that have dispatched personnel to UN missions<sup>3</sup>. As of the end of October 2020, India has deployed a total of 5,424 military, police, and civilian personnel to nine of the thirteen current missions, such as UNMISS (UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan), MONUSCO (UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo), and UNIFIL (UN Interim Force in Lebanon)<sup>4</sup>.

This article traces the early years of the history of India's deployment to UN PKO and outlines some of India's distinctive cases, with reference to a chart of the number of Indian personnel deployed over a period of about 30 years from 1990 to the present.

In addition, since “@PKO Now!” columns have categorized articles, this article, which explains how India is a main country of deployment, has been newly added in the section of “Regional and country approach to PKO”<sup>5</sup>.

## India's History of Deployment to UN PKO

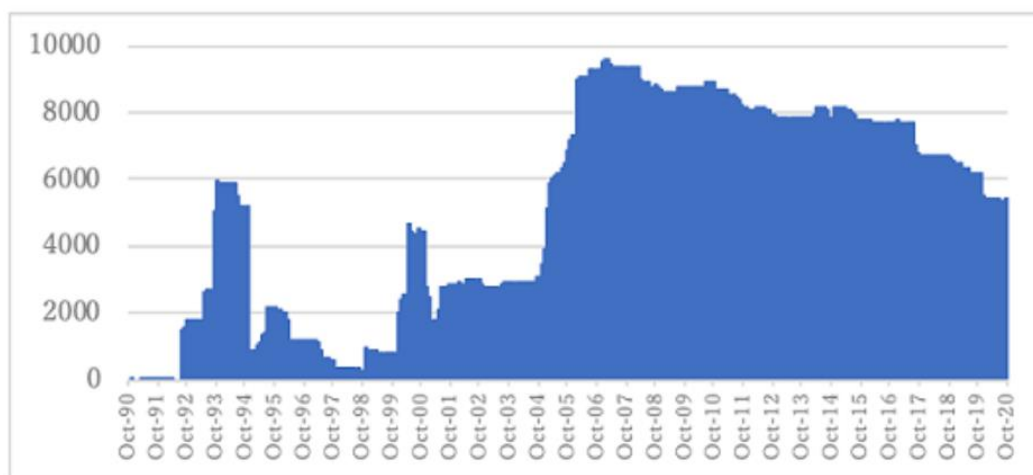
Although it was not a part of UN PKO mission, India sent a medical team to the Korean War armistice as their first assistance to the UN in 1950 under the administration of Jawaharlal

Nehru (hereafter referred to as “Nehru”), the first Prime Minister of India; since 1956, India has made a number of contributions to the UN PKO, including the deployment of its own troops<sup>6</sup>.

In 1989 and the 1990s, as militant groups in Indian-occupied Kashmir have sought independence from India, they became more active; Indian security forces were attacked, and tensions in India rose; therefore, it was necessary to send troops to the region to try to defuse the situation<sup>7</sup>. However, despite such a tense situation in India, the number of personnel deployed to UN PKO substantially increased from double digits to four digits after August 1992<sup>8</sup>. In fact, this has been pointed to the lack of military personnel in the nation<sup>9</sup>.

The increase in the number of Indian personnel deployed to UN PKO can be attributed to the increase in the number of peacekeeping missions after the end of the Cold War. In the same period, 20 UN PKO missions were newly added, and the total number of personnel increased from 10,000 (as of 1990) to 70,000 (as of 1993)<sup>10</sup>.

Number of Personnel Sent from India to the UN  
(the End of November 1999 ~ the End of October 2020)



Source: Prepared by the author; “Troop and Police Contributors,” UN Peacekeeping.

However, having looked at the number of personnel sent from India to the UN PKO for about 5 years from December 1994, it is clear that while the overall number of personnel deployed has also declined over the same period, the number of Indian personnel deployed, which accounted for about 10% of all personnel, has declined to 2 to 3%. In particular, the number

of deployments fell from the top five of around 70 to 80 countries to between 9th and 36th in 1995 and from April 1997 to October 1998<sup>11</sup>.

One of the reasons for the decline in the number of deployments was that at the time the following issues broke out in the UN Security Council (hereinafter referred as the UNSC), there was a decline in the number of deployments from member states, and similarly, it is considered that India was reluctant to deploy personnel.

In 1992, Brigadier General Satish Nambiar, the Force Commander of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR), which was tasked with disarming and protecting certain Serb-inhabited areas in Croatia, stated the fact that he, as Force Commander, did not receive crucial information and decisions taken at the initiative of the permanent members of the UNSC led to “unsatisfactory results”<sup>12</sup>. In his memoirs, he criticized “the extension of UNPROFOR’s mandate without any consensus building efforts between the conflict parties” and “the failure to provide adequate manpower and equipment to meet the expanded mandate”<sup>13</sup>; subsequently, the issues of the approval of a more powerful mandate and the failure for providing adequate manpower and equipment was not just discussed in India but throughout the UN<sup>14</sup>.

### **Special notes related to recent UN PKO**

This section introduces the dispatch of female personnel from India, which has drawn attention in recent years. India has been sending female personnel to UN PKO for a long time. In 2000, the UNSC Resolution 1325 was adopted, which for example, stated more active female participation in decision making in conflict prevention and peace building; to fulfill this resolution, in November 2006, with the aim of promoting gender equality in post-conflict societies, the then called UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) issued policy guidelines for the recruitment of more female military and police personnel<sup>15</sup>. Two months after having been issued the guidelines, India deployed the UN PKO’s first ever organized police personnel (Formed Police Unit, FPU) of 125 women to the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)<sup>16</sup>. At a time when the number of female personnel in peacekeeping operations was stagnant, India’s innovative and proactive response in deploying an all-

female FPU is still highly regarded by the international community<sup>17</sup>.

## **Conclusion**

This article reflected a brief history of Indian deployments to UN PKO, mainly in the 1990s, based on a figure showing the number of personnel sent from India, a long-time major deployer, to the UN over the past 30 years. Although India has been sending a large number of military and police personnel to date, the demand for those personnel in India has been increasing due to the country's own border issues and the inevitable impact of COVID-19, which India's military personnel have been forced to deal with as people return from abroad<sup>18</sup>. In this fast-paced reality, it remains to be determined how India will make history in UN PKO.

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Asoke Kumar Mukerji, "UN Peacekeeping: India's Contributions" Ministry of External Affairs: Government of India, November 8, 2019, (<https://www.mea.gov.in/articles-in-indian->

<sup>2</sup> Although the number of countries deployed differs from year to year, around 120 countries send personnel to UN PKO every year since 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Troop and police contributors, United Nations Peacekeeping, last updated October 29, 2020, (<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors>); See the figure.

<sup>4</sup> "Summary of Contribution to UN Peacekeeping by Country, Mission and Post: Police, UN Military Experts on Mission, Staff Officers and Troops 31/10/2020," UN Peacekeeping, last updated November 17, 2020; Where we operate, UN Peacekeeping, last updated November 17, 2020, (<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/where-we-operate>).

<sup>5</sup> "Category Index: @PKO Now!," Secretariat of the International Peace Cooperation Headquarters, ([https://www.cao.go.jp/pko/pko\\_j/organization/researcher/atpkonow/category.html#pko3](https://www.cao.go.jp/pko/pko_j/organization/researcher/atpkonow/category.html#pko3)).

<sup>6</sup> Sadiqua Rizvi, "India's role in the UN during the Nehru Era 1950-1960," 2015; Izuyama Mari, 「第6章インドの国連平和維持活動：国連主義としての軍事活動とその変容過程」『現代インドの国際関係：メジャー・パワーへの模索』（Institute of Developing Economies, Japan External Trade Organization, 2012）, p. 225-258.

<sup>7</sup> "Proxy War in Jammu & Kashmir," European Foundation for South Asian Studies, May 2017; 「武装集団の襲撃でインド兵17人死亡 パキスタン過激派が関与か」 AFP BB News, 19 September, 2016, (<https://www.afpbb.com/articles/-/3101380>); Khalid Shah, "Why Kashmir's new militancy is harder to defeat than the one in 1990s", The Print, January 11, 2020 (<https://theprint.in/opinion/why-kashmirs-new-militancy-is-harder-to-defeat-than-the-one-in-1990s/348157/>); Rayees A. Ganie and Towseef M. U. Din, "Impact of insurgency on Education in Kashmir," Journal of Education and Practice, vol. 6, no.1 (2015), p. 84.

<sup>8</sup> Troops and police contributors, United Nations Peacekeeping.; see the figure (<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors>).

<sup>9</sup> Nitin Pai, "My op-ed in the Indian Express: Bring the troops back", July 10, 2008 (<http://acorn.nationalinterest.in/2008/07/10/my-op-ed-in-the-indian-express-bring-the-troops-back/>).

<sup>10</sup> Asoke Kumar Mukerji, "UN Peacekeeping: India's Contributions", Ministry of External Affairs: Government of India, November 8, 2019([https://www.mea.gov.in/articles-in-indian-media.htm?dtl/32014/UN\\_Peacekeeping\\_Indias\\_Contributions](https://www.mea.gov.in/articles-in-indian-media.htm?dtl/32014/UN_Peacekeeping_Indias_Contributions)); "Troop and police

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contributors,” United Nations.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.; see the figure.

<sup>12</sup> Izuyama, 『現代インドの国際関係：メジャー・パワーへの模索』, p. 225-258.

<sup>13</sup> Please note that the original article with this description has already been removed; therefore, it is cited from Izuyama’s article (2012); Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> “Our History” UN Peacekeeping, last updated November 8, 2020 (<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/our-history>).

<sup>15</sup> “Gender Equality in UN Peacekeeping Operations,” United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 2006.

<sup>16</sup> Izuyama, 『現代インドの国際関係：メジャー・パワーへの模索』, p. 225-258.; Banerjee Dipankar, “Peacekeeping contributor profile: India”, Providing for Peacekeeping, January 27, 2013, (<http://www.providingforpeacekeeping.org/2014/04/03/contributor-profile-india/>).

<sup>17</sup> Lesley J. Pruitt, “The End of a New Beginning: The World’s First All-Female UN Peacekeeping Unit Departs Liberia,” 2016; “UN praises India's women police initiative”, Hindustan Times, March 30, 2006, (<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india/un-praises-india-s-women-police-initiative/story-WmlbA8cTeSAWJuEYBnaPhL.html>).

<sup>18</sup> “Coronavirus: Indian Army takes care of those quarantined and sets up more facilities”, Financial Express, March 13, 2020 (<https://www.financialexpress.com/defence/coronavirus-indian-army-takes-care-of-those-quarantined-and-sets-up-more-facilities/1897304/>).