

II. Organizations conducting multilateral peace operations

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The United Nations remains the main organization deploying multilateral peace operations, accounting for about one third of all operations and 67 per cent of all personnel deployed on 31 December 2023 (see figure 3.6).¹ However, most peace operations were deployed by regional organizations and alliances, which led 38 multilateral peace operations in 2023—the same number as in 2022. These took place primarily in sub-Saharan Africa. Ad hoc coalitions of states conducted five multilateral peace operations in 2023, which was one less than in 2022. In addition to these, there was a series of multilateral operations that aimed to contribute to security and stability but were not classified as multilateral peace operations under SIPRI's definition.

The United Nations

In 2023, the UN deployed 20 multilateral peace operations, which was the same number as in 2022 and 2021. However, by the end of 2023, two of these operations had closed (see section I): the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS). Over the course of 2023 the number of personnel deployed in UN peace operations saw a notable reduction of 16 per cent, from 80 508 to 67 643. Despite the modest personnel increase observed in 2022, the past decade has generally witnessed a consistent downward trend in the deployment of personnel to UN peace operations—and 2023 marked the most substantial reduction within this ten-year period, primarily due to the closure of MINUSMA in June 2023. The reduction in personnel numbers was uniform across all categories, with police personnel experiencing a slightly greater decrease of 18 per cent compared to 2022. As of 31 December 2023, police personnel accounted for 9.5 per cent of those deployed in UN peace operations, while military personnel constituted 85 per cent, and civilian staff made up 5.7 per cent. The five largest UN missions are discussed below.

On 20 July 2023 UN Secretary-General António Guterres presented *A New Agenda for Peace*, a policy brief that describes his vision for the future multilateral peace and security architecture in the context of a world in transition.² *A New Agenda for Peace* outlines specific recommendations for strengthening

¹ 'United Nations peace operations' include both UN peacekeeping operations and special political missions.

² United Nations, *A New Agenda for Peace*, Our Common Agenda Policy Brief no. 9 (United Nations: New York, July 2023).

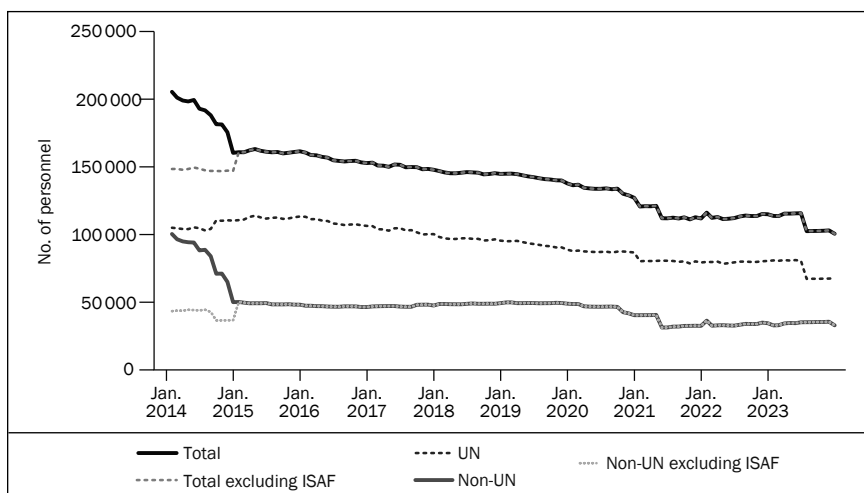


Figure 3.6. Number of personnel in multilateral peace operations, by type of conducting organization, 2014–23

ISAF = International Security Assistance Force; UN = United Nations.

Note: Personnel numbers are based on monthly data, with the last observation from Dec. 2023.

peace operations by focusing on partnerships, particularly through support to the African Union (AU) and subregional peace support operations.³

The Central African Republic: MINUSCA

On 31 December 2023 the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) was the largest peace operation deployed anywhere in the world, with 17 719 international personnel. In 2022, MINUSCA had already been the largest UN operation and the second largest globally, surpassed only by the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), following a significant troop reinforcement in response to escalating instability and violence in the country. In 2023, MINUSCA experienced a modest 2.3 per cent increase in personnel compared to the previous year.

The security situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) remained tense, especially in the eastern regions that have experienced heightened incursions from armed groups originating from Sudan and increased recruitment by armed factions along the border with Chad.⁴ In the west, the situation deteriorated further due to the activities of the Wagner Group, often referred to in UN Security Council documents as ‘other security personnel’.

³ United Nations (note 2).

⁴ United Nations, Security Council, ‘Central African Republic’, Report of the secretary-general, S/2024/170, 15 Feb. 2024. On the armed conflict in CAR see also chapter 2, section I, in this volume.

which conducted operations against armed groups in coordination with the national defence forces.⁵

MINUSCA also encountered internal challenges in 2023, including the repatriation of 60 Tanzanian peacekeepers amid allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation. Eleven members of that unit were implicated in the sexual abuse and exploitation of at least four victims.⁶ Since the establishment of MINUSCA in 2013, over 100 women, girls and boys have accused peacekeepers in CAR of sexual abuse.⁷

South Sudan: UNMISS

Since 2022, the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has been the second largest UN peace operation, with 16 309 international personnel deployed on 31 December 2023—an increase of 4.7 per cent compared to the previous year. In November 2023 the head of UNMISS, Nicholas Haysom, affirmed that it was ‘impossible to envision free, fair, and credible elections in December 2024’, as planned, unless parties, leaders, and stakeholders ‘agree on a critical mass of decisions by the first quarter of 2024’.⁸ Supporting free, fair and peaceful elections in accordance with the 2018 Revitalized Peace Agreement is a key part of the strategic vision defined in the mission’s mandate since 2021.⁹ Moreover, Haysom affirmed that although UNMISS continued to support state authorities and protect civilians, transitional security arrangements needed to be completed. In 2023, security challenges were exacerbated in South Sudan by an influx of refugees and returnees following the outbreak of new fighting in Sudan in April 2023, as well as by the effects of climate change.¹⁰

The Democratic Republic of the Congo: MONUSCO

With 15 225 deployed personnel in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) was the third largest UN peace operation as of 31 December 2023, marking a 0.8 per cent increase from the previous year. Established in 2010 as the successor to the UN Organization Mission in the DRC (MONUC), MONUSCO is expected to close its operations in the near future. Relations between MONUSCO and the Congolese government have deteriorated

⁵ Security Council Report, ‘Central African Republic: Briefing and consultations’, What’s in Blue, 20 Feb. 2024. On the role of the Wagner Group in CAR see also chapter 4, section I, in this volume.

⁶ Dodds, P., ‘More UN sex abuse allegations in CAR; 60 peacekeepers to be sent home’, New Humanitarian, 9 June 2023.

⁷ Dodds (note 6).

⁸ UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), ‘Near verbatim: Press conference by Mr Nicholas Haysom, Special representative of the secretary-general and head of UNMISS’, 23 Nov. 2023.

⁹ UN Security Council Resolution 2567, 12 Mar. 2023.

¹⁰ United Nations, Security Council, ‘Situation in South Sudan’, Report of the secretary-general, S/2023/657, 11 Sep. 2023.

in recent years, and, in June 2023, Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi requested an accelerated withdrawal of the mission.¹¹ In September 2023, amid discussions on MONUSCO's future, Congolese Foreign Minister Christophe Lutunda also called for the accelerated departure of MONUSCO in a letter to the Security Council, which included criticisms of UN missions in the country.¹²

Moreover, MONUSCO continued to face discontent from local populations due to the perception of its limited achievements in addressing the conflict. This discontent was especially marked in the eastern regions, which have been the most affected by conflict violence and have experienced recurring anti-UN protests over the last few years. In August 2023, one of these protests was met with violent suppression by national forces, leading to 43 fatalities. Additionally, issues such as the sexual misconduct of peacekeepers have intensified anti-UN sentiments. Contributing to these tensions, in October 2023, eight MONUSCO peacekeepers were repatriated following sexual misconduct charges.¹³

In September fighting broke out in the North Kivu province between the M23 armed group and the FARDC supported by local militias.¹⁴ Throughout the year, tensions between the DRC and Rwanda escalated, with both countries accusing each other of supporting armed groups as proxies.¹⁵ On 16 October 2023 the Security Council requested that MONUSCO and the Congolese government formulate a disengagement plan by November, outlining a timeline for the gradual withdrawal of MONUSCO.¹⁶ The proposed plan envisaged the repatriation of uniformed personnel and equipment in three stages, each expected to last four to five months.¹⁷ In the first phase, MONUSCO aims to complete the withdrawal of uniformed personnel from South Kivu by 30 April 2024. The second phase is contingent on the assessment of the first and scheduled for the latter half of 2024, and it focuses on the withdrawal from North Kivu. The final phase plans for the exit from Ituri and the withdrawal of the remaining forces in North Kivu. Negotiations on the 2023 mandate renewal of MONUSCO occurred simultaneously with the

¹¹ Walker, J. Z. and Stearns, J., 'What will come after MONUSCO?', Center on International Cooperation Blog, 5 Sep. 2023.

¹² Walker and Stearns (note 11).

¹³ Africanews, 'DRC: UN demands "independent" probe after deadly crackdown on anti-MONUSCO protest', 1 Sep. 2023; and 'South Africa recalls UN peacekeepers accused of sexual misconduct in DR Congo', BBC, 15 Oct. 2023.

¹⁴ United Nations, Security Council, 'United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo', Report of the secretary-general, S/2023/932, 30 Nov. 2023.

¹⁵ United Nations (note 14).

¹⁶ United Nations, Security Council, 'Statement by the President of the Security Council', S/PRST/2023/5, 16 Oct. 2023.

¹⁷ United Nations, Security Council, Letter dated 23 November 2023 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, S/2023/904, 26 Dec. 2023.

general elections in the DRC, held on 20 December, to which MONUSCO offered logistical support in areas outside its deployment at the request of the Congolese government.¹⁸

Lebanon: UNIFIL

With 9797 international personnel on 31 December 2023, the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has maintained relatively stable deployments in relation to 2022 and is the fifth largest UN peace operation. The Israel– Hamas war in Gaza led to heightened tensions along the Lebanese–Israeli border, including increased Israeli attacks against Hezbollah in Lebanon. These developments directly impacted UNIFIL’s operations, with troops frequently seeking shelter in bunkers due to intense shelling and several of UNIFIL’s bases sustaining damage.¹⁹ On 15 October 2023 the operation’s headquarters near Naqoura were damaged first by a rocket and later in the month by a shell that landed inside the base.²⁰ On the same day as the latter incident, mortar shells struck another base near Houla, resulting in injuries to one peacekeeper.²¹ In response to these incidents, UNIFIL engaged with both sides to facilitate a de-escalation of tensions.²² Nevertheless, on 25 November 2023 one of UNIFIL’s patrols was hit by Israeli gunfire in southern Lebanon.²³

South Sudan/Sudan: UNISFA

On 31 December 2023 the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) reported a deployment of 3477 personnel, marking a 17 per cent increase from the previous year. This increase largely reflected the operation’s reconfiguration from relying heavily on a single troop-contributing country (Ethiopia) to becoming a more multinational peacekeeping force.²⁴ By the end of 2023, several troop contingents had achieved full operational capacity, with UNISFA expected to reach its complete operational capability by the first quarter of 2024.²⁵

¹⁸ Security Council Report, ‘Democratic Republic of the Congo: Vote on MONUSCO mandate renewal’, What’s in Blue, 18 Dec. 2023.

¹⁹ Taher, A. and Alwaaile, H., ‘UN peacekeepers try to stay safe amid Lebanon–Israel border flare-ups’, Reuters, 30 Nov. 2023.

²⁰ UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), ‘UNIFIL statement’, 15 Oct. 2023; and UNIFIL, ‘UNIFIL statement’, 28 Oct. 2023.

²¹ UNIFIL, ‘UNIFIL statement’, 29 Oct. 2023.

²² UNIFIL, 15 Oct. 2023 (note 20).

²³ Razek, O. A. and Makary, A., ‘UNIFIL says Israeli gunfire hit one of its patrols in southern Lebanon’, Reuters, 25 Nov. 2023.

²⁴ The UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) deployments were affected by Ethiopia’s decision to withdraw its contingent by April 2022 following border tensions with Sudan over the al-Fashaga area.

²⁵ United Nations, Security Council, ‘Security Council calls on Sudan, South Sudan, to demilitarize Abyei, highlights impact of Sudan conflict on area’s political process, humanitarian needs’, SC/15481, 6 Nov. 2023.

Throughout 2023 the security situation in the Abyei area remained tense, despite a reduction in intercommunal armed clashes.²⁶ The UN secretary-general's report on Abyei in 2023 highlighted concerns regarding the ongoing presence of South Sudanese and Sudanese security forces in the area, which violates its demilitarized status.²⁷ Moreover, UNISFA's freedom of movement was repeatedly obstructed by the South Sudan People's Defence Forces, breaching the status of forces agreement and the operation's mandate.²⁸

Additionally, the armed conflict that began in Sudan in April 2023 led to a surge of displaced persons into Abyei, further undermining security conditions in the area.²⁹ In November, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa Hanna Tetteh warned that the conflict in Sudan could spill over into Abyei and negatively impact social cohesion in the area.³⁰

Fatalities in UN peace operations

During 2023, 45 international personnel and 15 local staff died while serving in UN peace operations (see figure 3.7), which was 41 fewer fatalities than in 2022.³¹ Of the 45 international personnel fatalities, 30 were military personnel, 11 were international civilian personnel and 4 were police. There was a decrease in the number of fatalities across all categories of personnel compared to 2022 and this was the lowest number of fatalities among peacekeepers over the past decade.

The number of hostile deaths (i.e. fatalities caused by malicious acts) among international personnel also decreased from 32 in 2022 to 7 in 2023. Military personnel, the category which tends to be the most targeted by malicious acts, accounted for all of these deaths. In contrast to 2022, when most of the deaths were caused by malicious acts, in 2023 the main cause of peacekeepers' deaths was illness. In 2023, 27 peacekeepers died from illness, 8 died due to accidents, 2 deaths were self-inflicted and in 1 case the cause of death was undetermined.

In 2023, MINUSMA continued to be the deadliest peace operation for peacekeepers, despite being discontinued in the middle of the year, with 12 fatalities registered—although 1 of them was after the mission officially terminated. This was 13 fewer fatalities than in 2022. Five of the 7 hostile deaths registered within UN peace operations in 2023 were in MINUSMA,

²⁶ United Nations, Security Council, 'Situation in Abyei', Report of the secretary-general, S/2023/777, 16 Oct. 2023.

²⁷ United Nations Security Council (note 26).

²⁸ United Nations Security Council (note 26).

²⁹ United Nations Security Council (note 26).

³⁰ UN Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, 'Statement by Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa Hanna Tetteh', 6 Nov. 2023.

³¹ The figures for fatalities in this section refer to international personnel unless otherwise specified and do not include the UN's personnel category 'other'.

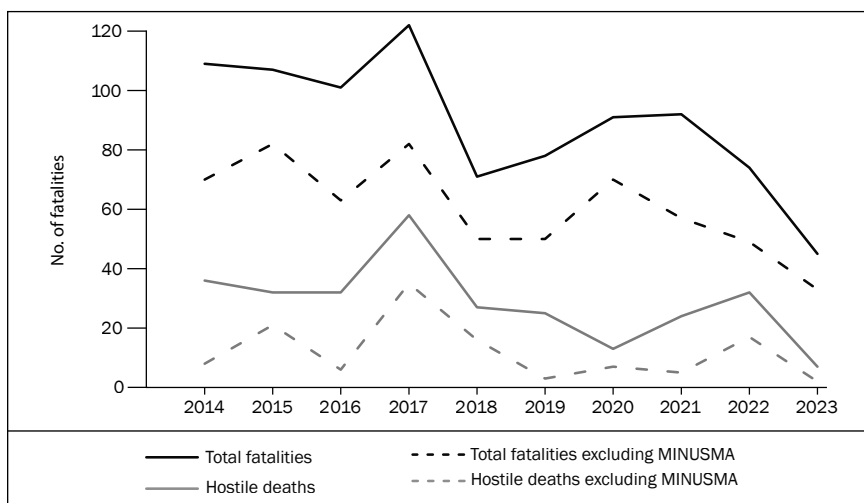


Figure 3.7. Number of fatalities among international personnel in United Nations peace operations, 2014–23

MINUSMA = United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

Note: Fatality numbers are shown annually.

which suffered 311 deaths in total during the 10 years of the mission, most of them due to malicious acts.

The number of uniformed personnel fatalities was the lowest for the past decade (34 fatalities). Most of these were in MINUSMA (11) and MONUSCO (9). The fatality rate for uniformed personnel in 2023 was 0.49 per 1000 uniformed personnel (see figure 3.8), which was 0.21 points lower than in 2022. Over the past decade, MINUSMA, MINUSCA and MONUSCO have been the deadliest UN peace operations for peacekeepers, but in 2023 the rates of hostile deaths decreased significantly for all these operations (see figure 3.9).

Regional organizations and alliances

The three new operations in 2023 were all established by regional organizations or alliances (see section I). As of 31 December 2023, multilateral peace operations established by regional organizations or alliances deployed a total of 30 609 personnel, a decrease of 4.9 per cent compared to the 32 192 personnel deployed in 2022.

Africa

Five African regional organizations—the AU, the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Southern

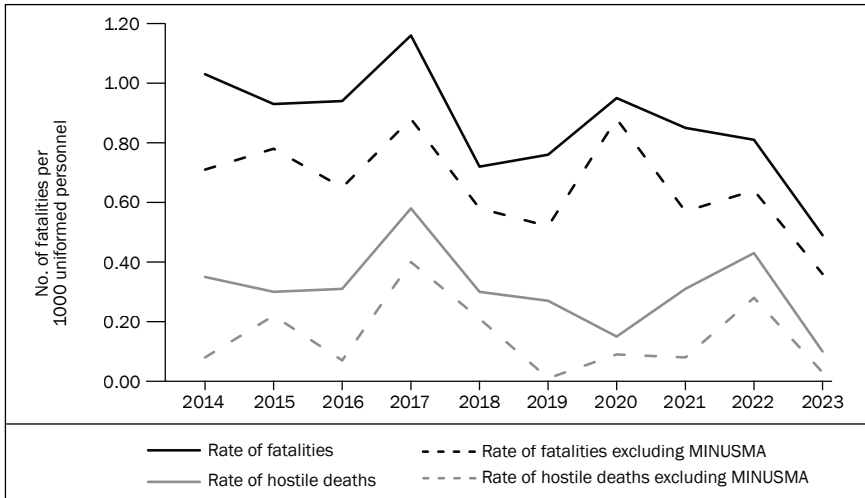


Figure 3.8. Fatality rates for uniformed personnel in United Nations peace operations, 2014–23

MINUSMA = United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

Note: Fatality numbers are shown annually.

African Development Community (SADC)—conducted a total of 11 multilateral peace operations in 2023, which was the same number as in 2022. The total number of personnel registered on 31 December 2023 decreased by 11 per cent from 24 840 to 22 040 in comparison to the previous year. This decrease was primarily due to the closure of the East African Community Regional Force in the DRC (EACRF-DRC) and drawdowns within ATMIS.

The AU was the regional organization conducting most of the African operations and deploying most personnel. This was largely due to ATMIS, which was the second largest multilateral peace operation in 2023, with 17 711 personnel on 31 December 2023. This marked a 10 per cent decrease in relation to 2022. The other AU peace operations, namely the AU Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL), the AU Mission for the CAR and Central Africa (MISAC), the AU Mission in Libya and the AU Monitoring, Verification and Compliance Mission (AU-MVCM) are much smaller in scale.

The reduction in ATMIS personnel was part of a plan to gradually draw-down troop numbers, envisaging the mission's discontinuation by the end of 2024, with the goal of gradually transferring security responsibilities to Somalia's security forces.³² Of the two planned phases of troop reduction in 2023 (with four in total by the end of 2024), only the first phase was completed by 30 July 2023, which involved the withdrawal of 2000 troops.³³ The

³² UN Security Council Resolution 2637, 27 June 2023.

³³ 'Atmis hands over 9 military bases to Somalia in troop withdrawal', *The EastAfrican*, 30 Jan. 2024.

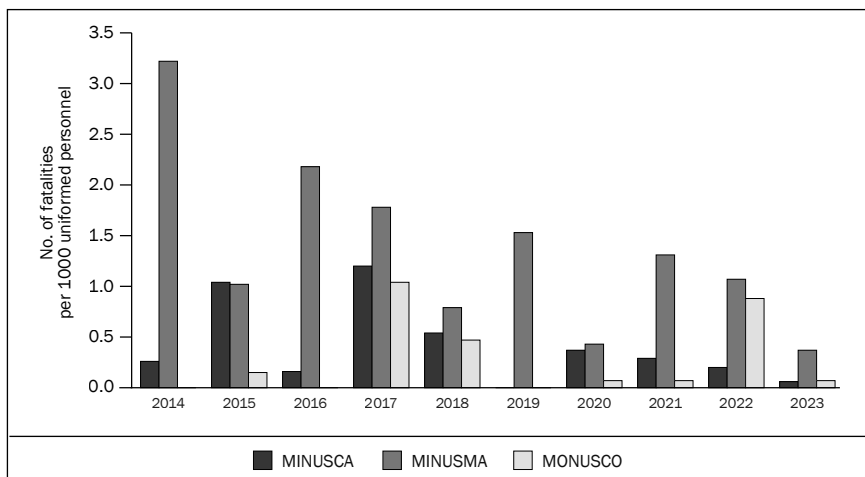


Figure 3.9. Fatality rates of hostile deaths for UN uniformed personnel, 2014–23
 MINUSCA = UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Central Africa Republic; MINUSMA = UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali; MONUSCO = UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Note: The rate for MINUSMA is calculated based on the average number of uniformed personnel from Jan. to June 2023, when the mission was discontinued.

second phase, intended to withdraw an additional 3000 troops by September 2023, was delayed for three months at the request of the Somali government due to ongoing terror attacks and concerns over the Somali security forces' ability to maintain control over territories recaptured from al-Shabab.³⁴ At the end of 2023 this phase was still under way. The first two phases included the handover of certain forward operating bases to the Somali security forces and the closure of others.

However, the drawdown of ATMIS troops coincided with a significant uptick in al-Shabab activities, particularly along the Kenyan border, leading to increased attacks on both security forces and civilians.³⁵ Furthermore, several military bases transferred from ATMIS to the Somali security forces were reportedly targeted by al-Shabab.³⁶ As the Somali Army continued to struggle to control some areas, a year after initiating an offensive to dislodge al-Shabab, there are concerns that ATMIS' withdrawal could lead to a security vacuum.³⁷

³⁴ Kinkoh, H., Mahdi, M. and Soumahoro, M., 'Inconsistencies are costing the AU Mission in Somalia', ISS Today, 15 Dec. 2023.

³⁵ Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), 'Kenya–Somalia border: Rising al-Shabaab threat in the wake of ATMIS drawdown', ACLED Special Report, 1 Sep. 2023.

³⁶ Redden, A., 'Kenya confirms last troops to leave Somalia by end of 2024', Africanews, 6 Oct. 2023.

³⁷ Hochet-Bodin, N. 'En Somalie, le retrait prévu des troupes de l'Union africaine fait craindre un vide sécuritaire' [In Somalia, the planned withdrawal of African Union troops raises fears of a security vacuum], *Le Monde*, 25 Oct. 2023.

Amid these challenges, in December 2023 the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2719, wherein the Security Council reiterates its commitment to strengthen the partnership with the AU in line with Chapter VIII of the UN Charter and aims at greater regional and national ownership for the maintenance of international peace and security.³⁸ Moreover, the UN Security Council agreed to evaluate, on a case-by-case basis, requests from the AU Peace and Security Council for authorization to utilize UN-assessed contributions to fund AU-led peace support operations.³⁹

ECOWAS led two peace operations in 2023, namely the ECOWAS Mission in Gambia (ECOMIG) and the Stabilisation Support Mission in Guinea-Bissau (SSMGB). ECOMIG has been in place since January 2017 to address the constitutional crisis that followed the 2016 national elections in Gambia. On 1 January 2023 ECOWAS renewed the mission's mandate for another year.⁴⁰ It also recommended a gradual downsizing and the training of Gambian defence and security forces.⁴¹ In March 2023 the resident president of the ECOWAS Commission to the Gambia, Miatta Lilly French, confirmed that ECOMIG would start to drawdown.⁴²

The SSMGB was established by ECOWAS on 3 February 2022, following a coup attempt against Guinea-Bissau President Umaro Sissoco Embaló.⁴³ The peace operation started to be deployed in April 2022 and resembles the 2012 ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB), which was launched following a coup staged by elements of the armed forces.⁴⁴ On 10 December 2023 ECOWAS renewed the mandate of SSMGB for another year.⁴⁵

IGAD led the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (CTSAMVM), which has been monitoring compliance with the South Sudan peace agreement since 2018. In March 2023 monitors of the mechanism initiated a strike due to the non-payment of salaries since April 2022.⁴⁶ They returned to their duties in June following a donation from Japan. However, in December 2023 the chair of the mechanism, Major General Hailu Gonfa Edossa, announced plans to decrease the staff size of the peace operation for financial reasons.⁴⁷ This reduction is

³⁸ UN Security Council Resolution 2719, 21 Dec. 2023.

³⁹ UN Security Council Resolution 2719 (note 38).

⁴⁰ Bobb, C. O., 'Any good mission should come to an end', *The Point*, 8 Mar. 2023.

⁴¹ Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), 'Final Communiqué of the Sixty-second Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government', 4 Dec. 2022.

⁴² Bobb (note 40).

⁴³ ECOWAS, 'Final Communiqué of the Extraordinary Summit of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government on the political situation in Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali', 3 Feb. 2022.

⁴⁴ Dansó, I., 'Guiné-Bissau: Debate aceso sobre força militar da CEDEAO' [Guinea-Bissau: Ongoing debate on ECOWAS military force], *Deutsche Welle*, 4 May 2022.

⁴⁵ ECOWAS, 'Final Communiqué of the Sixth-fourth (64th) Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government', 20 Dec. 2023.

⁴⁶ United Nations (note 10).

⁴⁷ 'Peace monitoring body to downsize staff due to lack of funding', *Radio Tamazuj*, 11 Dec. 2023.

expected to exacerbate existing challenges, such as the timely publication of the CTSAMVM's reports, considering its already limited resources.

In addition to the SADC Mission in the DRC (SAMIDRC), SADC has been leading the SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) since 2021. SAMIM's objective is to assist Mozambique in combating violent extremism in the northern province of Cabo Delgado.⁴⁸ In July 2023, based on a field assessment report from member states, SADC opted to extend SAMIM for an additional year, with plans for a full withdrawal thereafter.⁴⁹

During 2023 there was a notable improvement in the security situation in Cabo Delgado, with a 71 per cent reduction in fatalities associated with militant Islamist violence in northern Mozambique compared to the previous year.⁵⁰ This improvement was credited to the offensive operations of SAMIM, alongside the Joint Force of the Rwanda Defence Force and the Rwanda National Police, as they supported the Mozambican military in dislodging extremists from the region.⁵¹ National authorities reported that 90–95 per cent of territories previously under extremist control had been recaptured.⁵² However, this progress was overshadowed by allegations of human rights abuses by SAMIM personnel, including an incident recorded in a video that emerged in January 2023 and involved the mistreatment of corpses by South African soldiers.⁵³

Nevertheless, experts urged caution, particularly as violence linked to Islamic State Mozambique (ISM) saw a resurgence in December 2023, including the deaths of 14 troops in coordinated attacks in two coastal villages.⁵⁴ Additionally, attacks by extremists in the districts of Muidumbe, Macomia and Mocímboa da Praia have led to new waves of internal displacement.⁵⁵

⁴⁸ Southern African Development Community (SADC), 'Communiqué of the Extraordinary Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government', 23 June 2021.

⁴⁹ SADC, 'The Extra-Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the SADC Organ Troika, Plus SADC Troika, and Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) and SAMIM Contributing Countries to the peace processes in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Mozambique', 11 July 2023.

⁵⁰ Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 'Deaths linked to militant Islamist violence in Africa continue to spiral', Infographic, 29 Jan. 2024.

⁵¹ The Joint Force is not a multilateral peace operation, but a single-country contingent deployed through a bilateral agreement with the government of Mozambique. Africa Center for Strategic Studies (note 50).

⁵² 'Mozambique: Mozambican forces recover over 90% of territory once controlled by terrorists', AllAfrica, 26 Dec. 2023.

⁵³ Machado, Z., 'Southern African leaders silent over abuses in Mozambique', Human Rights Watch, 18 Aug. 2023.

⁵⁴ Bofin, P., Queface, T. and Lima, F., 'Cabo Ligado Monthly: December 2023', Cabo Ligado, 19 Jan. 2024.

⁵⁵ Platform for Dialogue for Conflict Resolution in Cabo Delgado, 'Vaga de Novos Ataques Em Muidumbe Provoca Deslocamento Forçado de 42 Agregados Familiares' [Waves of new attacks in Muidumbe causes forced displacement of 42 households], 18 Dec. 2023.

These incidents highlight the resilience of ISM and the potential security vacuum that could emerge following SAMIM's withdrawal.⁵⁶

Finally, the EAC led the EACRF-DRC, which was discontinued on 8 December 2023 (see section I).

Europe and North America

Regional organizations and alliances from the northern hemisphere—the European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)—conducted 26 multilateral peace operations during 2023, which was 1 more than in 2022. The combined number of personnel deployed by these organizations increased 17 per cent, from 7325 on 31 December 2022 to 8549 on 31 December 2023. This uptick was primarily due to reinforcements in the two remaining military peace operations in the Western Balkans: the EU Force Bosnia and Herzegovina Operation ALTHEA (EUFOR ALTHEA) and the NATO Kosovo Force (KFOR).

In 2023 the EU conducted 17 missions and operations in the framework of its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) that met SIPRI's classification of a multilateral peace operation, which was 2 more than in 2022. Besides the deployment of 2 new missions, the EU Mission in Armenia (EUMA) and the EU Partnership Mission in the Republic of Moldova (EUPM Moldova), the EU also established a civilian–military 'security and defence initiative' covering Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo in the Gulf of Guinea, which does not qualify as a multilateral peace operation according to SIPRI's definition. The initiative aims to support these countries and build their capacities against security threats and challenges spilling over from the Sahel countries, where a series of coups have made it increasingly difficult for the EU to conduct missions and operations.

Together, all EU missions and operations that classified as multilateral peace operations comprised 3369 international personnel on 31 December 2023, which was 17 per cent more than the previous year. The personnel strength of EUFOR ALTHEA, which has been deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina since 2004, increased from 906 to 1669, the highest number since 2011. This was done in response to increasing political and ethnic tensions in the country during 2023.

NATO conducted two multilateral peace operations in 2023—the same operations as in 2022. On 31 December 2023 the number of personnel deployed by NATO increased 17 per cent in relation to the previous year, from 4247 to 4987. This increase was due to reinforcements in KFOR in June 2023 in response to clashes that erupted in the north of Kosovo. Around 25 KFOR troops were injured during violent protests in May 2023, which also led to

⁵⁶ Bofin, Queface and Lima (note 54).

increased tensions between Kosovo and Serbia and fears of military escalation.⁵⁷ The tensions in northern Kosovo had escalated after the installation of ethnic Albanian mayors in offices within northern municipalities, following elections that saw a mere 3.5 per cent voter turnout.⁵⁸ This low participation rate occurred as Serbs, who constitute the majority in the region, boycotted the local elections.

In February 2021, at the request of the Iraqi government, NATO agreed to expand the NATO Mission in Iraq (NMI). However, by the end of 2023 there were no official reports on the expansion.⁵⁹

The OSCE conducted seven multilateral peace operations in 2023. As of 31 December 2023 the organization had 193 personnel, with almost half of them (93) in the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMIK).

Ad hoc coalitions

In 2023, ad hoc coalitions of states conducted five multilateral peace operations: the Office of the High Representative (OHR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina; the Joint Control Commission (JCC)/Joint Peacekeeping Forces (JPKF) in the disputed Trans-Dniester region of Moldova; the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) in the Sinai Peninsula; the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC) on the Korean peninsula; and the Russian–Turkish Joint Monitoring Centre (RTJMC) in Azerbaijan. The number of personnel deployed in operations in this category increased by 2.2 per cent in 2023, from 2266 on 31 December 2022 to 2316 on 31 December 2023.

The OHR continued to face challenges to its operations during the year. In July 2023 the leader of Republika Srpska (one of the two federal entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina), Milorad Dodik, supported a law rejecting the authority of High Representative Christian Schmidt in Republika Srpska. Dodik has openly supported the secession of Republika Srpska and has continuously attempted to undermine decisions from the high representative and the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁶⁰ A 2023 report by the high representative warned that there had been unprecedented attacks on the ‘constitutional order of Bosnia’.⁶¹ The Russian Federation and China still did not recognize the authority of the high representative on the grounds that his position was not endorsed by the UN Security Council.

⁵⁷ Radovanovic, R. and Semini, L., ‘25 NATO-led peacekeepers injured in Kosovo in clashes with Serbs outside municipal building’, AP, 30 May 2023.

⁵⁸ Radovanovic and Semini (note 57).

⁵⁹ North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), ‘NATO Mission Iraq’, accessed 28 Feb. 2023.

⁶⁰ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, ‘UN Security Council extends EU peacekeeping mandate in Bosnia, debates high representative’s report’, 2 Nov. 2023.

⁶¹ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (note 60).

The Russia–Ukraine war continued to have reverberations in the Trans-Dniester region of Moldova, where the JCC/JPKF has been deployed to observe the 1992 ceasefire agreement between Moldova and Russia. During the year, Trans-Dniester called once again for an increase in the number of Russia contingents in the area beyond the JCC/JPKF framework, citing worsening security risks.⁶²

Other multilateral operations

As the nature and structure of peace operations change, multilateral organizations and ad hoc coalitions of states continue to deploy operations that aim to contribute to security and stability but fall outside of SIPRI's definition of a multilateral peace operation. In 2023 the main examples of such operations were in Africa, with one exception in Ukraine. Additionally, Operation Sabre, comprised of around 400 French special forces personnel, ceased its operations in Burkina Faso in February 2023. This officially ended the French military presence in the country.⁶³

The Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (JF-G5S) was effectively dissolved in 2023.⁶⁴ Following coups, and mirroring Mali's withdrawal from the JF-G5S the previous year, Burkina Faso and Niger jointly announced their withdrawal from the alliance on 2 December 2023. Four days later, Chad and Mauritania announced they would move towards the full dissolution of the JF-G5S, following the successive losses of three out of five original members.⁶⁵ Notably, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger formed a new defence alliance, the Alliance of Sahel States (Alliance des États du Sahel), in September 2023.⁶⁶ This new alliance has yet to initiate direct responses to security threats in the region.⁶⁷ Meanwhile, the AU has expressed concern over the growth of these threats and the potentially destabilizing effects of the disengagement from ECOWAS alongside MINUSMA's withdrawal.⁶⁸

The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to combat Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin continued its operations in West Africa in 2023.⁶⁹ The

⁶² 'Breakaway Moldovan region suggests Russia deploy more peacekeepers', Reuters, 8 May 2023.

⁶³ Bensimon, C., Vincent, E. and Le Cam, M., 'Opération « Sabre » au Burkina Faso: D'une arrivée discrète à une fin amère' [Operation 'Sabre' in Burkina Faso: From a discreet arrival to a bitter end], *Le Monde*, 21 Feb. 2023.

⁶⁴ Agence Mauritanienne d'information (AMI), 'Communiqué Conjoint de la République Islamique de Mauritanie et de la République du Tchad à propos du G5-Sahel' [Joint Communiqué from the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and the Republic of Chad regarding the G5-Sahel], 5 Dec. 2023.

⁶⁵ AMI (note 64).

⁶⁶ 'L'Alliance des États du Sahel, pari sécuritaire et acte de défiance diplomatique' [The Alliance of Sahel States, a security bet and an act of diplomatic defiance], *Le Monde*, 14 Dec. 2023.

⁶⁷ Dieng, M. and Frowd, P. M., 'Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger have a new defence alliance: An expert view of its chances of success', *The Conversation*, 19 Oct. 2023.

⁶⁸ Kanu, M. I., 'Joint A-3 Plus statement on situation in Western Africa and the Sahel', Permanent Observer Mission of the AU to the UN, 11 Jan. 2024.

⁶⁹ Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), 'About us', [n.d.].

MNTJF has seen some success but also faced a number of challenges and setbacks, primarily related to inadequate funding and capacity and intelligence gaps.⁷⁰ Its mandate was renewed in December 2022 until February 2024.⁷¹ The task force is mandated to secure the areas in which Boko Haram operates, including reducing sexual and gender-based violence and other violence against civilians; facilitate the implementation of stabilization programmes, including restoring state authority and returning internally displaced persons; and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian and other assistance services.⁷²

The EU Military Partnership Mission in Niger (EUMPM Niger) was launched in 2023 to enhance the military capacity of the Nigerian armed forces in fighting terrorism.⁷³ However, despite its launch, the junta government of Niger withdrew state consent for the EUMPM Niger in December 2023, without EU member states ever deploying to the mission.⁷⁴ This followed a coup in July 2023 and the country's subsequent move to strengthen military cooperation with Russia and its regional allies.⁷⁵

The EU Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine), established in October 2022, provides large-scale training for the Ukrainian armed forces, as well as facilitates the provision of lethal and non-lethal equipment and other supplies from EU member states to Ukraine. In November 2023 the Council of the EU approved a significant increase in financial support for training, from €61 million (\$66 million) to €255 million (\$276 million).⁷⁶ The mission, with its narrow mandate, has trained an average of 600 Ukrainian soldiers per day and over 34 000 in total since its launch.⁷⁷ In August 2023 Ukraine requested that the EUMAM training be extended to 'the National Guard, the State Border Service, the National Police, and the Security Service of Ukraine'.⁷⁸

⁷⁰ Onuoha, F. C., Tchier, A. E. Y. and Zabala, M. L., *A Quest to Win the Hearts and Minds: Assessing the Effectiveness of the Multinational Joint Task Force*, Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network (EPON) Report (Norwegian Institute of International Affairs: Oslo, 2023); and Zabala, M. L., 'MNJTF in Lake Chad Basin: What lessons for addressing capability gaps more systemically?', *Challenges Forum*, Oct. 2023.

⁷¹ MNJTF, 'Renewal of MNJTF mandate', 14 Dec. 2022.

⁷² Onuoha, Tchier and Zabala (note 70).

⁷³ European External Action Service (EEAS), 'EU Military Partnership Mission in Niger', accessed 26 Mar. 2024.

⁷⁴ Delegation of the European Union (EU) to the Republic of Niger, 'Niger: Déclaration du Haut représentant Josep Borrell sur les derniers développements concernant EUCAP Sahel et EUMPM' [Niger: Statement by High Representative Josep Borrell on the latest developments concerning EUCAP Sahel and EUMPM], EEAS, 5 Dec. 2023.

⁷⁵ 'Niger ends EU security and defense partnerships', *Le Monde*, 4 Dec. 2023; and Tasamba, J., 'Niger ends EU defense, security partnerships', Anadolu Agency, 5 Dec. 2023.

⁷⁶ Council of the EU, 'European Peace Facility: Council greenlights further funding for training of the Ukrainian Armed Forces under EUMAM Ukraine', Press release, 28 Nov. 2023.

⁷⁷ EUMAM Ukraine, Press and Information Team, 'Fast and flexible: The EUMAM UA Special Training Command', EEAS, 20 Dec. 2023; and Council of the EU (note 76).

⁷⁸ Council of the EU (note 76).