Forum: **First Committee (Disarmament and International Security)**
Question of: **Ensuring the safety of UN troopers in conflict zones**
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I. Description of the Issue

The United Nations plays an important role in maintaining international peace and security through deploying peacekeeping troops and personnel in conflict zones. These peacekeepers are usually sent to regions that are experiencing civil wars, terrorism, racial violence, and humanitarian crises. Their aim is to protect civilians, deliver humanitarian aid, support peace agreements, and help governments restore stability.

Conflicts nowadays have become far more complex compared to traditional wars. Many conflicts now involve non-state armed groups, terrorist organizations, and militias rather than only national armies. These newer actors may not respect the safety and neutrality of UN peacekeeping staff and international law. As a result, UN peacekeeping troopers are being targeted more and more throughout the world through ambushes, kidnappings, and direct attacks.

In fact, several UN peacekeeping missions over the past couple decades have been attacked heavily. Some important examples include MINUSMA (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali), which suffered heavy attacks over its decade-long operation; MONUSCO (United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo), which too faced attacks from armed rebel groups, resulting in several casualties; and UNMISS (United Nations Mission in South Sudan), which faced similar attacks.

Dangerous environments like modern conflict zones can seriously affect the ability of peacekeepers to achieve their goals effectively. Humanitarian aid deliveries may get delayed, and protection for civilians may become limited. The loss of peacekeepers could also potentially discourage countries from sending troops to future missions. Risks with security

could also weaken international efforts to resolve wars and maintain peace. Furthermore, advanced weapon technology has created even more risks for peacekeeping missions. Some hosting governments are unable to provide sufficient security or support largely due to weak institutions and instability in conflict regions.

As a result, it has become an important topic to protect UN peacekeepers in such environments. The only way to ensure the effectiveness of a peacekeeping mission is protecting the peacekeeping personnel. Achieving this goal requires cooperation between the UN, the countries that are deploying the troops, regional organizations, and local communities. Therefore, delegates should come up with ways to better protect UN personnel while allowing them to complete their tasks.

II. Definition of Key Terms

UN Peacekeeping: Operations established by the United Nations to help maintain international peace and security in conflict-affected regions.

UN Peacekeepers/Troopers: Military personnel, police officers, and civilian staff deployed by the United Nations to carry out peacekeeping mandates.

Conflict Zone: An area experiencing armed conflict, political violence, terrorism, or severe instability.

Peacekeeping Mission: A UN-authorized operation deployed to support peace processes, protect civilians, and help restore stability.

Armed Non-State Actor: Any armed group participating in a conflict that is not part of an official state military, such as militias, rebel groups, or terrorist organizations.

Rules of Engagement: Guidelines that determine when and how peacekeepers may use force while carrying out their duties.

Protection of Civilians: Measures taken to safeguard civilian populations from violence and harm during armed conflicts.

Improvised Explosive Device: A homemade explosive weapon commonly used by insurgent and terrorist groups against military and peacekeeping forces.

Asymmetric Warfare: A type of conflict in which weaker groups use unconventional tactics, such as ambushes, terrorism, and guerrilla warfare, against stronger opponents.

Host Nation: The country in which a peacekeeping mission is deployed and operates.

Terrorist Organization: A group that uses violence or intimidation against civilians or governments to achieve political, ideological, or religious objectives.

Mandate: The set of responsibilities and objectives assigned to a UN mission by the United Nations Security Council.

Troop-Contributing Country (TCC): A member state that provides military personnel for UN peacekeeping operations.

Ceasefire: A temporary or permanent agreement between conflicting parties to stop fighting.

Humanitarian Assistance: Aid provided to populations affected by conflict, disasters, or emergencies to meet basic needs and alleviate suffering.

III. Background information

Evolution of UN Peacekeeping Missions:

The concept of peacekeeping was invented after World War II in 1948 to maintain global security and peace. The UN Charter did not originally include peacekeeping. The concept was first seen when the Security Council sent unarmed military observers to the Middle East in 1948. That first ever peacekeeping mission was UNTSO (the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization). In 1956, the UN deployed its first armed military force (UNEF) during the Suez Crisis. This mission popularized the iconic "Blue Helmets" and established the core rules of consent, neutrality, and using force strictly for self-defense.

For its first 40 years, the division between the US and the USSR limited peacekeeping mostly to monitoring stable borders and ceasefires. Despite these challenges, the global impact of these early forces earned the UN peacekeeping branch the Nobel Peace Prize in 1988.

In the 1990s, a massive shift toward multidimensional and dynamic operations occurred. Peacekeepers were no longer just separating armies. They began organizing elections, protecting civilians, and rebuilding broken government systems in active war zones.

Since UNTSO's creation, the UN has deployed 72 peacekeeping missions involving over two million people from 125 different countries.

Major Threats Faced by UN Troopers:

Modern UN peacekeepers face dangerous threats from asymmetrical warfare, where rebel groups and terrorists deliberately target them. Because they operate in active conflict zones, troopers frequently encounter ambushes, mortar fire, and roadside bombs (IEDs), which are the leading cause of peacekeeper deaths. Additionally, digital disinformation on social media spreads fake news that accuses the UN of helping local militias, which triggers violent civilian riots and direct attacks on UN bases.

Peacekeepers are also left vulnerable by severe structural and environmental issues. A major global funding crisis forces the UN to cut troop numbers and scale back patrols, leaving remaining soldiers under-resourced and overstretched. Some troops also lack the advanced training or gear needed for modern combat. On top of these military threats, peacekeepers must deal with hostile host governments that restrict their movement, deadly diseases like malaria, and dangerous road accidents caused by broken infrastructure.

Conflict Zones Most Affected by Attacks on Peacekeepers:

Certain conflict zones have become extraordinarily dangerous for UN personnel, turning what were meant to be stabilizing missions into high-casualty deployments. As geopolitical tensions rise and local governance fails, peacekeepers increasingly find themselves stationed in areas where there is no peace to keep. Instead of monitoring established borders, they are forced to operate in active combat zones where international forces are deliberately targeted by local factions looking to seize power.

The deployment in Mali (MINUSMA) historically stood out as the single most perilous operation in UN history due to relentless, asymmetrical warfare. For years, peacekeepers in Mali were subjected to coordinated ambushes and heavy roadside bomb attacks by highly organized Al-Qaeda and Islamic State-affiliated extremist groups. Although the mission was forced to withdraw under pressure from the host country's military junta, the high loss of life there established a grim blueprint for the extreme dangers modern peacekeepers face from terrorist insurgencies.

Meanwhile, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) continues to present intense physical and political hazards for international troops. Peacekeepers in the eastern DRC are trapped in a brutal, multi-sided conflict involving a complex web of over 100 localized armed groups, including heavily equipped militias like the M23 rebel group. Compounding the physical danger of active Combat is a massive wave of digital disinformation, which falsely blames the UN for ongoing instability and incites violent local mobs to storm and attack peacekeeping bases.

Other regions on the African continent, such as South Sudan and the Central African Republic, suffer from severe political fragmentation and widespread militia violence. In South Sudan (UNMISS), peacekeepers must navigate constant political instability, deep-rooted inter-communal cattle-raiding violence, and severe blockades from local armed actors that restrict their ability to protect fleeing civilians. In the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), troops face highly fluid frontlines as rival rebel coalitions fight bitterly for control of mineral-rich territories. Together, these cases demonstrate that modern peacekeepers must survive an unpredictable mix of terrorist insurgency, civil war, and political chaos across different environments.

Consequences of Inadequate Protection:

The severe lack of adequate protection for UN personnel directly paralyzes their operational capacity and compromises entire missions. When peacekeepers are left vulnerable to heavy asymmetrical warfare, escalating casualties naturally degrade troop morale and overall mission effectiveness. Constant, unmitigated security threats force commanders to prioritize defensive lockdowns over field tasks, severely restricting the forces' freedom of movement and rendering them entirely unable to safely patrol unstable conflict zones.

This forced retreat from dangerous areas triggers a devastating humanitarian crisis for local populations. Because weakened peacekeepers can no longer secure vital transit routes or establish safe zones, humanitarian organizations are blocked from safely distributing lifesaving food, water, and medical aid. Left without an international security umbrella, civilian populations become dramatically more vulnerable to mass atrocities, sexual violence, and targeted raids by predatory local militias.

Ultimately, failing to protect the "Blue Helmets" threatens the very existence of global peacekeeping. As deployments grow increasingly dangerous without proper defensive backing, troop-contributing nations become highly reluctant to put their national soldiers at risk, leading to critical manpower shortages. This collapse in international participation completely derails the UN's broader capability to stabilize fractured nations, advance political settlements, and maintain long-term global security.

(Historical background)

IV. Major Countries and Organizations Involved

United States of America: The United States is one of the largest financial contributors to UN peacekeeping operations and plays a significant role in shaping international security policy. As a permanent member of the Security Council, it influences the mandates, funding, and objectives of peacekeeping missions. The US has consistently advocated for improving peacekeeper training, accountability, and operational effectiveness. Its decisions can greatly affect the resources available for protecting UN personnel.

United Kingdom: The United Kingdom is a permanent member of the Security Council and has historically supported UN peacekeeping initiatives. It contributes personnel, training expertise, and diplomatic support to international peace operations. The UK frequently promotes reforms aimed at improving the safety and effectiveness of peacekeeping missions. Its influence within the UN makes it an important stakeholder in this issue.

Russia: Russia's position as a permanent member of the Security Council gives it significant influence over peacekeeping mandates and resolutions. Russian support or opposition can

affect the authorization and structure of missions. As a major military power, Russia also contributes to discussions on conflict management and international security. Its stance is therefore highly relevant to debates regarding peacekeeper protection.

Democratic Republic of the Congo: The DRC hosts one of the largest and longest-running UN peacekeeping missions. Persistent violence from armed groups has made the country a major case study for the dangers facing peacekeepers. Security challenges in the DRC continue to test the effectiveness of UN protection measures. The country remains central to discussions on peacekeeper safety.

Mali: Although the UN mission has ended, Mali remains one of the clearest examples of the dangers peacekeepers face in modern conflict zones. Attacks by extremist groups caused significant casualties and highlighted weaknesses in mission security. The experience of Mali continues to influence discussions on future peacekeeping reforms. It serves as an important precedent when evaluating peacekeeper protection strategies.

South Sudan: South Sudan continues to experience political instability and armed violence, creating serious risks for UN personnel. The UN mission UNMISS works to protect civilians and support peace efforts in a difficult security environment. Peacekeepers often operate among competing political groups and armed actors. The situation demonstrates the challenges of maintaining peace in countries affected by internal conflict.

Central African Republic: The Central African Republic faces ongoing insecurity due to armed groups competing for political influence and resources. The UN mission MINUSCA supports stabilization efforts and civilian protection. However, peacekeepers continue to face threats from rebel groups and unstable local security conditions. The country represents the challenges of protecting UN forces in fragmented conflict environments.

India: India is one of the largest contributors of military personnel to UN peacekeeping missions worldwide. Indian troops have participated in numerous operations in conflict zones, exposing them to security risks while carrying out UN mandates. As a major troop-contributing country, India has a strong interest in improving the safety, training, and protection of peacekeepers. Its role demonstrates the importance of international cooperation in maintaining UN operations.

Bangladesh: Bangladesh is another major contributor of troops and personnel to UN peacekeeping missions. Bangladeshi peacekeepers have served in various conflict-affected regions and have faced the risks associated with international deployments. The country supports efforts to improve peacekeeper safety through better training, equipment, and operational support. Its involvement reflects the contribution of developing nations to global peacekeeping efforts.

United Nations: The United Nations is the primary organization responsible for establishing and managing international peacekeeping operations. It creates mandates, coordinates missions, and works with member states to deploy personnel to conflict zones. The UN plays the central role in developing strategies to improve the protection and safety of peacekeepers. Ensuring the security of UN personnel is essential for maintaining effective peace operations.

United Nations Security Council (UNSC): The United Nations Security Council authorizes peacekeeping missions and determines their mandates. It is responsible for responding to international security threats and adapting missions to changing conflict environments. The Council plays an important role in deciding the resources and objectives given to peacekeeping operations. Its decisions directly influence the ability of peacekeepers to operate safely.

African Union: The African Union works alongside the UN in addressing conflicts and security challenges across Africa. Many dangerous peacekeeping environments are located on the African continent, making cooperation between the AU and UN essential. The organization supports regional peace and security efforts and assists in responding to conflicts. Its partnership with the UN helps improve coordination in conflict-affected areas.

V. Timeline of events

1948: Establishment of the first UN peacekeeping mission, UNTSO.

1960: First major attack on a peacekeeping mission, which took place during UN intervention in Congo (ONUC)

1993: Deaths of peacekeepers during operations in Somalia, which highlight the risks of modern peacekeeping.

1994: Killing of Belgian peacekeepers during the Rwandan Genocide.

1999: Creation of MONUSCO's predecessor mission in the DRC.

2013: Establishment of the Force Intervention Brigade within MONUSCO to combat armed groups.

2013-2023: MINUSMA becoming one of the deadliest peacekeeping missions in UN history.

2017: Major attack on a UN base in the DRC resulting in numerous peacekeeper casualties.

2020-2024: Increased use of drones, IEDs, and asymmetric warfare against peacekeepers.

2025-2026: Continued security challenges in the DRC, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic.

VI. Previous attempts to solve the issue

The Cruz Report (2017):

This report was created after increasing attacks and deaths among UN peacekeepers. It identified major weaknesses in peacekeeping operations and recommended improvements in training, intelligence gathering, leadership, and equipment to increase personnel safety.

Establishment of the Force Intervention Brigade in MONUSCO (2013):

The United Nations created the Force Intervention Brigade within the mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to conduct targeted operations against armed groups threatening civilians and peacekeepers. It represented a shift toward more proactive protection measures.

MINUSMA Security Measures in Mali (2013–2023):

During the UN mission in Mali, the organization introduced stronger security measures, including armored vehicles, improved base protection, and counter-IED strategies due to repeated attacks by extremist groups. Despite these efforts, the mission continued to face severe security challenges and ended in 2023.

Improved Training Programs for Troop-Contributing Countries:

The UN has expanded pre-deployment training requirements for countries providing peacekeepers, including preparation for asymmetric warfare, civilian protection, and operating in high-risk environments.

Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) Initiative (2018):

The United Nations launched the Action for Peacekeeping initiative to strengthen the effectiveness and safety of peacekeeping operations. The program encouraged member states to improve training, provide better equipment, enhance medical support, and increase accountability for protecting peacekeepers in dangerous missions.

UN Peacekeeping Intelligence Policy (2017):

Following recommendations from the Cruz Report, the UN expanded the use of intelligence and information-gathering systems in peacekeeping missions. The policy improved situational awareness, early warning capabilities, and threat assessment, helping missions better anticipate attacks against peacekeepers and civilians.

Performance Peacekeeping Framework (2019):

The United Nations introduced a performance assessment framework to evaluate the effectiveness of peacekeeping personnel and units. The initiative aimed to improve operational readiness, identify weaknesses, strengthen leadership, and ensure that peacekeepers were properly prepared to operate in high-risk environments.

VII. Possible solutions

- **Enhance peacekeeper training in counter-terrorism, emergency response and operating in high-risk conflict zones.**
- **Increase the use of surveillance drones, armored vehicles and advanced communication systems to improve troop safety.**
- **Strengthen intelligence-sharing and early warning systems to detect potential threats before attacks occur.**
- **Improve cooperation between UN missions, host governments and local security forces.**
- **Implement stricter international measures against individuals and groups responsible for attacks on UN personnel.**
- **Increase funding for peacekeeping missions to ensure proper equipment, logistics and medical support.**

VIII. How to prepare as a delegate

All delegates participating in the First Committee (DISEC) should submit a minimum of 2-3 position papers in order to ensure adequate preparation for every single agenda item discussed in the committee. Also, each delegate is expected to prepare and submit at least one draft resolution addressing one of the committee's topics.

Delegates must submit all required documents by 27.08.2026. Student Officers will provide feedback and corrections only for documents submitted before the deadline. Any document submitted after the deadline could still be accepted at the discretion of the chairs but will not be taken into consideration when determining committee awards.

Delegates are heavily encouraged to conduct in-depth research and actively prepare for debate. The quality and timeliness of submissions will be taken into consideration when evaluating candidates for awards such as Best Delegate and Best First-Timer. As STOFF members, the Chairs will evaluate delegates based on both their preparation before the conference and their performance during the conference.

Delegates are expected to heavily research their delegation's position, interests, and past actions regarding the issue. To prepare fully for the conference, delegates should be aware of

their country's involvement in peacekeeping efforts, contributions to UN missions, voting records, and relationships with other countries regarding peacekeeping. You should also pay attention to existing alliances, regional partnerships and cooperation with organizations.

Delegates should also identify their country's priorities and concerns regarding the issue. During the debate, delegates are highly encouraged to develop realistic solutions that reflect their country's policy while seeking cooperation with other member states. As the Co-Chair of the committee, I wish all delegates an enjoyable and enthusiastic preparation for the conference.

IX. UN resolutions

Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel (1994):
This treaty establishes legal protections for UN personnel and requires states to prevent and punish attacks against them.

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel (2005):

This protocol expands the protections provided by the 1994 Convention to additional UN operations and personnel.

UNSC Resolution 2518 (2020):

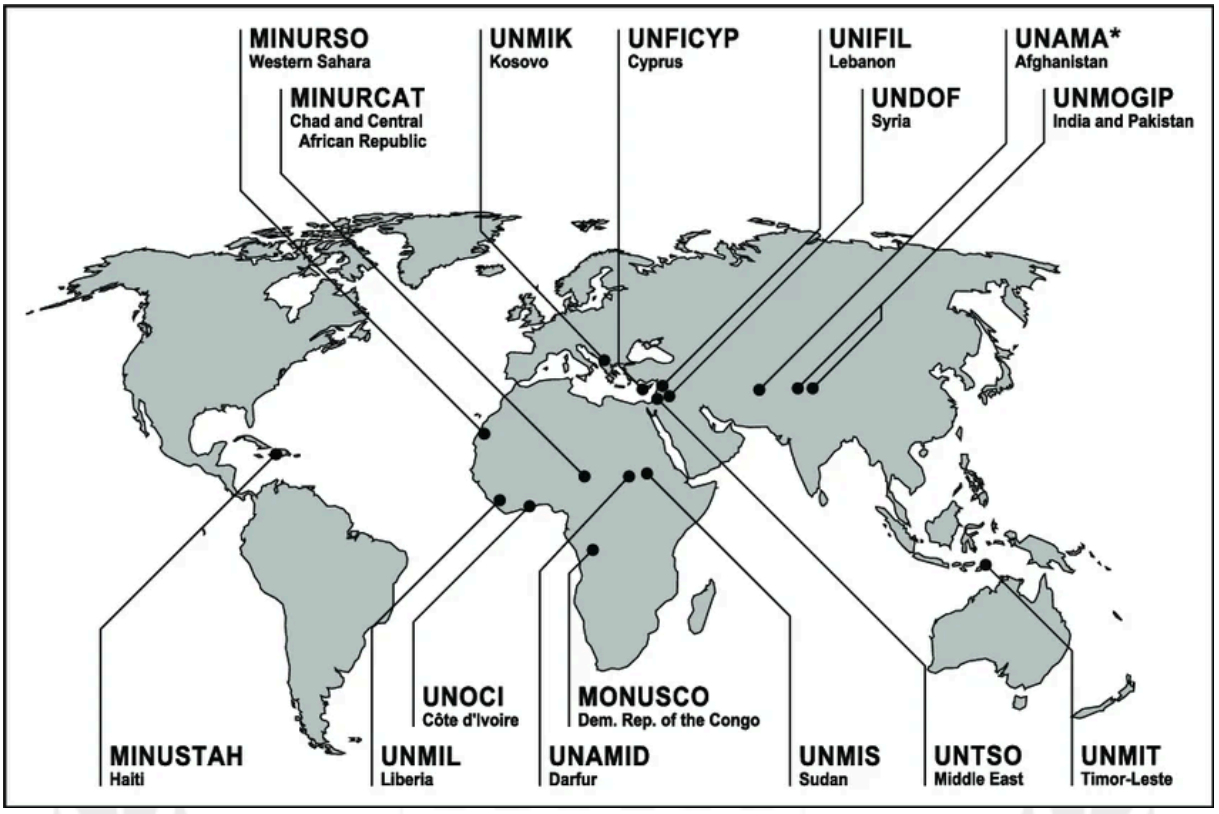
This resolution focuses specifically on improving the safety and security of peacekeepers and reducing casualties in peacekeeping missions.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2086 (2013):

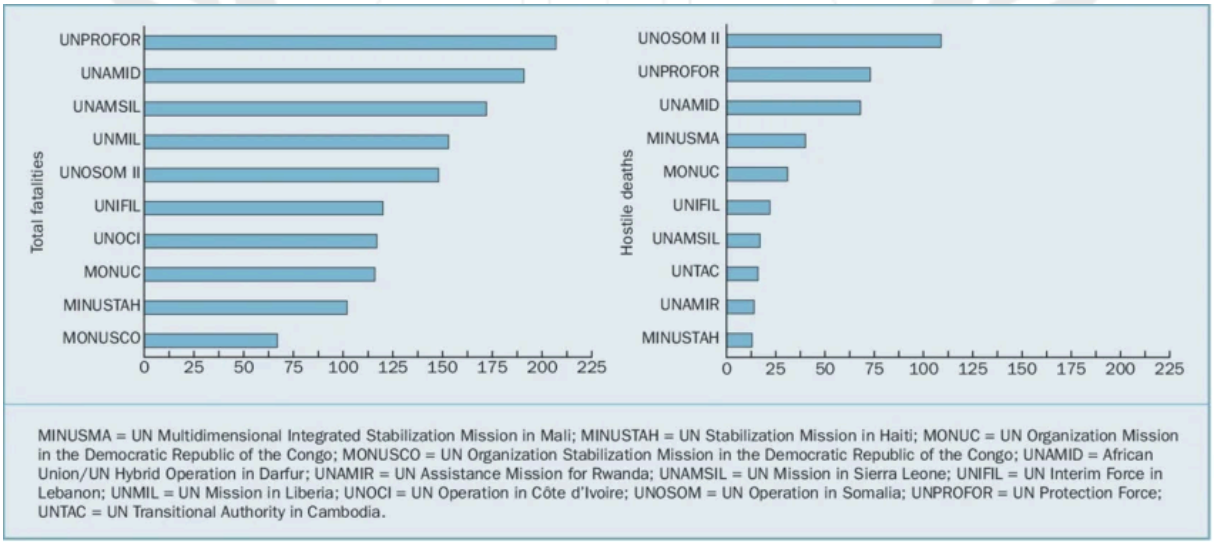
This resolution emphasizes the importance of adapting peacekeeping operations to modern security challenges and changing conflict environments.

X. Useful links

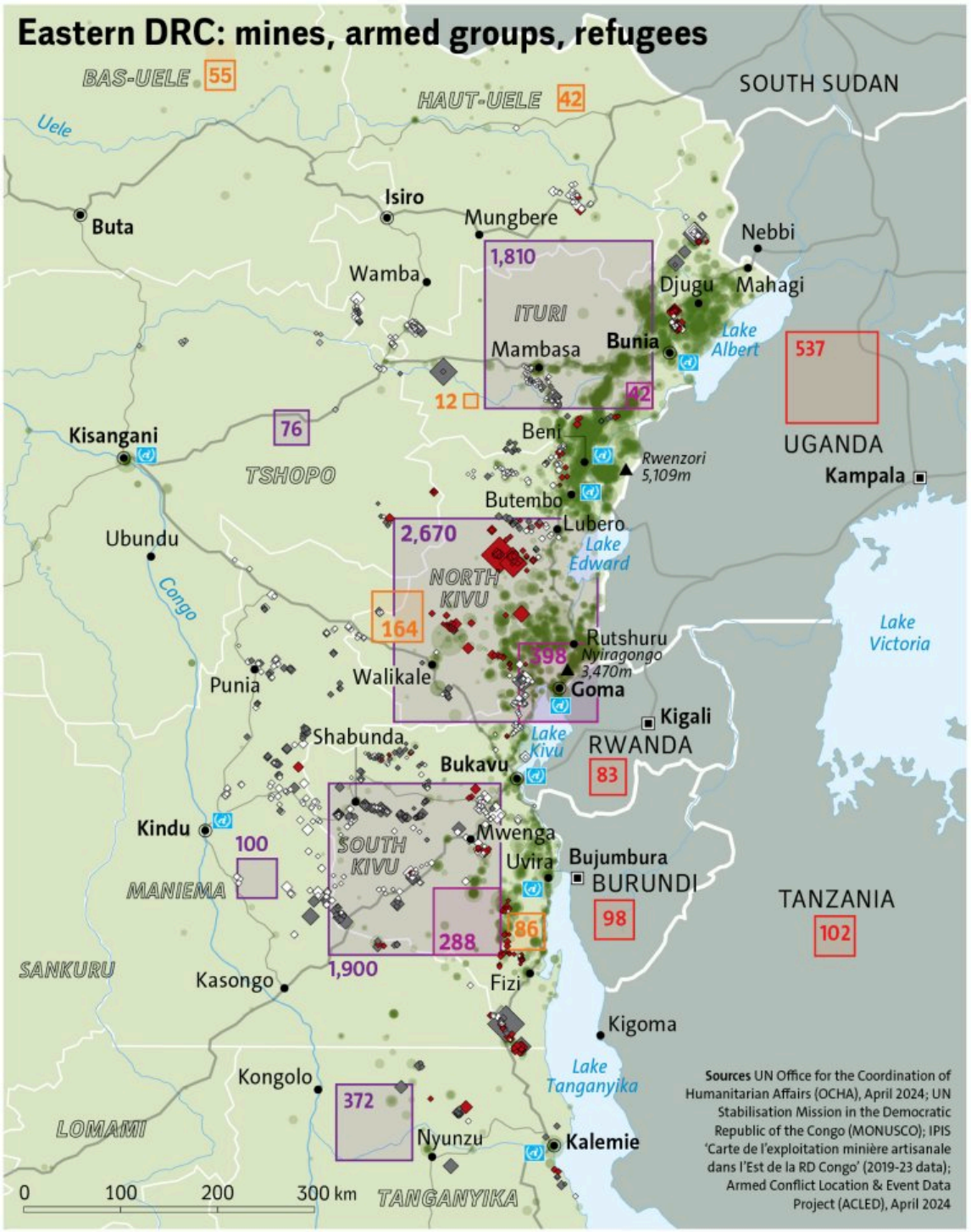
Map of Major UN Peacekeeping Missions:



UN Peacekeeping Fatalities by Mission:



Map of Armed Groups Operating in Eastern DRC:

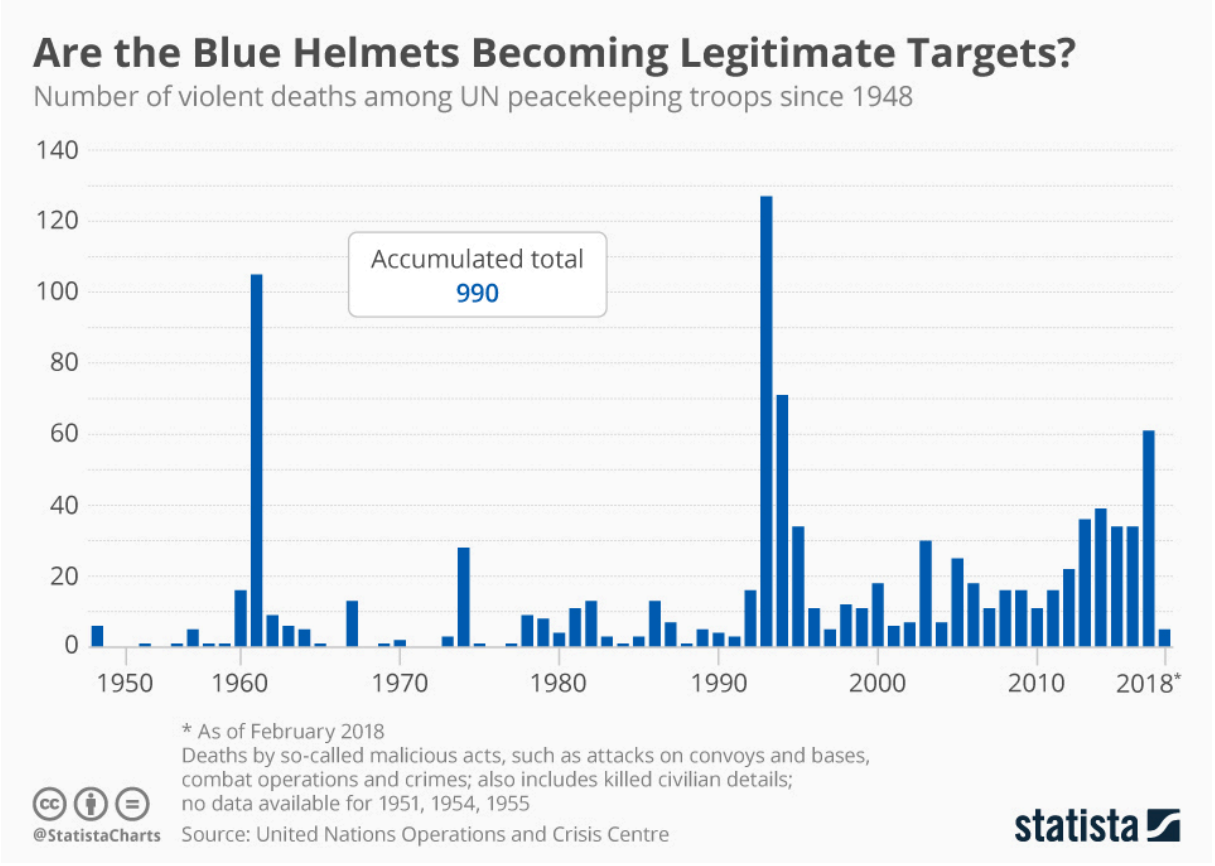


Videos Released by the UN Concerning Peacekeeping:

[What is UN Peacekeeping]

[Charlotte Kurusumu Muongo combats sexual exploitation and abuse (MONUSCO)]

Trend in Peacekeepers' Fatalities Over Decades:



XI. Sources

https://peacekeeping.un.org/en

https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/department-of-peace-operations

https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/resolutions

https://www.crisisgroup.org/

https://www.sipri.org/

https://minusca.unmissions.org/en

https://monusco.unmissions.org/fr