

The future trajectory of UN peace operations

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Chapter 1

The Future Trajectory of UN Peace Operations

Alexander Gilder, David Curran, Georgina Holmes and Fiifi Edu-Afful

The Need to Look to the Future

As the United Nations (UN)'s efforts to keep the peace constantly evolve, those working in and researching UN missions must regularly ask, 'What should the future of UN peace operations look like'? In a process of continual learning and innovation, the UN has shifted both the activities and key priorities of UN peacekeepers over the decades, notably with the introduction of the protection of civilians (PoC) mandates in the 2000s. From small missions that observe well-established ceasefires to large multidimensional missions that implement broad peacebuilding mandates, future missions could take many forms as conflict evolves. However, there have been no new UN peace operations since 2014, while in 2022 all five of the peace operations deployed by regional organisations have been criticised for being more focused on military intervention than on promoting and protecting human rights and building institutions (Pfeifer, 2023). Pressures within the Security Council to downsize UN peace operations and do more for less (Coleman, 2020; de Coning, 2021); seismic geopolitical shifts, including the rise of China as a financial and military global power (Karlsrud, 2023) and the growing rivalry between Russia and the West; increasing fragmentation and concomitantly, multilateralism within the international system, has meant practitioners and researchers are driving forward thinking on how to keep UN practices relevant and appropriate to respond effectively to conflict whilst ensuring both UN member states and host states remain committed to peacekeeping.

Existing militarised, liberal interventionist approaches to conflict resolution and peacebuilding are increasingly perceived to be inadequate (Moe and Stepputat, 2018; Karlsrud, 2019). Large-scale missions in the 2010s such as the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) faced numerous challenges that were unprecedented for UN peace operations. For example, to implement their PoC mandate, UNMISS converted its bases to PoC sites that at their peak housed upwards of 200,000 civilians (Gilder 2021). MINUSMA was tasked with working alongside the French Operation Barkhane and regional G5-Sahel Force to counter extremism and terrorist activity in the north of Mali (Karlsrud 2019). MINUSCA needed to extend state authority beyond the capital, Bangui, and has sought to end impunity through its support for a hybrid court to prosecute crimes committed during the conflict (Gilder 2022). Lastly, MONUSCO was mandated to include a Force Intervention Brigade in 2013 which sought to 'neutralise' rebel groups, an unprecedented shift into the realms of peace enforcement (Tull 2018).

However, these missions, whilst still deployed to this day, have all faced challenges and changes in circumstances that draw into question what the future holds for UN activities in Mali, the Central African Republic, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo

(DRC). After two military coups and the introduction of the Wagner Group to the conflict, Mali has lost much of its support from the international community. Multiple states had been willing to intervene in Mali and the wider Sahel region to prevent the further entrenchment of extremism and spread of terrorist activity. In particular, European states have been said to have externalised their borders into Africa which incentivised both EU missions in the region and an increased contribution from EU and NATO member states to MINUSMA (Charbonneau 2021). On 15 May 2022 Mali withdrew from the G-5 Sahel and halted its contribution to the G5's Joint Force that was using offensive force to defeat terrorist groups in the region (United Nations 2022b). This decision triggered a chain reaction throughout the year which saw the French Operation Barkhane withdraw in November 2022 after over 8 years using military force to combat terrorism alongside Malian forces. Similarly, the European Union's Takuba Task Force that was operating alongside Malian Forces withdrew in June 2022. MINUSMA now faces a radically different security environment where it must operate in the absence of the transitional government the mission supported for much of its deployment and without international forces using offensive force to quell terrorist activity.

The 2020s have also seen a shift in South Sudan and the DRC and an increase in peacekeeper fatalities. The UN described UNMISS' PoC sites as 'uncharted territory' as peacekeepers sought to provide protection from outside threats as well as internal threats from within the PoC sites (United Nations 2014). UN forces provided perimeter security but long-term internal security on these large PoC sites was something the UN had not prepared for, nor had had previous experience of managing (Sharland and Gorur 2015; Paddon Rhoads and Sutton 2020). The UN was essentially governing large cities which it was not prepared for in terms of powers under the mandate or the policies in place (Ibreck and Pendle 2016). Until late 2020, UNMISS' protection of civilian (PoC) sites housed approximately 170,000 civilians (United Nations 2020a). But since September 2020 the UN has been working towards the redesignation of its PoC sites to internally displaced persons camps under the jurisdiction of the South Sudanese government. By 2021 all but one of the PoC sites had been redesignated with only the Malakal site remaining under UN control in 2023.

MONUSCO faced backlash in 2022 after long brewing dissatisfaction with the mission's inability to protect civilians. In July 2022 violence broke out between MONUSCO and protesters (Weenink 2022). Protesters forcibly entered bases, looted and destroyed UN property, set fire to UN residences, and took weapons from Congolese police and used them to open fire on UN peacekeepers (UN 2022a). The UN has condemned these actions as war crimes committed against peacekeepers but there must also be recognition of how broad PoC mandates have contributed to the conditions leading to the violent protests. Several days after protests began UN peacekeepers opened fire for 'unexplained reasons', killing two protesters (United Nations 2022c). With 36 people killed during the protests in July, MONUSCO has found itself in a 'crisis of confidence' (United Nations 2022d). This example exemplifies where the UN has raised the expectations of local communities and failed to deliver the sense of security expected. How then can the UN better temper expectations and simultaneously improve its performance in the future?

Past Reform and Current Challenges

As mission-led evolution has been at considerable pace, the UN Secretariat has often sought to keep up or stay ahead of the pace of change. These efforts may arrive at the strategic level, manifested through landmark reports and initiatives led explicitly by the Secretary-General, senior actors external to the UN apparatus (Riis Andersen 2018, p5), or driven by partnerships with external organisations (de Coning 2021). The efforts are also built on through the development of guidance and policy which turns the aspiration into some form of reality for those working in operations. As this short chronological survey of the evolution of ideas associated with robust peacekeeping and peacebuilding shows, peace operations have been subject to varying degrees of policy change and reform.

The 2000 *Report of the Panel on UN Peace Operations* (known as the 'Brahimi Report'), was the first attempt at reshaping UNDPKO practice following the failures of missions in the 1990s, such as UNAMIR and UNPROFOR (United Nations 2000), whilst at the same time reacting to the problematic UNAMSIL intervention in Sierra Leone. The report offered significant challenges to accepted approaches to peacekeeping. Firstly it advocated robust peacekeeping, whereby UN peacekeepers be authorised to use force against what it termed as 'spoilers' to a peace process. Brahimi argued that Rules of Engagement (ROEs) should 'not limit contingents stroke-for-stroke responses but should allow ripostes sufficient to silence a source of deadly fire that is directed at United Nations troops or at the people they are charged to protect'. It also hinted at a proactive element of using force, stating that in 'particularly dangerous situations', ROEs should not 'force United Nations Contingents to cede the initiative to their attackers' (UN 2000, 9). As well as being tied to sources of fire against peacekeepers themselves, this also had effects on another area of expansion in UN peacekeeping, the capacity of missions to protect civilians in areas of deployment. Here the report advocated that peacekeepers "who witness violence against civilians should be presumed to be authorized to stop it, within their means" (United Nations 2000).

Another key area of reform driven by the Brahimi Report was in institutionalising multidimensional aspects of peacekeeping, incorporating peacebuilding at the micro and macro levels. The report took issue with past practices for their "fundamental deficiency in the way it... conceived of, funded and implemented peacebuilding strategies and activities" (United Nations 2000). The panel recommended the use of quick impact projects (QIPs) to provide rapid and real improvements to quality of life. This is needed to "make a demonstrable difference in the lives of the people in their mission area" (United Nations 2000). In addition the report suggested elections must take place alongside effective civilian governance and respect for human rights. Instead of merely documenting unacceptable behaviour the UN police forces would be asked to train local police and other civilian contingents of judicial and human rights experts may be needed for the establishment of the rule of law. This paved the way for the crucial role we see today where the mission assists the host state in realising its human rights obligations and materially supports rebuilding the rule of law.

The publication of the *United Nations Principles and Guidelines* (also known as the Capstone Doctrine) followed the changes regarding the areas outlined above and demonstrated the

solidifying of commitments made at a strategic level through the development of operational guidance. With regards to the use of force, the Capstone Doctrine has been described as a move towards robust peacekeeping (Gerchicoff 2013). The Capstone Doctrine supported the mandating of missions to use of all necessary means to “deter forceful attempts to disrupt the political process, protect civilians under imminent threat of physical attack, and/or assist the national authorities in maintaining law and order” (United Nations 2008). The Capstone Doctrine distinguishes between, but does not denounce, robust peacekeeping which uses force at the tactical level with the consent of the host nation and peace enforcement where, under Chapter VII, the Security Council authorises force without consent of the main parties.

The Capstone Doctrine importantly elaborates on the peacebuilding activities of operations, formalising various practices that were trialled in late 1990s and early 2000s missions. The Doctrine outlines that for sustainable peace, there needs to be progress in the following areas; restoring the state’s ability to provide security and maintain public order, strengthen the rule of law and respect for human rights, support the emergence of legitimate political institutions and participatory processes, and promote social and economic recovery. Recognising that peace operations are not able to carry out this work alone the Doctrine explains that the UN regularly plays a supportive role in achieving these goals through DDR, de-mining, security sector reform, protection and promotion of human rights, electoral assistance, and supporting the entrenchment of state authority. Many of these aforementioned activities feature in missions to this day as missions continue to implement wide ranging multidimensional mandates.

As peacekeeping entered the 2010s, the requirement for reflection on peace operations remained. The 2015 High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) was established to comprehensively assess the current state of peace operations giving special attention to issues facing operations such as the changing nature of conflict, evolving mandates, challenges to peacebuilding and good office, administrative and planning challenges, human rights, and the protection of civilians (United Nations 2015). As a result, the HIPPO report places ‘persistent emphasis’ on strengthening the political, rather than the military, aspects of UN deployments (Riis Andersen 2018, 17). The term ‘peacekeeping’ is placed within a broader framework of ‘peace operations’, incorporating political missions, peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations. The report identifies the benefit in this approach, as under this umbrella, all UN deployments are embraced as a ‘single spectrum of peace and security missions’, thereby facilitating seamless transition between each (UN 2015a, 15).

The report took a nuanced view of robust peacekeeping, suggesting that different levels of force would ideally be proportionate to the type of threat that was posed by ‘spoiler’ groups in the conflict zone (Spoilers defined as ‘those who lie outside and seek to undermine the peace process including through violent means’ (UN 2015a, 29)). This would range from deterrence, ‘containment, via deterrence and coercion, to direct confrontation, particularly when civilians or peacekeepers are at risk (UN 2015a, 33). Yet the HIPPO report outlines three different ways in which UN operations are entering uncharted territory regarding the use of

robust force. Firstly, it notes that peacekeeping missions, traditionally established for 'peace implementation' are assuming a 'conflict management role'. Missions asked to undertake conflict management are deployed amidst violent conflict, in areas where there exists an absence of a viable peace process, or where the peace process has effectively broken down. Operations assuming this role are expected to help in deterring escalation, containing conflict, protecting civilians, and attempting to start or revive a peace process, thus necessitating necessary military capabilities, and a 'robust deterrent posture' at mission start-up (UN 2015a 29). Secondly, the report notes that missions were undertaking counter-insurgency style campaigns, particularly in Mali (MINUSMA), and made clear that 'due to their composition and character', peacekeeping operations 'are not suited to engage in military counter-terrorism operations' (UN 2015a 31). This followed concern that the MINUSMA operation - outlined by the force commander of the mission itself - was engaging in a 'a terrorist-fighting situation without an anti-terrorist mandate or adequate training, equipment, logistics or intelligence to deal with such a situation' (UN 2014d; Boutellis 2015, 2). Thirdly, HIPPO outlined the emergence of 'stabilization' missions deployed over the previous decade, whereby three current UN Missions (MINUSMA, MINUSCA, MONUSCO) have the word 'stabilization' in the title. The report notes that:

the Security Council and the Secretariat have used the term 'stabilization' for a number of missions that support the extension or restoration of state authority and, in at least one case, during ongoing armed conflict. The term stabilization has a wide range of interpretations, and the Panel believes the usage of this term by the United Nations requires clarification.(UN 2015a 30)

The HIPPO report's recommendations on the impacts of these new operating environments appears cautious. This highlights what Riis Anderson sees as a debate between the authors of the report, who demonstrate scepticism towards peacekeeping becoming overtly robust, and member states on the UN Security Council who are more enthusiastic about increasing military responses to violent conflict. As a result, Riis Anderson notes no 'broad based consensus on prioritizing political solutions and conflict prevention over a militarized emphasis on countering violent extremism' (Riis Andersen 2018, 19).

As can be seen from how these three reports approach these two areas, contradictory processes of change are often articulated in UN policy, with the UN Secretariat simultaneously seeking to shape, guide and push back against key policy developments.

Since the HIPPO Report, the conditions have changed yet again. The UN budget for its peace operations steadily declined year on year from \$8.27 billion in 2015/16 to \$6.37 billion in 2021/22. Amidst a declining budget we have seen contestation within the UN over the role that its peacekeepers should play in conflict resolution. For instance, conflation between stabilization and peacebuilding activities present continued challenges to deciphering best practices and the pathways for mapping the future of UN peace operations (Hunt and Curran 2020). Russia, China and others remain sceptical of the protection of civilians and increasingly robust uses of force that threaten to undermine the sovereignty of states (Sharland 2019,

Barelli 2021). The establishment of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in 2000 with the endorsement of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent related resolutions concerning preventing and responding to Conflict Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), has raised awareness of the UN's lack of accountability mechanisms; the requirement to better train peacekeepers and establish due diligence around legal responsibility for wrongful acts (Basu and Confortini 2017; Freedman 2018; Hirschmann 2019; Westendorf 2020). The push for more gender responsive peacekeeping and the requirement to work with regional partners to implement the women, peace and security agenda also remain central priorities for the UN in shaping current and future missions (Holmes 2020).

Concurrently, the UN has initiated several initiatives aimed at driving forward consensus on peacekeeping practices and changing the organisation's approach to conflict resolution. In 2018 the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) launched to 'create peacekeeping operations fit for the future' (United Nations 2018b). Through a focus on various aspects of peace operations, such as finding lasting political solutions for sustainable peace, increasing the participation of women in peace processes, adopting preventative steps to reduce sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers, and engaging with a wide range of partners such as the AU and EU to better plan and strengthen missions, A4P aims to shape ongoing discussions within the organisation and build consensus with member states and troop contributing countries.

The HIPPO report and the *Report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture* (hereafter AGE report) also launched the Sustaining Peace Agenda in 2016. This has driven the UN to change its approach to conflict by increasingly prioritizing national and local ownership to promote the prevention of conflict (United Nations 2018a). The UN has committed to strengthening partnerships with civil society and other actors to work together on sustaining peace while recognising the UN's development programmes and agencies are key for conflict prevention. Despite these holistic efforts to move discussions toward viewing UN peace operations as part of the wider UN apparatus for conflict prevention and sustainable peace, tensions between peacekeeping and peacebuilding continue to slow progress (von Billerbeck, 2016).

In 2021 UN Secretary-General Guterres published *Our Common Agenda*, a wide reaching report intended to drive reform of the UN to mark its seventy-fifth anniversary. Part of this is a proposal for a 'new agenda for peace', which focuses on six areas:

- Reducing Strategic risks;
- Strengthening international foresight and capacities to identify and adapt to new peace and security risks. Reshaping our responses to all forms of violence.
- Investing in prevention and peacebuilding.
- Supporting regional prevention.
- Putting women and girls at the centre of security policy

With regards to the impact on peacekeeping operations, there are two notable points. Firstly, there is a significant focus on prevention and peacebuilding throughout the report, ranging from deep long-term conflict prevention (through arms control, and reduction of weapons of mass destruction), short term prevention (resourcing programmes focused on conflict prevention at national and international level), through to adequate and regular funding of peacebuilding programmes in the UN (such as the Peacebuilding Fund), and increased resourcing of the Peacebuilding Commission so it can expand its role thematically and geographically. The second impact is in supporting regional prevention efforts. The broader point the Secretary General makes in this report is that the relations between the UN and regional actors requires 'further consolidation' in order to prevent and respond to insecurity (United Nations, Our Common Agenda: Report of the Secretary General (A/75/982)., New York, United Nations, 2021, P44). More specifically, it has led to proposals relating to predictable and sustainable financing of African Union peace support operations. This initiative has been led by the Secretary General, who argued in 2023 that

[T]his is an opportune, timely moment for the [UN] Security Council to rise to the challenge of laying the foundation for a new generation of African Union-led, United Nations- supported peace operations on the African continent that blend the respective strength of both organizations in a manner that prioritizes political solutions and maximizes the impact of both uniformed and civilian capabilities (United Nations, Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2320 (2016) and 2378 (2017) and considerations related to the financing of African Union peace support operations mandated by the Security Council (S/2023/303), New York, United Nations., 2023, p15)

These initiatives provide scope for researchers and practitioners to collaborate to generate new thinking on UN peace operations alongside the active reconsideration of how the UN should both *keep* and *build* peace. In 2022, the UN peace operation budget grew for the first time since 2015 (Forti 2022). While this may not be the strongest sign that the international community intends to commit to the growth of peacekeeping, there may be opportunities for those working on peacekeeping issues to drive changes in policy that help maintain the hard-fought consensus on current operations. In this edited book, contributors specifically delve into a variety of challenges faced by UN peace operations and make proposals for the future that may help sustain contributions to peacekeeping, incentivise cooperation between member states and reshape UN approaches to peacekeeping. Exploring processes of adaptation and change in different bureaucratic and mission contexts, the book specifically engages with the future of UN peace operations to provide an important resource for scholars and practitioners interested in the evolution of current and future UN missions.

A Pragmatic Future for UN Peace Operations

Moe and Stepputat (2018) call for a 'pragmatic turn' in peacebuilding to mitigate against the failings of liberal interventionist approaches. They contend that pragmatic responses

incorporate a series of toolkits that bring into dialogue ‘perspectives on the *realpolitik* of stabilization, the apparent retreat of liberal idealism, and the bottom-up focus on contextualizing efforts to sustain peace’ (Moe and Stepputat 2018, 295). This may require new actors and organisations to respond to the complexities of contemporary and future peace challenges. Karlsrud (2023, 8) also observes a pragmatic turn in peacekeeping noting, for example, that UN support missions may operate in parallel to ‘regional and ad hoc counter-terrorism operations’ while drawing on the bureaucratic and logistical of the UN’ without ‘needing to adhere to UN principles of impartiality, consent and non-use of force’. With constantly shifting partnerships and security environments, the UN cannot always wait for strategic-level change and instead must take a pragmatic view of how to facilitate incremental reform that will respond to the needs of TCCs, host states, and local populations.

In a similar vein, the contributors of this book adopt a pragmatic approach to reform to identify future pathways for UN peace operations. Above all, they reflect on how the UN could more effectively implement the Sustaining Peace Agenda and related strategic priorities aimed at making peace operations more people-centred. Bringing together a range of academics and practitioners, the book provides multidisciplinary understandings on current issues in peacekeeping and peacebuilding to address many of the pressing questions facing current and future crises. Overall, the central research question asked is, how can we re-envision peace operations to become more responsive and adaptive in the future?

Contributors are located across multiple academic disciplines, including political science, history, law, global development, and sociology. Scholars apply a range of critical and theoretical perspectives including gendered and postcolonial perspectives to critically assess current trends and to identify pathways for future peace operations. To achieve this, the editors have prioritised voices that are often marginalised in the mainstream debates on peacekeeping and have ensured there is strong representation from women, early career researchers, and scholars from the Global South. This has led to a large geographic spread, with the inclusion of authors researching peacekeeping and peace missions from Australia, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Ghana, Japan, the Netherlands, the UK and US. Contributors adopt a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods to offer new and critical perspectives on how to address deficiencies identified by the research, with the concerted aim to generate new thinking on the future of UN peace operations. The chapters included in the book have been organised into four themes: reforming security, resolving conflict and ensuring protection, strengthening partnerships, and ensuring future accountability.

In the first theme, reforming security, Alessandra Jungs de Almeida and Juliana Viggiano each discuss local actors in security sector reform. They identify a failure by the UN to outline the role of local actors in security sector reform (SSR) processes, they consider how informal security mechanisms could be more responsive to the needs of communities and argue that a fundamental shift in the approach to peacebuilding and UN reporting would improve the outcomes of SSR. Drawing on recent research in the disciplines of criminology and sociology, Charles T Hunt examines how the design and configuration of missions can shift to place police at the centre. Building on the advantages brought to missions by police contingents the

UN can reorientate existing approaches to elevate the role of police to create viable opportunities for peacekeeping success.

Under the second theme, which focuses on resolving conflict and ensuring protection, Walter Dorn and Shannon Zimmerman each offer an original critique of current protection approaches to investigate practical limitations that arise when protection strategies are implemented in UN peace operations. Dorn assesses the use of attack helicopters and other technologies that allow UN peace operations to more effectively balance peacekeeping and peace enforcement through air power. Dorn suggests missions should be better equipped to demonstrate overwhelming force and consequently deter violence. Improving access to airpower would be one way of achieving this and building on the successes of implementing airpower in recent years.

Zimmerman employs theories of change to demonstrate how stabilization missions have become distinct from traditional missions and the repercussions this brings for the future of peacekeeping. By examining the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF I) and the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), Zimmerman is able to show how major changes to conflict management have taken place throughout the course of UN peacekeeping as the UN adapts to new conflicts and challenges.

Diego Salama offers a new historical analysis of what can be learnt from the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) to bring new ideas forward for how to resolve conflict and maximise the potential for positive outcomes from such missions. A small and enduring mission, UNTSO does not often receive much attention in contemporary literature. Salama shows how the mission remains relevant and suggests how traditional observer missions may still be useful in other modern conflicts.

When examining the strengthening of partnerships, Ruth Adwoa Frimpong looks back at UN and African Union (AU) cooperation in the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) providing suggestions for how future UN-AU missions can encourage synergies and foster an improved division of labour. Frimpong calls for the AU to improve its capacity for maintaining peace and security alongside improved communication channels with the UN to better respond to the emergence of conflicts in Africa.

Mohammad Sabuj examines practices relevant for peacekeeping in the Middle East, and the wider Islamic world, drawing on his scholarly expertise in Islamic law to critique Islamic conceptions of peacebuilding within the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Drawing on the concept of *hifz al-salam*, Sabuj outlines how Islamic states could lead on peacekeeping operations in the Islamic world in the event of the UN Security Council being unable to act on a threat to international peace and security. This contribution provides a new and pragmatic way of thinking about conflict in Islamic states and the potential for an emerging regional partnership approach to peacekeeping.

Then Dustin Johnson, Catherine Baillie Abidi, Laura Cleave, and Shelly Whitman's advancement of a children, peace and security agenda calls for greater attention to be paid to the importance of partnerships in their vision of a new security agenda. Building on the importance of child protection by UN peacekeepers, the authors suggest the narrowness of

the current approach, in terms of seeing children as passive victims and failing to take preventative steps, undermines the effectiveness of child protection.

Three contributions explore accountability to provide fresh examinations of policies on sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and provide new ways of thinking about solutions. Sabrina White offers a theoretical reconceptualisation of how to provide accountability for sexual exploitation. White contends that affected individuals and communities should be engaged in the accountability agenda and participation is merely a starting point in the process of generating new relationships for accountability processes.

Sarah Blakemore, Rosa Freedman and Nicolas Lemay-Hébert draw on extensive fieldwork to offer solutions on how to best safeguard child victims of SEA. The authors present a clear framework for child safeguarding and explain how they have built and implemented a toolkit to assess an organisation's strengths and weaknesses in safeguarding children. The innovative toolkit helps organisations and contributing states to know how and when to take action.

Our final contribution on accountability delves into the African Union's regulatory framework on SEA. Ai Kihara-Hunt and Roisin Burke provide a clear explanation as to why the UN will continue to have a difficult relationship with the AU due to its due diligence obligations and draw out flaws in the AU's current policies and approaches. For greater effectiveness and collaboration between the UN and AU, Kihara-Hunt and Burke explain how greater transparency is needed to evaluate the AU's SEA policies.

By asking the contributors to focus on the future and make suggestions relevant for policymakers in the field we hope the chapters in this book provide a critical assessment of the '*where next*' for UN peacekeeping. While not providing all the answers, projects such as this, which encourage scholars to think critically and practically about the future of the field, is an important exercise that we hope others will replicate.

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