



REPORT

# SOLDIERS OF PEACE

ESTONIA, FINLAND AND IRELAND IN UNIFIL

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Go raibh maith agaibh. Kiitos. Aitäh.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report considers the role of small states in United Nations peacekeeping through the lens of the Estonian, Finnish and Irish contributions to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Estonia, Finland and Ireland, respectively the fourth, second and first largest per capita European troop contributors to UN operations, serve together in a Finnish/Irish battalion in UNIFIL's Western Sector. The report's findings are largely based on a series of interviews with key players, including strategic-level decision makers in the three national capitals, and Estonian, Finnish and Irish peacekeepers in south Lebanon.

The rationale of the three states for participating in UN missions varies along a scale that might be labelled 'transactional' at one end and 'values-based' at the other. Irish decision makers tend to see peacekeeping above all as an essential component of a values-based foreign policy, while Estonian decision makers look for more tangible returns for their participation including, ultimately, an expectation that their readiness to provide security will ensure that they themselves are not left alone in times of crisis. Finnish decision makers also explain their contribution largely in terms of values, but, much more than Ireland, also justify it on the grounds of building the capability of the Finnish Defence Forces.

UNIFIL is the largest single contribution of all three states. All three have participated in the operation in the past and their decisions to re-join UNIFIL (Ireland in 2011, Finland in 2012 and Estonia in 2015) came about because opportunities to participate in this mission surfaced at a time when there were few other international operations, but when the three states were actively seeking an engagement for their armed forces to support wider foreign policy aims. In all three cases, UNIFIL was a target of opportunity, rather than a specific aim.

All three countries benefit greatly from serving in a joint battalion, with most of the benefits – for example associating with like-minded partners, and cost and risk sharing – accruing at the strategic level. While decision makers often referred to the advantages this arrangement brings in military interoperability and the sharing of best practice, the reality is that day-to-day contacts between the three contingents in the field are somewhat limited. The Battalion is held together as much by the need to follow UN Standard Operating Procedures and Rules of Engagement as it is by interworking of the contingents. Nonetheless, cooperation between the three contingents is good, and there is nothing to suggest that their different cultures and languages, military cultures and experiences, or styles of operating are in any way a hindrance to the conduct of the mission.

There are several areas in which small improvements to the Battalion's effectiveness might be made:

- First, many peacekeepers highlighted a need for more female soldiers to participate in the mission, as communication between male soldiers and female locals is culturally difficult. It is recommended that efforts are made to increase the proportion and visibility of female troops in each contingent and in CIMIC teams, for example by recruiting personnel from parts of the armed forces that are not normally considered for peacekeeping duties, or by implementing more flexible personnel policies such as job sharing schemes.

- Second, many peacekeepers noted that small CIMIC projects can make a large difference and suggested that more efforts should be made in CIMIC. Such efforts need not be expensive, indeed some may be cost-free. Others argued that CIMIC projects to support long-term, sustainable development would do more to increase the mission's impact. It is recommended that steps are taken to increase CIMIC efforts and that CIMIC policies are reviewed with a view to identifying an appropriate balance between short- and longer-term efforts.
- Third, while most peacekeepers were highly appreciative of their pre-deployment training and the role it played in preparing them for the mission, there are two areas in which this training might be developed further:
  - The most frequent adverse comment made by peacekeepers was that too little attention was paid to cultural awareness in their training, not only in preparing them to deal with the local population, but also in helping them to work with their contingent partners. It is recommended that pre-deployment training programmes should pay more attention to cultural awareness; and that greater efforts should be made to enhance understanding between peacekeepers of the three states, both so that they can work better together and so they can develop a better appreciation of each other's security concerns and policies.
  - Pre-deployment training tends to focus – necessarily – on dealing with crisis situations. The experience of peacekeepers, however, is that one of the largest challenges in UNIFIL is dealing with the unchanging routine of the deployment. This is personally de-motivating, erodes military skills and may lead to complacency, risking the security of personnel. It is recommended that more effort should be put into managing expectations about the reality of a UNIFIL deployment in pre-deployment training. Consideration should also be given to encouraging individual soldiers to set personal development goals to be achieved during a rotation, and organisations such as the staff colleges of the three states drafted in to assist in formulating and supporting such goals.
- Fourth, it is recommended that a formal lesson learning process is instituted. While lessons learned exercises do take place, especially at lower levels such as within a company post-deployment, there does not appear to be a higher level process for identifying the strengths, weaknesses, successes and failures of each rotation. There is certainly no such exercise involving all three states, nor has the UN undertaken a substantive and critical appraisal of the UNIFIL mission. It is recommended that representatives from the three capitals and the field should gather at the end of each rotation with a view to identifying lessons.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BALTBAT	Baltic Peacekeeping Battalion
CIMIC	Civil-Military Co-operation
EDF	Estonian Defence Forces
FDF	Finnish Defence Forces
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
LAF	Lebanese Armed Forces
MINURCAT	United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad
MINURSO	United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
PDF	Permanent Defence Force (Ireland)
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDOF	United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (Golan Heights)
UNFICYP	United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNMOGIP	United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan
UNOCI	United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
UNSOM	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia
UNTSO	United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (Golan Heights/South Lebanon/Sinai)

*The UN has over 100,000 peacekeepers on the ground, in places others can't or won't go, doing things others can't or won't do. Peace, like war, must be waged.*

George Clooney  
Former UN Messenger of Peace

# 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

## 1.1 THIS REPORT

This report considers the role of small states in United Nations peacekeeping through the lens of the Estonian, Finnish and Irish contributions to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).<sup>1</sup> It is partly based on a review of the more readily available literature on UN peacekeeping, the role of small states in international security, strategic and military cultures, and the UNIFIL mission itself. But the

*UNIFIL is now in its 39th year of operation in south Lebanon; it is the UN's fifth longest duration peacekeeping mission*

larger part of the research, and the basis for most of the report's conclusions, consisted of a series of interviews with key players. These included strategic-level decision makers in the three national capitals, and Estonian, Finnish and Irish peacekeepers in south Lebanon.<sup>2</sup> The report thus takes the form of a case study.

Part 1 of the report contains some background on the UNIFIL mission and the Estonian, Finnish and Irish contributions. Part 2 records the findings of the interviews and supporting material under several thematic headings. Finally, Part 3 draws conclusions and makes recommendations.

1. For consistency, the three states are named in alphabetical order throughout. Similarly, the capitals are referred to as "Dublin, Helsinki and Tallinn".
2. In Dublin, Helsinki and Tallinn, former and serving officials in relevant positions in the parliaments, ministries of foreign affairs, ministries of defence, and defence forces headquarters; in south Lebanon peacekeepers in the infantry role, CIMIC staff and the command group. A total of 18 interviews were conducted with strategic-level decision makers in the three capitals, and 26 in the field.

## 1.2 UNIFIL

On 14 March 1978, following a terrorist attack on a bus near Tel Aviv which resulted in the deaths of 35 civilians, Israeli forces entered south Lebanon to neutralise the threat to Israel from Palestinian militant groups based in the border areas. Five days later, the UN Security Council called for Israel to cease its military action and decided to establish an interim force, mandated to confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces, restore international peace and security and assist the Government of Lebanon in re-establishing its authority over the area.<sup>3</sup> This interim force, UNIFIL, is now in its 39th year of operation in south Lebanon; it is the UN's fifth longest duration peacekeeping mission.<sup>4</sup>

The force remained in place during the first Lebanon War (1982) and subsequent Israeli occupation, including three years operating behind Israeli lines. Its activities were necessarily limited in this period and its military duties were not fully resumed until 2000, when Israel withdrew its forces from Lebanon. The period of uneasy peace that followed came to an end in July 2006 when Israeli forces again entered south Lebanon, this time in response to a Hezbollah ambush of an

Israeli border patrol, resulting in the deaths of three Israeli soldiers and the abduction of another two. The 34-day war that followed was brought to an end by a UN-brokered ceasefire and UNIFIL's mandate was enhanced with several additional tasks, including monitoring the cessation of hostilities, accompanying and supporting the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), and ensuring humanitarian access to civilian populations and the return of displaced persons.<sup>5</sup> With this more robust mandate, the mission strength grew from fewer than 2,000 troops in June 2006 to more than 12,000 by January 2007.<sup>6</sup> The mission was also complemented by a maritime task force, the first naval force to be included in a UN mission, which supports the Lebanese Navy in securing

3. United Nations Security Council, Resolution 425 (19 March 1978).
4. After UNTSO, UNMOGIP, UNFICYP and UNDOF.
5. United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1701, S/RES/1701 (2006) (11 August 2006).
6. International Peace Institute, "IPI Peacekeeping Database," <http://www.providingforpeacekeeping.org/contributions/>.

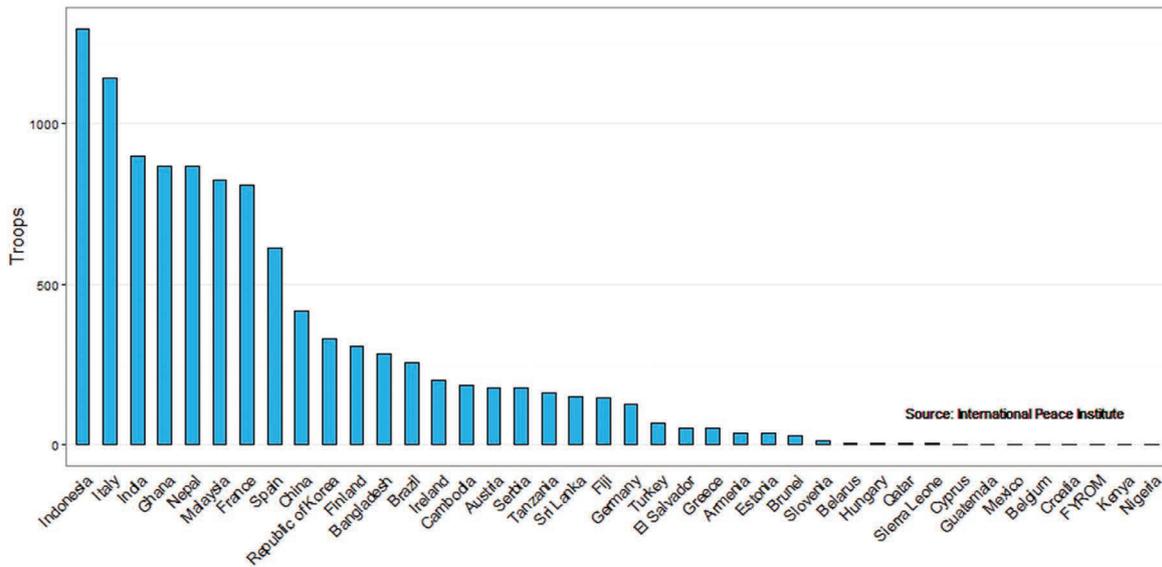


Figure 1. Average Troop Contributions to UNIFIL, January to July 2016.

Lebanon’s coastline and preventing the entry of arms.<sup>7</sup> The enhanced mission is commonly, although not officially, known as UNIFIL II.

As of August 2016, the total strength of the mission was 11,345, of whom 10,490 were uniformed troops from a total of 40 countries (Figure 1).<sup>8</sup> The area of operations is organised into an Eastern Sector, divided into Indian, Indonesian, Nepalese and Spanish battalion areas of responsibility, and a Western Sector, divided into Finnish/Irish, Ghanaian, Italian, Korean and Malaysian battalion areas of responsibility (Figure 2). In addition, seven naval vessels under Brazilian command make up UNIFIL’s maritime task force.

*Estonia, Finland and Ireland are respectively the fourth, second and first largest European troop contributors per capita to UN peacekeeping operations*

### 1.3 THE ESTONIAN, FINNISH AND IRISH CONTRIBUTIONS

Among European states, Estonia, Finland and Ireland are respectively the fourth, second and first largest per capita troop contributors to UN peacekeeping operations, while Ireland and Finland are the sixth and seventh largest contributors in terms of absolute numbers (see Annex A).

Estonia first deployed a company-sized unit to UNIFIL between December 1996 and May 1997. The company served under a Norwegian battalion as part of the development programme for BALTBAT, a joint Baltic peacekeeping battalion through which

western military support could be channelled to the Baltic states following the restoration of their independence. The current contribution, a platoon-sized unit operating as part of the Finnish contingent (auspiciously, the ‘Finest Company’) of the Finnish/Irish Battalion, deployed to Lebanon in May 2015 (Figure 3). Its mandate is renewed annually and currently expires in December 2017.

Finland and Ireland have long histories of participating in UNIFIL. Both countries contributed a battalion-sized presence, Ireland from the mission’s initiation in 1978 and Finland from 1982, until 2001, when UNIFIL was scaled down by the UN. They returned in 2006 for a fixed period of one year at the request of the UN, this time as part of a joint Finnish/Irish Battalion. Ireland returned to the operation with a mechanised infantry battalion in 2011,

7. UNIFIL, “UNIFIL Maritime Task Force,” UNIFIL, <https://unifil.unmissions.org/unifil-maritime-task-force>.  
8. United Nations Peacekeeping, “Peacekeeping Factsheet,” United Nations, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/factsheet.shtml#IFIL>.

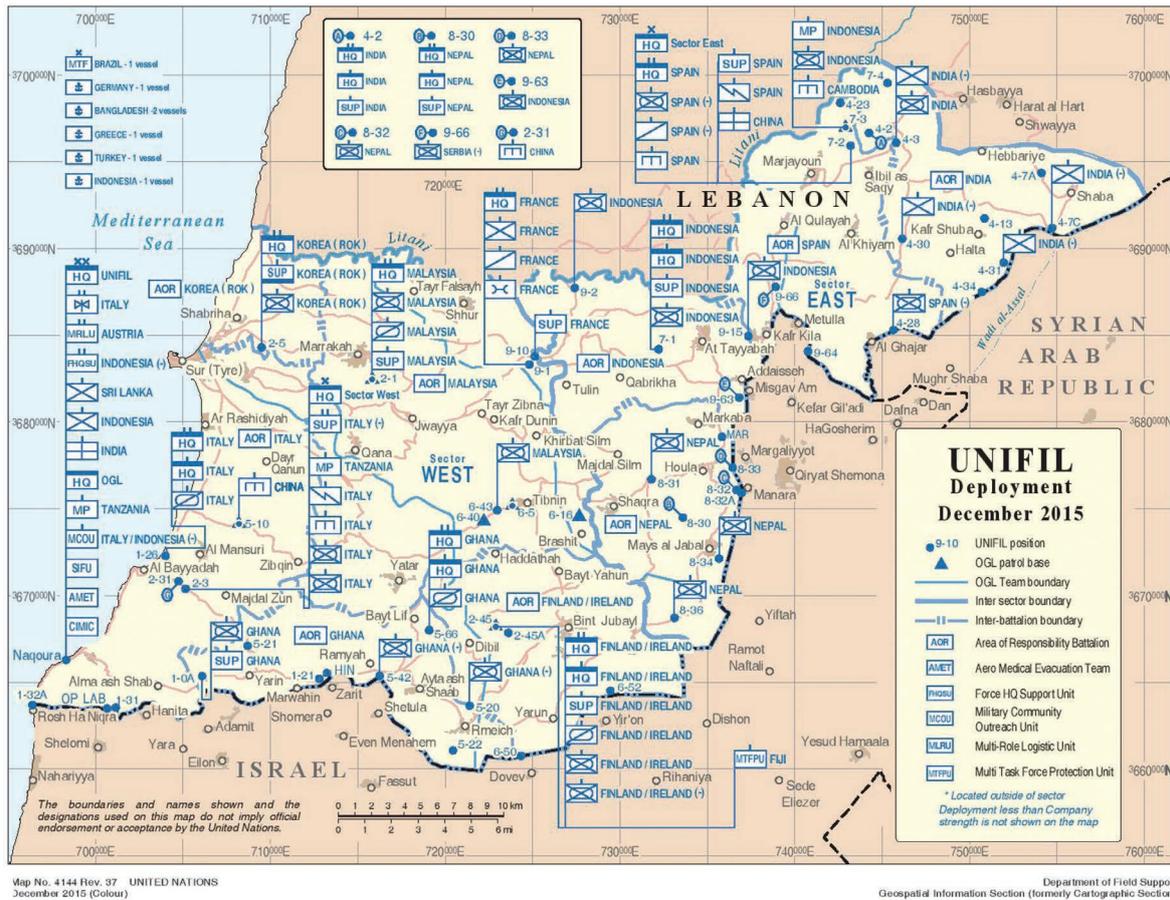


Figure 2. UNIFIL Deployment. Source: UN.

which became part of the second Finnish/Irish Battalion in late 2013.<sup>9</sup> Ireland currently has command of the Finnish/Irish Battalion, having taken over from the Finns in November 2016. Although not shown in Figure 3, the Irish troop contribution has thus recently increased, while Finland's has decreased.

The Finnish contribution is currently mandated until November 2018. In addition, Finland will provide 160 troops to the UNIFIL joint reserve battalion from April 2017 to April 2018 in response to a French request for assistance under article 42(7) of the Lisbon treaty, following the November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris.<sup>10</sup> This will relieve French

troops for counter-terrorism duties and is regarded by the Finnish strategic-level decision makers consulted for this report as a critical demonstration of solidarity, in support of an important article of the EU Treaty.

Finland has suffered 11 fatalities, and Ireland 47, in the service of peace in the UNIFIL mission.<sup>11</sup>

## 2 SMALL STATES AS PEACEKEEPERS

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This part of the report compares and contrasts the three states' attitudes towards and execution of UN peacekeeping. In particular, it examines their motivations for participating in UN peacekeeping and in UNIFIL, and the

9. Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, "Finland withdraws from the UNIFIL peacekeeping operation," press release 8/17/2001, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, <http://www.formin.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=55125&contentlan=2&culture=en-US>. Defence Forces Ireland, "United Nations Interim Force Lebanon," Defence Forces Ireland, <http://www.military.ie/overseas/current-missions/unifil/>.  
10. "If a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. This shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States."

European Union, "Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union," *Official Journal of the European Union* C326/55, 26 October 2012, 39.

11. United Nations Peacekeeping, "Fatalities," United Nations, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/fatalities.shtml>.

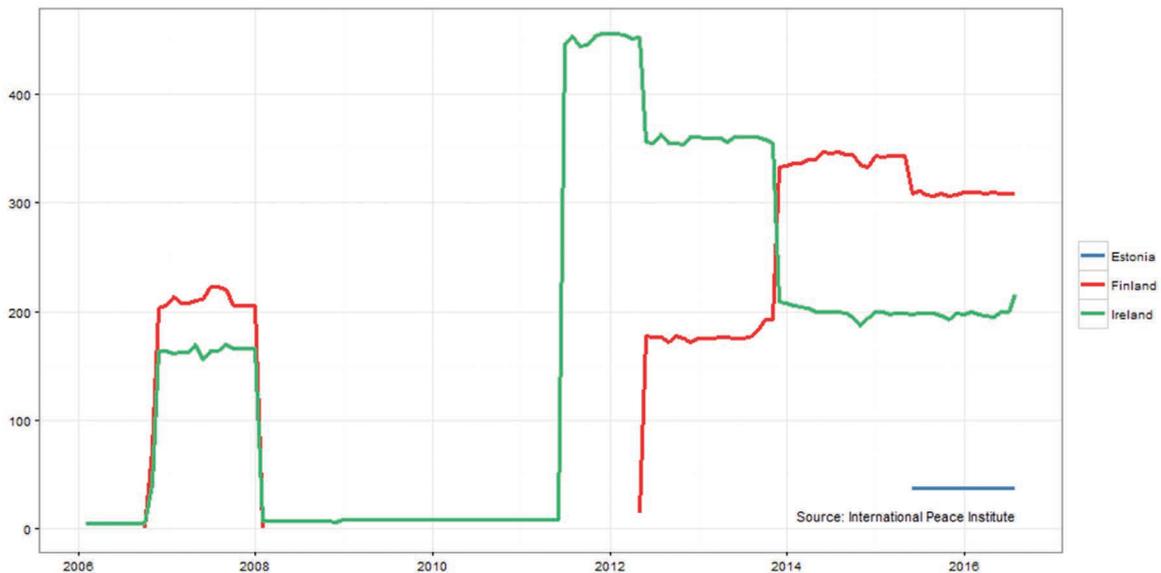


Figure 3. Estonian, Finnish and Irish Troop Contributions to UNIFIL, 2006 – Present.

benefits and challenges of their operational partnership.

The authors of a recent study on operational partnerships in UN peacekeeping identify six factors for enhancing success.<sup>12</sup> Four of these (pre-deployment designation of partners' respective responsibilities, careful planning to reduce friction in the ranks, consideration of the size and tasking of the junior partner's unit, and continued partnership until the end of the mission and in any follow-on rotation) are essentially within the control of the states involved and can be shaped through careful management.

Two, however (similar social backgrounds, and military compatibility) are more fundamental features of the partners' national and military cultures.

Considering these last two criteria, Estonia, Finland and Ireland share many similarities. They are all democratic European states and are part of the same 'western community'. Their security and defence policies are shaped by their location in the same European security space, and their militaries represent a well-established western tradition governing

the roles, position and conduct of armed forces. They have also worked together in a military context, Finland and Ireland in UN peacekeeping, and all three states in preparing for operations under the EU Nordic Battlegroups NBG08, NBG11 and NBG15. But at the same time, they are substantially different. They do not share a common language or, until relatively recently, a common history. They have different threat perceptions – Estonia and

*Decision makers in Estonia tended to first explain their country's participation in international operations in more transactional terms than did those from Finland and Ireland*

Finland both share a border with a militarily aggressive neighbour – and have responded to these in different ways. Finland and Ireland have remained militarily non-aligned, while Estonia has become a NATO Ally. Estonia and Finland retain conscription, while Ireland's armed forces are fully professional. Estonia and Ireland deploy only professional soldiers to UNIFIL, while Finland deploys a substantial number of reservists. A key question of interest is the extent to which these similarities and differences impact the performance of the Finnish/Irish Battalion.

A further factor that links Estonia, Finland and Ireland is that they are all 'small states'.

12. Donald C. F. Daniel, Paul D. Williams, and Adam C. Smith, *Deploying Combined Teams: Lessons Learned from Operational Partnerships in UN Peacekeeping* (New York: International Peace Institute, August 2015), 24.



Traditionally, small states have pursued policies aimed at preserving their survival, including those – such as participating in UN peacekeeping – that strengthen international law. After the end of the Cold War, the growth of crisis management created a situation in which small states were also expected to deploy their militaries in support of the aims of great powers, even if there was no direct threat to their own interests.<sup>13</sup>

Unless otherwise stated, the material in this part of the report is based on interviews conducted with strategic-level decision makers in the three capitals, and with peacekeepers in south Lebanon. The thoughts and opinions presented here are, however, not further attributed to individuals or positions.

## 2.2 WHY KEEP THE PEACE?

### 2.2.1 ESTONIA

As a very small state in a geographically vulnerable position, Estonia has sought security through military alliances and international organisations since regaining its independence in 1991.<sup>14</sup> Estonia's overarching concept of

its own security is to view it as inseparable from international security, making active participation in crisis management and peace support operations a critical facet of its security policy.<sup>15</sup> In the (now somewhat dated) National Defence Strategy, international operations are thus justified by the statement that, "Participation in international operations will be used to intensify co-operation with Estonia's strategic allies."<sup>16</sup>

In line with this thinking, and while acknowledging the value and importance of contributing to international peace, decision makers in Estonia tended to first explain their country's participation in international operations in more transactional terms than did those from Finland and Ireland. Very broadly, Estonia's concept of the indivisibility of security requires that it should help others by participating in international operations if it expects to be helped itself in times of crisis. This in turn leads to a widely understood, if not fully stated, hierarchy of preferred organisations to work with – NATO, US-led coalitions and the EU all being given priority over the UN – and a similar hierarchy of preferred operational partners, in which Finland ranks highly. Estonia is especially keen to be seen as a security provider at present, as the arrival in 2017 of 1,000 Allied troops under NATO's Enhanced

13. Anders Wivel, Alyson J.K. Bailes, and Clive Archer, "Setting the scene. Small states and international security," in *Small States and International Security: Europe and Beyond*, ed. Clive Archer, Alyson J.K. Bailes, and Anders Wivel (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 4.

14. Kadi Salu and Erik Mannik, "Estonia," in *Strategic Cultures in Europe. Security and Defence Policies across the Continent*, ed. Heiko Biehl, Bastian Giegerich, and Alexandra Jonas (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2013), 99.

15. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Estonia), "Estonian Security Policy," Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.vm.ee/en/estonian-security-policy>.

16. Ministry of Defence (Estonia), *National Defence Strategy* (Tallinn: Ministry of Defence, 2011), 9.

Forward Presence will add a significant weight to the ‘consumption’ side of the scale.

Decision makers also explained Estonian participation in UN peacekeeping in more tangible transactional terms. It is variously seen: as a means to garner support for Estonia’s campaign for a seat on the UN Security Council in 2020; as a useful contribution to the NATO target of having 10% of armed forces deployed on international missions at any time; as a means to improve bilateral relations in the region of the operation and with European partners who traditionally take a greater interest in that region (for example, Estonia credits its participation in UNIFIL as having a positive impact on its relations with countries such as France, Italy and Spain); and as vehicle for gaining the wider perspective on the world necessary during an age of globalisation.

Participation in UN peacekeeping is also seen as militarily valuable to Estonia. It provides mission experience and training (although Estonia tends to value combat missions more than it does traditional peacekeeping), is a useful motivation and recruiting tool for the Scouts Battalion (the fully professional component of the Estonian Defence Forces (EDF) from where contributions to international operations are mostly drawn), deepens cooperation with other militaries, and allows materiel, tactics and procedures to be evaluated. On the other hand, interviewees noted that sending forces abroad reduces combat readiness in Estonia and disrupts force development processes such as the introduction of new equipment. This is an issue for small armed forces, particularly if they are required to deploy specialist units which can severely curtail capacity at home, for example sending training teams to Mali and Afghanistan has a notable impact on the conscript training cycle in Estonia.<sup>17</sup> Also, the environment and mission in south Lebanon are thought to differ very much from those which Estonian troops would expect to see in their wartime roles, placing some limits on the military benefits of participation in UNIFIL.

17. The Estonian Defence Forces are around 6000 strong, of whom about half are conscripts. Estonian Defence Forces, “Estonian Defence Forces,” Estonian Defence Forces, <http://www.mil.ee/en/defence-forces>.

## 2.2.2 FINLAND

Finland, a militarily non-aligned small state, with a culture of ‘small-state realism’ prioritises national survival and preparing for the defence of its territory above all else.<sup>18</sup> Nonetheless, it has a very strong tradition of contributing to UN peacekeeping, deploying for the first time in 1956 and having troops deployed continuously on UN missions since 1961. Over the years, through this high level of contribution, Finland has come to view itself as a major peacekeeping nation, and its rationale for involvement in peacekeeping operations has evolved from “pure realism towards liberal internationalism”.<sup>19</sup>

Decision makers in Helsinki explained the rationale for contribution in terms of a desire to maximise all forms of international cooperation as a means of advancing Finland’s foreign policy goals, a wish to belong to and to show solidarity with the Western group of states, and, recognising the UN as an important organisation for small states, to share the burden of UN peacekeeping. Underpinning this political rationale is a strong values-based belief that contributing to the peace is the ‘right thing to do’. Finland wants to be counted among the group of nations that values the rule of law, democracy and the principles of the UN Charter;

*Finland wants to be known as – and takes pride in being – a peacekeeping nation*

and as part of this wants to be known as – and takes pride in being – a peacekeeping nation. In terms of contributions, Finland thus believes that it should punch above its weight. Despite being a country of only 5.5 million inhabitants, it is among European nations one of the highest troop contributors to the UN (see Annex A) and is the highest per capita contributor to civilian crisis management. In addition to the UN, Finland sees value in contributing to crisis management through NATO, the EU, and international coalitions, although its normal policy is not to take part in operations that would involve the use of force.

18. Antti Seppo, and Tuomas Forsberg, “Finland,” in *Strategic Cultures in Europe. Security and Defence Policies across the Continent*, ed. Heiko Biehl, Bastian Giegerich, and Alexandra Jonas (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2013), 113-114.

19. *Ibid.*, 115.

Finland also derives substantial military benefits from UN peacekeeping, using missions as a vehicle to assist in the development of military capabilities. While peacekeeping is acknowledged to be very different from the defence of Finland, the Finnish defence forces

*Peacekeeping is to be seen as a component of a coherent values-based foreign policy, which requires a proactive role in foreign affairs, and the assumption of responsibilities under the UN*

(FDF) believe that such operations allow them good opportunities to test armament and other equipment in realistic conditions, to test and validate tactics and procedures, and to provide experience and training for key leaders and reservists (reservists typically make up half of any deployment and benefit greatly from participating in peacekeeping missions). Further, Finland welcomes the opportunity provided by multinational operations to exercise interoperability and to share and learn best practice. The FDF aim to deploy one larger troop contribution at any one time in order that these benefits can be realised at the level of higher formations – company and, to an extent, battalion. Decision makers suggested that the UN is often a better vehicle for meeting this military objective, since entire wartime units with their regular equipment can be deployed; by contrast, NATO operations often require the deployment of tailor-made elements and specialist equipment, losing the opportunity to learn more general lessons. Other authors, however, report a view that participating in NATO-led operations is militarily more beneficial for Finland.<sup>20</sup>

### 2.2.3 IRELAND

Safely located on Europe's western periphery, Ireland has been able to base its defence policy predominantly on instruments that contribute to implementing international law and avoiding or recovering from conflict.<sup>21</sup> According to its White

Paper on Defence, it regards the requirement to defend its territory against conventional military attack as "unlikely, but possible".<sup>22</sup> Participation in "multi-national peace support, crisis management and humanitarian relief operations" is thus the second of eleven roles assigned to the Permanent Defence Force (PDF).<sup>23</sup> In terms of its preferred framework for such operations, the country has strong emotional ties to the UN as the cradle of its independence and an

equally strong political and military commitment to UN peacekeeping.<sup>24</sup> Ireland also recognises the benefits to itself that this values-based foreign policy posture brings, not least as a small country operating in a global economy.<sup>25</sup>

Interviewees in Dublin explained that peacekeeping is to be seen as a component of a coherent values-based foreign policy, which requires a proactive role in foreign affairs, and the assumption of responsibilities under the UN, which also include, for example, contributions to development aid and disarmament. It is thus part of a package that aims to deliver a serious, engaged foreign affairs posture – the vehicle by which Ireland, as a small state, situates itself in the world. Peacekeeping gives expression to such a policy and allows Ireland to pursue the values it propounds. This, in turn, provides prestige, visibility, credibility and authority to underpin Ireland's advocacy for the principles and values it holds. Ireland thus believes that it needs to make a large contribution – around 10% of the PDF is involved in peacekeeping at any one time.<sup>26</sup> Further, Ireland's neutrality

*Security and Defence Policies across the Continent*, ed. Heiko Biehl, Bastian Giegerich, and Alexandra Jonas (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2013), 181.

22. Department of Defence (Ireland), *White Paper on Defence* (Dublin: Department of Defence, 2015), 24.

23. *Ibid.*, 59.

24. Edward Burke and Jonathan Marley, *Walking Point for Peace: An Irish view on the state of UN peacekeeping* (New York: New York University Center on International Cooperation, 2015), 4.

25. "Supporting greater peace, security and development is also in our interest as a small country with an open economy in an ever more interconnected and uncertain world." Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Ireland), *The Global Island. Ireland's Foreign Policy for a Changing World*, (Dublin: Government of Ireland, 2015), 27.

26. As of May 2016, the Permanent Defence Force had an active strength of 9,137 personnel (Army 7,310, Navy 1,094, Air 733). "Defence Forces Strength," *Dáil Éireann Parliamentary*

20. Peter Viggo Jakobsen, *Nordic Approaches to Peace Operations: A New Model in the Making* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 126. Charly Saloni-Pasternak, "Peacekeeping Contributor Profile: Finland," International Peace Institute, <http://www.providingforpeacekeeping.org/2014/04/03/contributor-profile-finland/>.

21. Daniel Keohane, "Ireland," in *Strategic Cultures in Europe*.



and post-colonial status mean that it can be effective in peacekeeping where the status of other nations might be an impediment. More broadly, peacekeeping presence allows Ireland to develop relations with countries that would otherwise be beyond its reach – there is, for example, no Irish embassy in Beirut.

Peacekeeping also provides the PDF a means to substantively operationalise its work. Without peacekeeping, it would be limited largely to supporting the civil powers, a role that has in any case reduced since the end of the troubles. Through peacekeeping, the defence forces maintain operational tempo and interoperability with other states; as a neutral state, Ireland has fewer opportunities to work with partners than, say, NATO Allies. Peacekeeping thus brings direct benefits to the PDF in terms of capability development (e.g. the armoured fleet and other capabilities are in service directly as a result of participating in peacekeeping), skills development among individual soldiers, corporate skills development (e.g. exercising the logistics processes necessary to deploy and then securely accommodate, feed and otherwise provide for a large troop contingent), and opportunities to benchmark against other armed forces and to learn from them (e.g. Ireland introduced electronic countermeasures capabilities into its vehicles following Finland's lead). Peacekeeping is also a useful recruiting tool, as it offers young people opportunities to serve overseas.

*Debates Official Report 914:1, Tuesday, 21 June 2016, 65.*

## 2.3 WHY UNIFIL?

### 2.3.1 ESTONIA

For Estonia, participating in UNIFIL was an opportunity that could be seized, rather than a specific foreign or defence policy objective. Estonian interviewees stated that the EDF had been very committed in the first decade of the millennium to NATO and coalition operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, and to preparing for EU operations through the battlegroups concept. As these activities wound down, Estonia actively sought some form of replacement, albeit a less intense one with a lower risk of casualties. Finland had participated in UNIFIL since 2012, and the good working relations between Finnish and Estonian opposite numbers at all levels meant that a conveniently timed proposal for Estonia to join the Finnish contingent could be rapidly elaborated and approved. There were several other benefits to this for Estonia, including: providing a concrete means to reinforce Estonia's bid for a seat on the UN Security Council; and offering an opportunity to work with Finland, a preferred partner with whom cooperation had recently been thin. Interviewees also observed that it is difficult to contribute troops to UN operations, as peacekeeping slots are quickly filled. Replacing a platoon of Finns within a Finnish company was a much easier ready-made solution. An early idea was to get a platoon-sized foot in the door before building up to deploying a company, which

is the preferred size for Estonia in terms of training and force development. However, this idea has not materialised, nor is it likely to given the perception that the EDF are already stretched by existing commitments to NATO and to national force development. A crisis management operation in Africa might have been an alternative deployment, but Estonia was reluctant to take this route on the grounds of cost, training requirements, equipment needs, and logistical difficulties. Estonia's contribution to the EU operation in the Central African Republic in 2014 had, in any case, proved controversial domestically.<sup>27</sup>

### 2.3.2 FINLAND

Despite its strong peacekeeping traditions, Finland had few troops deployed with the UN in the first decade of the millennium,

*Finland had previously had very positive experiences in UNIFIL and felt that it understood the situation and knew the people well*

when Partnership for Peace and coalition operations had become more important (see Figure A-5, Annex A). Interviewees recalled a belief that Finland needed to return to its strong tradition of UN peacekeeping, coupled with a recognition that, if not addressed, a declining understanding of the UN and its operations would make future contributions more difficult. The 2012 deployment to UNIFIL was in response to a request from the UN for Finnish troops to return to south Lebanon, which arrived as Finland's contribution to ISAF was winding down. Finland was glad to respond positively since this provided the opportunity to deploy the sizable contribution that the Finnish military argues is necessary for force development, in conditions that are especially well suited to delivering the military benefits Finland expects to accrue from contributing to peacekeeping operations. Further, Finland had previously had very

27. Estonia deployed 50 troops to the EU's EUFOR RCA mission in May 2014 for a one-off rotation.

positive experiences in UNIFIL and felt that it understood the situation and knew the people well, and would thus be able to make a helpful contribution. Interviewees also noted that UNIFIL was a cost effective operation to participate in; an equivalent operation in Africa would be around twice the cost.

### 2.3.3 IRELAND

Ireland also has a long history of participating in UNIFIL. Interviewees reported that its withdrawal in 2000 was at least partly based on the idea that the operation was becoming stale and that Ireland had learned all it could from south Lebanon; it should perhaps focus instead on Africa, where the bulk of UN peacekeeping takes place and where there is a demand for western forces with peacekeeping experience. However, Ireland, like Finland, was invited to return in 2006 and faced some pressure from the UN and from partners in the EU to do so. The deployment in 2011 was also in response to a request from the

UN. At the time, there were few alternative operations to which Ireland could contribute. The financial crisis, already partly responsible for Irish contributions to peacekeeping being at a historically low level, further limited Ireland's options; participating in an EU-led operation would, for example, have been difficult to afford. Deploying to south Lebanon also offered an opportunity to work again with the Finns, thus satisfying a ministerial-level commitment to renew an operational partnership that had been cut short in 2010, when uncertainties over the prolongation of the mandate

*Withdrawal in 2000 was at least partly based on the idea that Ireland had learned all it could from south Lebanon*

caused both countries to withdraw from the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT). While over-familiarity with UNIFIL may have led some to have reservations about returning to south Lebanon, the perceived pressing need for

the PDF to deploy was a major factor in the decision to do so.

## 2.4 WHY WORK TOGETHER?

### 2.4.1 ESTONIA AND FINLAND

For Estonia, the benefits of working alongside Finland are both political and practical. Politically, Finland is a close neighbour and a key strategic partner, and Estonia welcomes the opportunity to enhance ties between its defence institutions at all levels, especially as such contacts were perceived to have declined since Estonia joined NATO in 2004. In this regard, in addition to routine military-military contacts, and contacts between defence officials, both the prime ministers and defence ministers of the two countries have conducted joint visits to the UNIFIL mission area. Estonian interviewees also valued the fact that the UN provided an umbrella under which they could work with the Finns that was acceptable to all, noting that Finnish sensitivities otherwise made it difficult for them to be seen to cooperate militarily with Estonia (for example, Finland only began to participate, with staff officers, in Estonia's annual conscript graduation exercise, 'Spring Storm' in 2016).

At the practical level, the direct benefits to Estonia include: the offsetting of some of Estonia's costs as the Finns provide vehicles and other logistic support to the Estonian contingent; the opportunity to learn from Finland's tactics and procedures and from its

extensive experience in peacekeeping; and the chance to place staff officers (three) in a battalion headquarters. Both Finnish and Estonian interviewees reported that day-to-day cooperation between the two countries is very easy, as they have close strategic and military cultures.

Finnish decision makers valued the Estonian contribution to their contingent, and in particular the opportunity to work with a NATO member state, and the role this partnership plays in supporting a broader Finnish foreign policy objective of enhancing cooperation with the Nordic and Baltic states. The Estonians themselves were more sceptical of the real worth of their contribution to the Finns. They recognised that deploying a platoon as part of a larger contingent made little sense militarily, and was financially costly for the Finns. Finland's inclusion of Estonia is thus, they believe, above all a political act; indeed, Estonian interviewees claimed that there had been some pushback from the FDF, as Estonia's involvement would mean that a platoon of Finns would be held back from a popular and coveted posting.

### 2.4.2 ESTONIA AND IRELAND

By contrast, there is very little direct cooperation between Estonia and Ireland. Some decision makers noted that Estonian and Irish military cultures are very different making practical cooperation difficult. However, the structure of the Finnish/Irish Battalion, in



which the Estonian platoon works as part of the Finnish contingent, means that in practice there is little need for day-to-day contact between the two nations (for example, any initial concerns that Ireland may have had over Estonia's participation were handled by the Finns, rather than by the Estonians themselves) although there is some expectation that contacts will grow now that Ireland has taken over command of the battalion. Further, few Estonian interviewees recognised much political value in working with Ireland, observing that the geostrategic positions of the two countries are very different. For Estonia, working with Ireland is simply part of the package of working with Finland.

#### 2.4.3 FINLAND AND IRELAND

Finland and Ireland have a long history of managing crises together, not only in south Lebanon, but also in KFOR, in MINURCAT, and in preparing for operations under the EU Nordic Battlegroups. Although viewed by UNIFIL officials as "a bit of an oddity" when compared to other peacekeeping partnerships, Finland and Ireland's UN peacekeeping cooperation has been found to work well as the two countries "have the same international (neutral) political outlook; are partners but not full members of NATO; speak English easily; and are manned by officers with similar profiles and experience."<sup>28</sup> Finnish decision makers agreed that this partnership works well on the ground, observing that the reduced effectiveness usually associated with multinational units was not evident in the Finnish/Irish Battalion. On the contrary, the different strengths of the two contingents (Ireland – professional soldiers with extensive experience in UNIFIL; Finland – civilian professional skills of reservists) complemented each other and made for a more effective unit.

For Finland, the benefits of this partnership are largely practical. Above all, the Finnish/Irish Battalion in UNIFIL is seen as a cost effective means of deploying the larger contingent that Finland requires for training and force development, which would otherwise be difficult to afford. Command rotates between

the two partners, with the commanding nation providing a larger force contribution and also being responsible for camp services and supply, and battalion level communications equipment. Finland thus gains battalion-level experience without the costs of deploying a full battalion. Finnish interviewees also valued the opportunity to practise interoperability, share tactics and techniques, and improve military language skills.

The Irish government also sees partnership as an important component in ensuring its participation in international operations, the Department of Defence asserting in its most recent white paper that,

"... the development of more formal bilateral relations with other states, is becoming an increasing feature of Ireland's security, defence and international peacekeeping and crisis management arrangements ... the Department of Defence will continue to engage in developing and deepening bilateral relations with potential like-minded partners so as to secure Ireland's position in current and future international crisis management operations"<sup>29</sup>

Ireland thus looks to non-NATO countries as its preferred partners in international operations, regarding Finland as its best partner.<sup>30</sup> Decision makers in Dublin agreed that the partnership

*Command rotates between the two partners, with the commanding nation providing a larger force contribution*

is an effective one, adding that the two countries share much: neutrality (which, for Ireland, is helpful in selling the partnership domestically), a complex relationship with their neighbours, and a readiness to robustly defend their sovereignty. While there is much understanding between the two nations, the partnership was also helpful to Ireland, in 2006 at least, as a means of mitigating risk. Although Ireland's return to south Lebanon was not especially controversial, there was an understanding that the environment was potentially a hot one and that a partnership

28. Daniel, *Deploying Combined Teams*, 23.

29. Department of Defence, *White Paper on Defence*, 29.  
30. Burke and Marley, *Walking Point for Peace*, 5.

was a way of sharing the risks. Further, the UN and others were keen to have participation in UNIFIL from large western ‘anchor contingents’ – a partnership was a way of providing such a contribution without too large a strain on one nation’s resources. Finally, in terms of spreading its peacekeeping presence, a shared deployment with, for example, the Finns providing a company of troops, allows Ireland to deploy another company elsewhere.

## 2.5 THE VIEWS OF PEACEKEEPERS

### 2.5.1 THE NATURE OF PEACEKEEPING

The famous aphorism, “peacekeeping is not a job for soldiers, but only soldiers can do it,” is usually attributed to Dag Hammarskjöld, the UN’s second Secretary General. Peacekeepers in south Lebanon agreed that fundamental military skills were necessary in their daily

*Skills such as conflict management, diplomacy, communication, judgment, cultural awareness, patience and tolerance are crucial for effective peacekeeping*

tasks, both to maintain awareness and to be ready to respond, with weapons if needed, should a crisis situation arise. They also recognised that in conducting peacekeeping, a shift in their military mentality was required, and that skills such as conflict management, diplomacy, communication, judgment, cultural awareness, patience and tolerance are crucial for effective peacekeeping. In many ways this means that peacekeeping is a harder mission than combat. The objectives are less clear, and there is greater uncertainty. While the Rules of Engagement may be black and white, the reality is more shaded and the behaviour of individual soldiers can have a great impact on the entire mission (the ‘strategic private’ effect).<sup>31</sup>

31. The term ‘strategic corporal’ was coined by General Charles Krulak to reflect the idea that modern warfare demands leadership skills from ever lower levels of the military hierarchy. Charles C. Krulak, “The Strategic Corporal:

Many interviewees felt that it took some time to adjust to this situation, although there

*Several peacekeepers noted subtle differences between the contingents in, for example, body language, weapons carry and force protection measures*

was general agreement that pre-deployment training, which is largely carried out separately by the three states, was helpful in preparing the contingents before their arrival in theatre. Finnish peacekeepers noted that about half of their conscript training (around half of the Finnish contingent are reservists) is in peace support operations, making the transition to a real peacekeeping operation somewhat easier. On the other hand, their battalion counterparts suggested that the Finns are less flexible in their approach to operational tasks and tend to delegate less, partly because a large part of the Finnish contingent are reservists and partly because, unlike the Estonians and Irish, the Finnish contingent assembles for the first time during pre-deployment training. Irish peacekeepers also referred to the focus on peace support operations

during their training, and to the substantial (albeit now reduced) role the PDF has played in supporting the Irish civilian authorities, for example in border security and checkpoint manning. The skills gained here were thought to be easily translated into a peacekeeping context.

For Estonian peacekeepers, the challenge is perhaps larger. Many have recent experiences in the highly kinetic environments of Iraq and Afghanistan, and Estonian decision makers were very conscious that appropriate training would be necessary to allow them to participate effectively in peacekeeping. They also reported that the Finns were initially a little concerned about the EDF’s warfighting mentality. In the event, this does not seem

Leadership in the Three Block War,” *Marines Corps Gazette* 83 no.1 (January 1999), 18-23.

to have been a particular problem, although some interviewees in south Lebanon observed that the Estonian contingent adopted an overly aggressive posture in the earlier part of its deployment. Even after some months, several peacekeepers noted subtle differences between the contingents in, for example, body language, weapons carry and force protection measures, which they attributed to the different experiences of the three contingents. The Estonian peacekeepers, meanwhile, appear to have been more challenged than they had expected by their experiences in UNIFIL, despite its non-kinetic nature.

Several peacekeepers commented that they would have appreciated more cultural awareness training before their deployment, as this is an important component when it comes to exercising ‘soft’ peacekeeping skills. This is especially the case for the Estonian and Finnish contingents, many of whom are coming to the region for the first time; the Irish contingent is widely credited with a deep cultural knowledge of the area and a capacity to put this knowledge to use to the benefit of the mission.

Beyond these challenges, and the difficulty of being away from home and family for an extended period, the main hurdle reported by

peacekeepers was dealing with the routine of the deployment. The calm security situation allows a very steady routine of patrolling (typically 5-6 times per week), training and resting that many found wearing; indeed some expressed concern that their military skills might be blunted by the unchanging

*Many interviewees argued that there was a strong need for female soldiers to participate in the mission, and that the proportion of female peacekeepers should be increased*

working routine of the operation, while others noted that this can be an operational risk, as it encourages complacency in what remains a potentially threatening environment. Some peacekeepers also observed that the pre-deployment training, which focused inevitably on dealing with crises, did not prepare them to handle this situation.

### 2.5.2 THE ROLE

Most peacekeepers reported good relations with the local population and felt that they were very welcome in south Lebanon. Hostility is rare and usually confined to a handful of known locations. UNIFIL’s relations with the LAF were also generally thought to be good; several peacekeepers believed that UNIFIL should do more to involve the LAF, and that



the international community should assist more with their training and equipment. Interviewees thus generally felt that their presence was making a difference, although some observed that the long-term nature of peacekeeping means that it can be frustrating not to see many real results during a rotation. At the same time, others argued that short term CIMIC projects (rather than projects to support long-term, sustainable development) and the short rotation cycle of UNIFIL contingents reduced the mission's potential impact. In a similar vein, some peacekeepers criticised the hand over from one rotation to the next as being too rapid. In this respect, the Finnish contingent has an advantage, in that one third

at female soldiers in which individuals are paired and each serve for half a rotation (three months), offering a potential (partial) solution to the issue. Irish interviewees also noted that all their peacekeepers receive gender awareness training and a few receive additional training in this area to act as specialists in each deployment.

Another issue highlighted by peacekeepers was the UN practice of separating CIMIC activities from the security-related activities of most of the mission, despite CIMIC projects being seen as a tool for the Commanding Officer to achieve operational objectives. This was felt to be a weakness as the good relations created by CIMIC were not necessarily beneficial to the reputation

of UNIFIL as a whole. CIMIC projects are typically each worth around 25,000 Euros, with drinking and agricultural water, power and

waste management being the current priorities. Several peacekeepers argued that CIMIC activities should be increased, since they bring tangible benefits to the local population and help UNIFIL's image. Projects could be small scale and thus inexpensive, but still have a substantial impact.

### *Peacekeepers reported that specific opportunities to learn from each other are somewhat limited*

of its contingent remains in theatre for an additional six months providing continuity and mentoring for the successor rotation, while the Estonian and Irish contingents rotate entire units at the six-month point.

Many interviewees argued that there was a strong need for female soldiers to participate in the mission, and that the proportion of female peacekeepers should be increased. It is culturally difficult for Lebanese women to speak with male peacekeepers, thus UNIFIL finds difficulty in engaging with large sections of the local population, and misses out on a potential source of intelligence. Further, female soldiers can act as positive role models for younger female locals. The participation of women in CIMIC teams was also felt to be important, for example in helping to support elected female representatives in municipal councils or female mukhtars (village heads, town mayors). The problem is that there are simply too few women amongst active duty personnel in the three countries (and for Finland amongst reservists) to allow for their deployment in sufficient numbers.<sup>32</sup> In this respect, Ireland has recently introduced a job sharing scheme aimed primarily

#### 2.5.3 MULTINATIONALITY

Decision makers in the three capitals saw the opportunity for their soldiers to interact with those of other nations in the Finnish/Irish Battalion, and more widely in UNIFIL, as an advantage. In practice, however, peacekeepers reported that specific opportunities to learn from each other are somewhat limited. First, because the three contingents tend to work (and usually also to socialise) amongst themselves. There is a certain amount of interaction between the Estonians and Finns, since they are part of the same company, but little (except at the headquarters level) with the Irish. Even within platoons, the routine of patrolling and resting in shifts reduces opportunities to meet. The only time the Battalion comes together as a whole professionally is for Crowd and Riot Control training. Second, because the operations of the three contingents are in any case heavily shaped by the UNIFIL way of doing things – Standard Operating Procedures, Rules of Engagement, a similar training programme

32. Percentage of women among active duty military personnel: Estonia – 11.2%; Finland – 2.3%; Ireland – 6.1%. NATO Office of the Gender Advisor, *Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations 2014* (Brussels: NATO, 2016), 44, 119, and 124.

and a common command chain all contribute to ensuring that the three states carry out their daily tasks in a broadly similar way and build cohesion across the Battalion. Third, because there is no formal process for transferring knowledge. Several peacekeepers stated that they would have appreciated the opportunity to hear more from their counterparts, both as regards the operation, but also as regards national culture and national security concerns and policies. Those in leadership positions would also benefit from a better understanding of their counterparts' organisations and working processes.

Nonetheless, some organised transfer of knowledge has taken place, for example the Estonian pre-deployment training programme relied on the Finns to identify UNIFIL's mission specific tasks, while Estonia has been able to draw on its Afghanistan and Iraq experience to teach the Finns counter-IED techniques and patrol debriefing procedures (one Estonian decision maker argued that it was only a matter of time before IEDs were used against UNIFIL). Further, simply by sharing an operating environment, the three contingents become familiar with each other's equipment, procedures and national caveats. This 'learning by osmosis' was much appreciated in all three contingents, and is believed to be relevant to other contexts such as the EU battlegroups.

Peacekeepers believed that cooperation between the three contingents is good; certainly, there are no issues or differences that

get in the way of the operation. Interviewees noted that the peacekeeping skills of diplomacy and understanding are also relevant to dealing with coalition partners. They also suggested that cultural awareness training in the pre-deployment phase should be enhanced with an aim of developing a better understanding of battalion partners.

#### 2.5.4 THE BENEFITS

Peacekeepers believed that their participation in the UNIFIL mission brought direct career benefits and personal benefits. In addition to the broad idea of an interesting and challenging life experience, the personal benefits identified were largely in the form of skills development – cultural awareness, communication (in particular with other nations), diplomacy, English language skills, people skills, patience, leadership and mentorship – and also specific military skills, such as interoperability and peacekeeping itself. Some interviewees noted that such skills were also transferable to civilian life.

The direct career benefits varied significantly by contingent. For Ireland, participation in overseas missions is an important requirement for career advancement; it would be unusual for an Irish soldier not to take part. Finnish professional soldiers also benefit in their careers from deployment, although the scarcity of operations in which Finland currently participates means there is competition for slots. For the Estonians, however, there are fewer direct career benefits. On the one hand, the Scouts are expected to go on



operations – UNIFIL is just another deployment; on the other hand, there are currently fewer operations meaning that a deployment is no longer a pre-condition for promotion.

## 2.6 ASSESSMENTS OF THE SECURITY SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON

There was broad consensus among interviewees in all locations that the situation in south Lebanon is stable. While the parties share an interest in keeping the situation calm – Hezbollah because it is engaged in Syria and Israel because Gaza and the West Bank are more pressing concerns – the presence of UNIFIL is nonetheless a major factor in that stability. It keeps a lid on a potentially explosive situation and encourages the parties to the conflict to behave cautiously. One interviewee observed, for example, that Israel will always return fire from south Lebanon, but will deliberately miss so as not to escalate the situation. Further, there was broad agreement that although stable, the situation is fragile. As evidence, interviewees pointed to the general situation in the Middle East and the influence in Lebanon of various regional actors, Lebanon's weak internal politics, the destabilising effect of the war in Syria, and the refugee situation in Lebanon.<sup>33</sup> There is always the chance that a small incident will lead to a larger conflict.

The war in Syria has impacted UNIFIL in several ways. Hezbollah is active there and thus not especially engaged in south Lebanon; UNIFIL peacekeepers reported that the funerals of Hezbollah fighters whose bodies have been returned from Syria are a frequent occurrence in their area of operations. The presence of the LAF, meanwhile, has reduced as its soldiers are deployed in greater numbers to the north and east of the country to ensure the integrity of the Lebanese/Syrian border. According to UNIFIL peacekeepers, South Lebanon has become something of a rest and recuperation posting for the LAF and even when LAF troops are present, they are less engaged than they were previously. UNIFIL is thus currently more visible. Decision makers in Finland

33. With a population of around 4 million, Lebanon has the largest per capita concentration of refugees in the world, including 1.2 million from Syria. UNHCR Global Focus, "Lebanon," UNHCR, <http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/2520?y=2016#year>.

noted that they had taken the opportunity to undertake some small development projects during this period, reinforcing the mission's positive image. Several interviewees, however, expressed concern that once the war in Syria was over was over, the return of battle-experienced Hezbollah fighters to an area of high unemployment would lead to a degradation of the security situation.

Interviewees also agreed that Lebanon has become dependent on UNIFIL, and while there is security, Lebanon has not been successful in developing its own institutions; there is thus no wider political progress towards a lasting solution. This is echoed by the UN Secretary General in his most recent report to the UN Security Council, in which he observes that,

"relative calm should not be mistaken for durable stability. Many of the root causes of the conflict are largely unaddressed. The long-term preventive potential of the resolution [UN Security Council Resolution 1701] requires us, actively and collectively, to seek to move forward with its implementation."<sup>34</sup>

Nonetheless, several interviewees noted that this stagnant stability is the best that can be expected and perhaps even the best approach at the moment. The UN at least provides a framework under which the parties can meet to exchange information and to discuss issues. A frozen conflict in south Lebanon is clearly preferable to a hot one.

## 3 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report has considered the role of small states in UN peacekeeping through the lens of the Estonian, Finnish and Irish contributions to UNIFIL. It has largely been based on a series of interviews with strategic-level decision makers in the three national capitals, and with Estonian, Finnish and Irish peacekeepers in south Lebanon.

Estonia, Finland and Ireland, all small states, each make substantial contributions to UN peacekeeping operations. In 2016, they are

34. United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)*, S/2016/572 (24 June 2016), 17.

respectively the fourth, second and first largest troop contributors per capita to UN missions. Their rationale for participating in these missions varies along a scale that might be labelled ‘transactional’ at one end and ‘values-based’ at the other. Irish decision makers tend

based on their previous experience, in all three cases UNIFIL itself was a target of opportunity, rather than a specific aim.

*Several interviewees expressed concern that once the war was over, the return of battle-experienced Hezbollah fighters would lead to a degradation of the security situation*

to see peacekeeping above all as an essential component of a values-based foreign policy, while Estonian decision makers look for more tangible returns for their participation including, ultimately, an expectation that their readiness to provide security will ensure that they themselves are not left alone in times of crisis. Finnish decision makers also explain their contribution largely in terms of values, but, much more than Ireland, also justify it on the grounds of building the capability of the Finnish Defence Forces. It is important to stress that this conclusion is an observation, not a judgement – the UN gets the peacekeepers it needs whatever the rationale of the troop contributing nation.

Estonia, Finland and Ireland serve under the aegis of the Finnish/Irish Battalion, in UNIFIL’s Western Sector. This is, in essence, an arrangement between Finland and Ireland that builds on previous successful cooperation in peacekeeping between the two states; Estonia’s participation became

possible when Finland offered to include an Estonian platoon as part of a Finnish company. In practice this means that there is little contact either between Estonian and Irish decision makers or Estonian and Irish peacekeepers. Nonetheless, all three countries benefit greatly from this arrangement, with most of the benefits – for example associating with like-minded partners, and cost and risk sharing – accruing at the strategic level. While decision makers often referred to the advantages this arrangement brings in military interoperability and the sharing of best practice, the reality is that day-to-day contacts between the three contingents in the field are somewhat limited. The Battalion is held together as much by the need to follow UN Standard Operating Procedures and Rules of Engagement as it is by interworking of the contingents. Nonetheless, cooperation between the three contingents is good, and there is nothing to suggest that their different cultures and languages, military

For all three countries, UNIFIL is their largest single contribution to peace support operations. All three have participated in the operation in the past with Finland and – especially – Ireland having long and substantial histories of deployments to south Lebanon. Their decisions to re-commit to UNIFIL, Ireland deploying again in 2011, Finland in 2012 and Estonia in 2015, came about because opportunities to participate in this mission surfaced at a time when there were few other international operations, but when the three states were actively seeking an engagement for their armed forces to support wider foreign policy aims. While there are many advantages to each of the three states to participating in UNIFIL rather than, say, a UN mission in Africa, and while Finland and Ireland have a strong affinity with and bring a great deal to the mission

*It is recommended that efforts are made to increase the proportion and visibility of female troops in each contingent and in CIMIC teams*

cultures and experiences, or styles of operating are in any way a hindrance to the conduct of the mission.

There are, however, several areas in which small improvements to the Battalion’s effectiveness might be made. First, many peacekeepers highlighted a need for more female soldiers to participate in the mission, as communication between male soldiers and

female locals is culturally difficult. The small percentage of women in the active armed forces of the three states makes it difficult to raise their numbers in UNIFIL; nonetheless, it is recommended that efforts are made to increase the proportion and visibility of female troops in each contingent and in CIMIC teams, for example by recruiting personnel from parts of the armed forces that are not normally considered for peacekeeping duties, or by implementing more flexible personnel policies such as job sharing schemes. Second, many peacekeepers noted that small CIMIC projects can make a large difference and suggested that more efforts should be made in CIMIC. Such efforts need not be expensive, indeed some may be cost-free. Others argued, on the other hand, that CIMIC projects to support long-term, sustainable development would do more to increase the mission's impact. It is recommended, therefore, that steps are taken to increase CIMIC efforts, perhaps drawing on national sources of funding, rather than UN sources, in order to avoid the UN's bureaucratic procedures in this area; and that CIMIC policies are reviewed with a view to identifying an appropriate balance between short- and longer-term efforts.

Third, while most personnel were highly appreciative of their pre-deployment training and the role it played in preparing them for the mission, there are two areas in which this training might be developed further. The most frequent adverse comment made by peacekeepers was that too little attention was paid in their training to cultural awareness, not only in preparing them to deal with the local population, but also in helping them to work with their contingent partners. It is recommended that pre-deployment training programmes should pay more attention to cultural awareness, as skills such as diplomacy, communication and conflict management are essential to effective peacekeeping. Further, it is recommended that greater efforts should be made to enhance understanding between

peacekeepers of the three states, both so that they can work better together and so they can develop a better appreciation of each other's security concerns and policies.

A bottom-up approach to sharing knowledge and understanding would not only be helpful in a practical context, for example in enhancing performance in UNIFIL or in the EU battlegroups, but also in promulgating the three states' wider security and foreign policy interests. Measures to implement this might include more involvement in each other's pre-deployment training, more common training in south Lebanon, and more formal information exchange events such as equipment familiarisation or training in areas in which one state has particular expertise. Finally, pre-deployment training tends to focus – necessarily – on dealing with crisis situations. The experience of peacekeepers, however, is that one of the largest challenges in UNIFIL is dealing with the unchanging routine of the deployment. This is personally de-motivating, erodes military skills and may lead to complacency, risking the security of personnel. It is recommended, therefore, that more effort should be put into managing expectations about the reality of a UNIFIL deployment in pre-deployment training. Consideration should also be given to encouraging individual soldiers to set personal development goals to be achieved during a rotation, and organisations such as the staff colleges of the three states drafted in to assist in formulating and supporting such goals.

Fourth, it is recommended that a formal lesson learning process is instituted. While lessons learned exercises do take place, especially at lower levels such as within a company post-deployment, there does not appear to be a higher level process for identifying the strengths, weaknesses, successes and failures of each rotation. There is certainly no such exercise involving all three states, nor has the UN undertaken a substantive and critical appraisal of the UNIFIL mission. It is recommended that representatives from the three capitals and the field should gather at the end of each rotation with a view to identifying lessons. This will not only have practical

*One of the largest challenges in UNIFIL is dealing with the unchanging routine of the deployment*

benefits for successive rotations, but will also enhance cooperation and contact between the three states on a subject of common interest. The results should also be offered to the UN.

UNIFIL is one of the UN's oldest missions. The parties have learned to live with the situation in south Lebanon and, in the continuing absence of any wider political peace efforts, a lasting solution to the hostilities is unlikely to be found. This is a frozen conflict – which is perhaps the best that can be expected at present. Nonetheless, south Lebanon is stable even if that stability is somewhat fragile. This stability is in large part due to UNIFIL's presence. Peacekeepers from Estonia, Finland and Ireland are able to make a difference in this complex environment and thus support the implementation of their countries' foreign and security policy goals.

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# ANNEX A: EUROPEAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO UN PEACEKEEPING

## EUROPE

The average troop contributions made by European states to UN peacekeeping operations, for each month from January to July 2016 are shown in Figure A-1 and (in the form of a map) in Figure A-2.

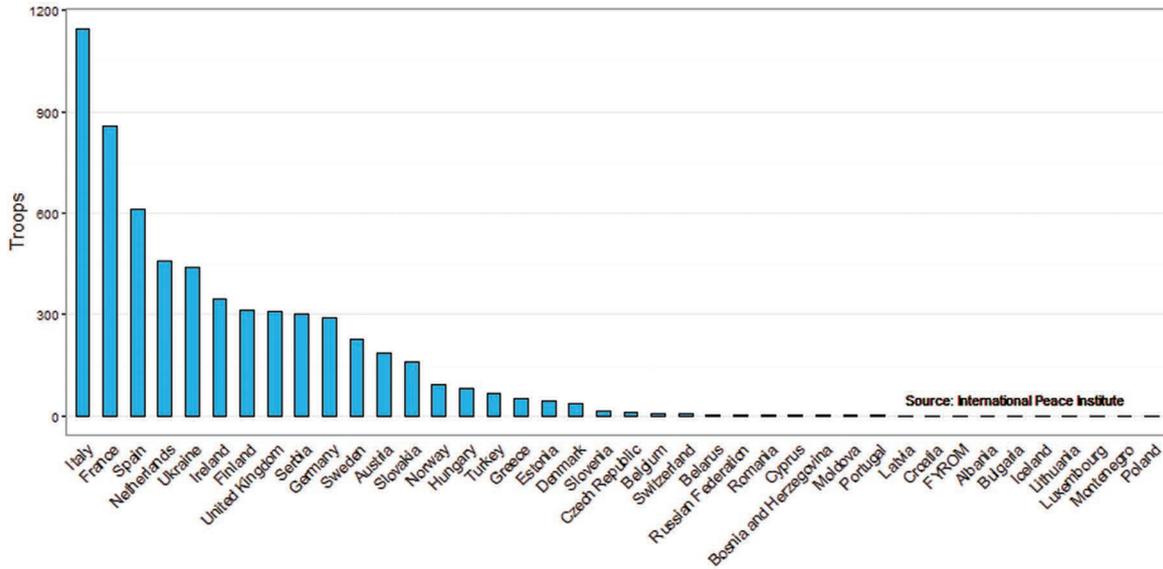


Figure A-1. Average Troop Contributions to UN Peacekeeping Operations, January to July 2016

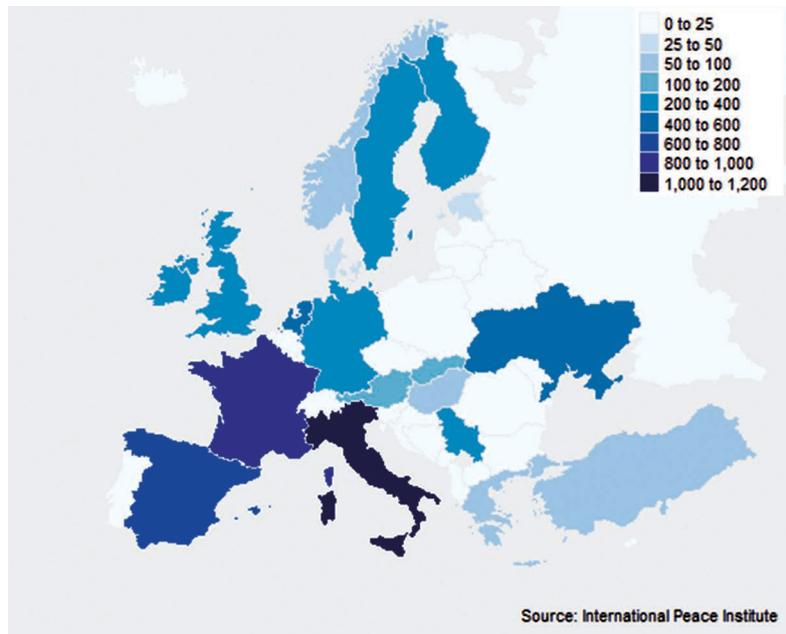


Figure A-2. Average Troop Contributions to UN Peacekeeping Operations, January to July 2016

The average per capita troop contributions made by European states to UN peacekeeping operations, for each month from January to July 2016 are shown in Figure A-3 and in Figure A-4.

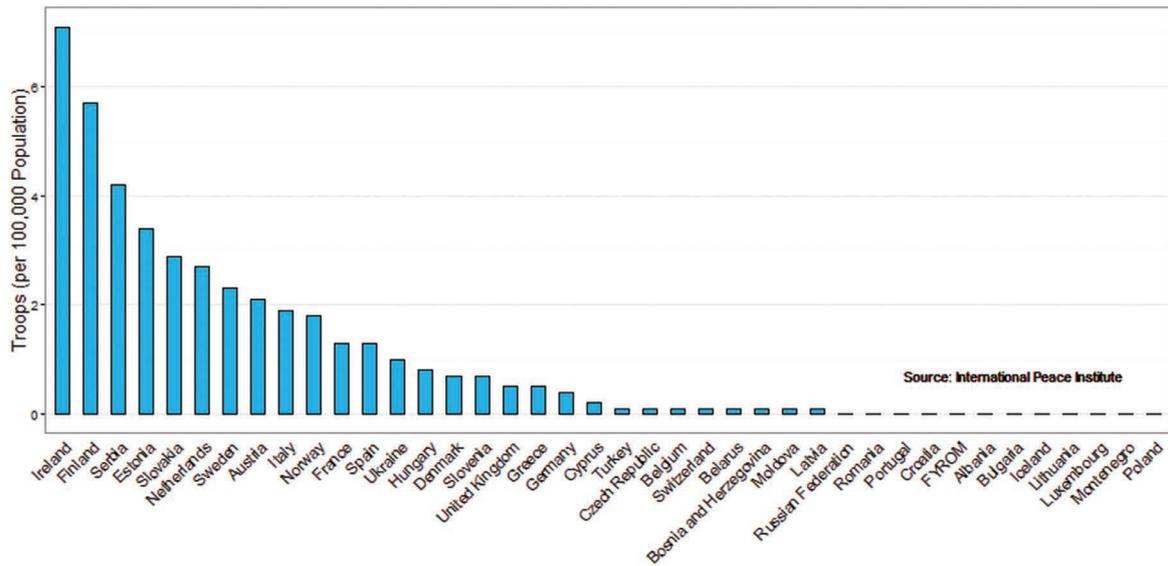


Figure A-3. Average Troop Contributions Per Capita to UN Peacekeeping Operations, January to July 2016

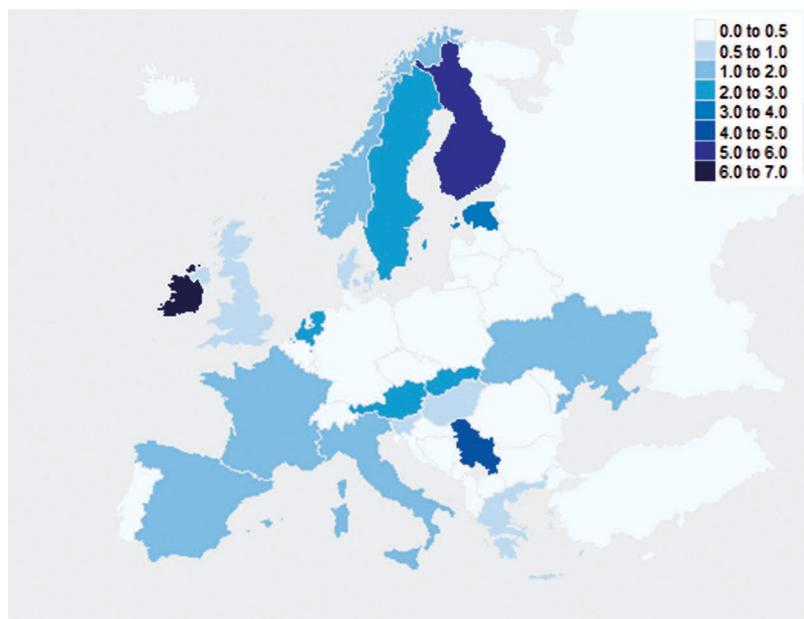


Figure A-4. Average Troop Contributions Per Capita to UN Peacekeeping Operations, January to July 2016

## ESTONIA, FINLAND AND IRELAND

The Estonian, Finnish and Irish troop contributions to UN missions, 1990 – present, are shown in Figure A-5.

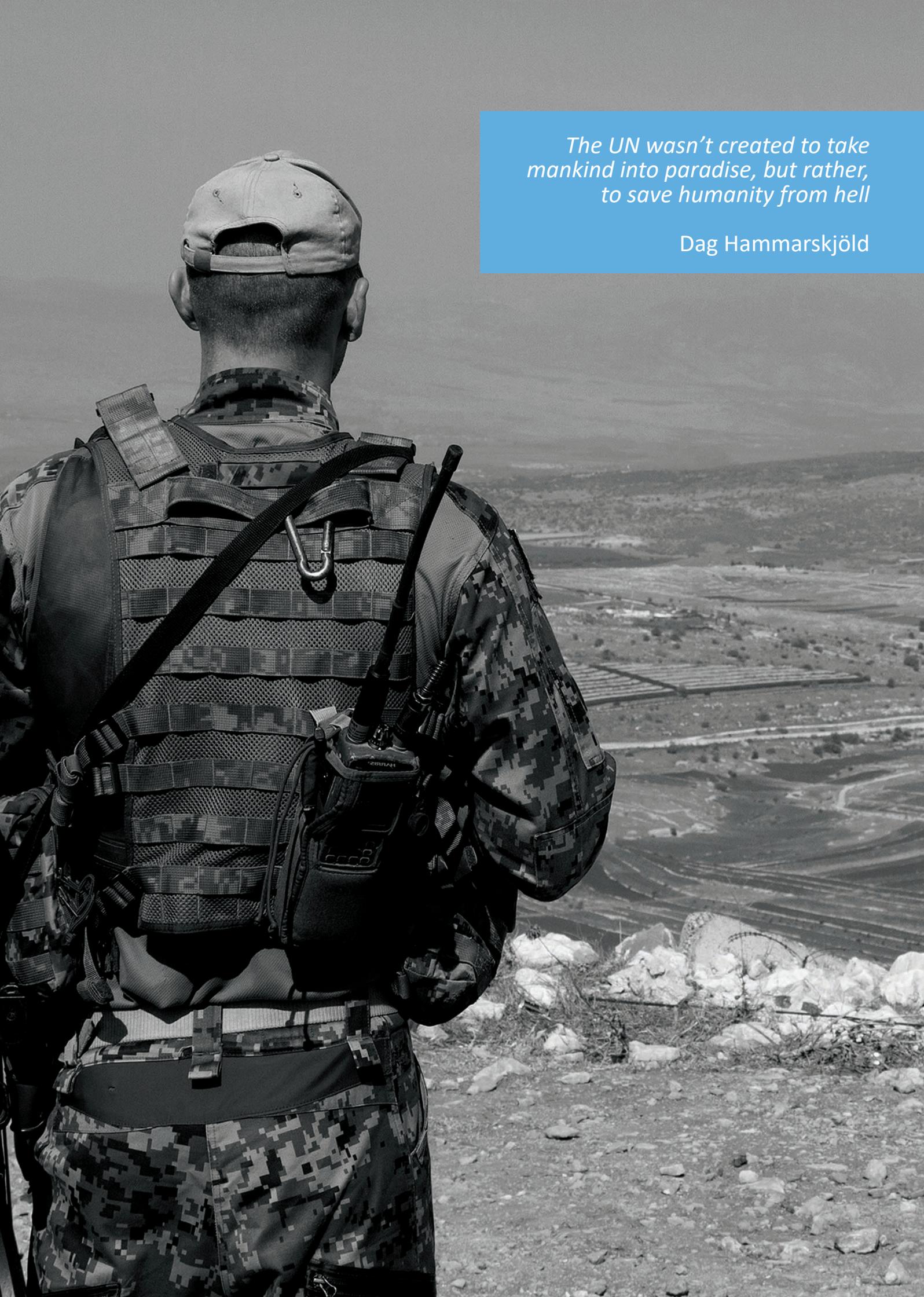


Figure A-5. Estonian Finnish and Irish Contributions to UN Missions, 1990 - Present

The monthly average Estonian, Finnish and Irish total contributions to UN missions (troops, observers and civilians), for January to July 2016, are shown, by mission, in Table A-1.

Mission	Estonia	Finland	Ireland
MINURSO	-	-	3
MINUSMA	5	4	-
MONUSCO	-	-	4
UNAMA	-	1	-
UNDOF	-	2	141
UNFICYP	-	-	12
UNIFIL	38	308	200
UNMOGIP	-	6	-
UNOCI	-	-	2
UNSOM	-	2	-
UNTSO	4	18	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>374</b>

Table A-1. Total Contributions to UN Missions. Monthly Averages, January to July 2016. Source: International Peace Institute



*The UN wasn't created to take  
mankind into paradise, but rather,  
to save humanity from hell*

Dag Hammarskjöld

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