



# Cabinet National Security and External Relations Committee

## Minute of Decision

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### Deployment to United Nations Mission in South Sudan

Portfolios                    Foreign Affairs / Defence

On 20 February 2018, the Cabinet National Security and External Relations Committee:

- 1        **noted** that the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is a high profile and challenging peacekeeping mission that has played an important role in stemming the conflict and humanitarian suffering in South Sudan;
- 2        **noted** that New Zealand currently has four New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) personnel deployed to UNMISS, with a mandate until November 2018;
- 3        **noted** that the United Nations (UN) have requested that the NZDF deploy a Brigadier (or equivalent rank) to the role of Chief of Staff in UNMISS Headquarters in South Sudan;
- 4        **noted** that a positive response to the UN's request would be well received by the UN and key defence partners, and make a small increase to the New Zealand contribution to UN peacekeeping operations;

5        [REDACTED] s6(a), s6(b)(ii)

- 6        **noted** the volatile nature of the security situation in South Sudan, and that the operational risk is mitigated through continual monitoring of operational risk, NZDF force preparation, and UN force protection measures;
- 7        **approved** the deployment of an NZDF officer at Brigadier level to the Chief of Staff role in UNMISS for one year, from May 2018;

### Financial implications

- 8        **noted** that the total estimated cost of the deployment is assessed as \$0.321 million;
- 9        **noted** that there is a shortfall of \$0.054 million in 2017/18 and \$0.267 million in 2018/19 that is not able to be met within existing baselines;

- 10 **approved** the following changes to appropriations to give effect to the policy decision in paragraph 7 above, with a corresponding impact on the operating balance:

	NZ \$m – increase / (decrease)				
	2017/18	2018/19	2018/20	2020/21	2021/22 & out-years
<b>Vote Defence Force Minister of Defence</b>					
<b>Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure</b> Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests MCA	0.054	0.267	-	-	-
<b>Departmental Output Expense:</b> Military Operations in Support of a Rules-Based International Order (funded by revenue Crown)					

- 11 **agreed** that the additional expenses required in 2017/18 and 2018/19 under paragraph 10 above be a charge against the tagged Operating Contingency established as part of Budget 2017 for “Military Operations in Support of a Rules-based International Order”;
- 12 **agreed** that the change to appropriations for 2017/18 above be included in the 2017/18 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from Imprest Supply;
- 13 **noted** that the tagged contingency established as part of Budget 2017 for “Military Operations in Support of a Rules-based International Order” is set to expire on 1 February 2018;
- 14 **agreed** to extend the expiry of this tagged contingency to June 2019.

Janine Harvey  
Committee Secretary

**Present:**

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern  
Rt Hon Winston Peters (Chair)  
Hon Kelvin Davis  
Hon David Parker  
Hon Ron Mark

**Officials present from:**

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister  
Officials Committee for NSE

**Hard-copy distribution:**

Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Minister of Defence

Office of the Minister of Defence  
Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Chair

Cabinet Business Committee

## **DEPLOYMENT TO UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SOUTH SUDAN**

### **Proposal**

1. That Cabinet approve the deployment of a New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) officer to the Chief of Staff role in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for one year from May 2018. The United Nations (UN) has requested a response from New Zealand by early February 2018.

### **Executive Summary**

2. On 11 November 2017 the UN requested that New Zealand provide a Brigadier (or equivalent rank) to fill the role of Chief of Staff in UNMISS Headquarters in Juba, South Sudan, for one year commencing May 2018. UNMISS is led by New Zealander David Shearer as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and New Zealand currently has four NZDF personnel deployed to the Mission (see the map in Annex A). The mandate for this deployment expires in November 2018.

3. UNMISS, the UN's most recently established peacekeeping mission (in 2011) operates under difficult circumstances as South Sudan continues to be challenged by ethnic violence, civil war and humanitarian crisis. While South Sudan has achieved some degree of stability in the capital Juba, elsewhere the conflict continues to cause concern and the Mission's focus on civilian protection remains critical.

4. New Zealand's participation in UNMISS contributes to our collective security responsibilities, addresses humanitarian concerns, and provides a small but tangible demonstration of New Zealand's commitment to peace and security in Africa. A positive response to the UN's request would be well received by the UN and key defence partners that contribute to UNMISS, [REDACTED] s6(a), s6(b)(i)

[REDACTED]. It would also be another opportunity to make a small increase to our overall UN peacekeeping contribution.

5. Officials advised Ministers previously, particularly in late 2016, of concerns regarding UNMISS's ability to protect personnel serving in the Mission. These protections have been hampered [REDACTED] s6(a), the hostile actions of armed groups in the country, and [REDACTED] s6(a), s6(b)(ii) [REDACTED]. However, reviews and remedial actions by both the UN and the NZDF (in reference to the New Zealand contribution) have led to improvements which were sufficient to enable New Zealand to extend its UNMISS deployment mandate to November 2018.

## **Background**

### *South Sudan Political Context*

6. South Sudan gained independence from Sudan in 2011 following two prolonged periods of civil war (1955-1972 and 1983-2005) over resource disputes, the role of religion in the state, and self-determination. Approximately 2.5 million people—mostly civilians—died. Independence did not bring an end to the conflict in South Sudan. Friction between Sudan and South Sudan has endured, and mutual distrust between the South Sudanese Government and opposition factions has been the source of ongoing instability.

7. The situation deteriorated in 2013, when President Salvar Kiir dismissed his Cabinet before accusing Vice President Riek Machar of plotting a coup, fuelling clashes between their supporters. This quickly escalated into ethnic violence involving numerous tribal militia groups, displacing millions of civilians and creating a humanitarian and security crisis. After several abortive attempts at brokering peace, the parties to the conflict signed an Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan in 2015. Attempts to form a unity government failed, and political tensions culminated in an outbreak of hostilities in the capital Juba in July 2016 that claimed more than 300 lives, including two UN peacekeepers. Machar has since fled the country resulting in the splintering of the opposition.

8. A degree of stability in Juba has since been established, but violence in South Sudan is ongoing with a state of emergency declared in several states, and tensions between President Kiir and the opposition remaining high. While President Kiir declared a ceasefire and announced a National Dialogue in May 2017, ostensibly aimed at building political unity and applying the peace agreement, implementation has been slow. Meanwhile, the humanitarian crisis is worsening amid a famine in the north and sustained violence and insecurity.

9. In December 2017, the parties to the civil war signed an Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access. This Agreement pledges that from 24 December 2017 all parties will end hostilities, freeze military positions, and release political detainees, abducted women and children and prisoners of war. Notably, the Agreement also contains proposed accountability measures, including sanctions and travel bans. However, these will likely prove difficult to implement including through the United Nations Security Council.

10. While the 2017 Agreement demonstrates a welcome intent by both parties for a cessation of the conflict, compliance with similar agreements in the past has been short-lived. This iteration will require comprehensive monitoring and support by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the wider international community. We will continue monitoring changes to the security environment as the implementation processes unfold [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED].

*UNMISS Mandate and New Zealand's Contribution*

11. UNMISS was established in 2011 to provide governance and peacebuilding support to the newly independent country. This succeeded the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) in place from 2005-2011, which sought to establish peace between the Government of Sudan and the independence movement in the south, until the founding of South Sudan in late 2011. After the 2013 political crisis in Juba, involving the power struggle between President Kiir and his former Vice-President Machar, the UN responded by expanding the UNMISS mandate. The Mission's focus was shifted from mainly peacebuilding activities to include: protecting civilians; facilitating humanitarian assistance; monitoring and reporting on human rights; preventing further intercommunal violence; and (after 2015) supporting the implementation of the 2014 cessation of hostilities agreement.

12. UNMISS comprises more than 12,000 peacekeepers, police, security and civilian personnel from at least 60 countries. New Zealand has contributed to UNMISS since its establishment in 2011 and currently has four NZDF officers deployed to the Mission. The NZDF provides a Military Advisor to the Special Representative of the Secretary General in the capital Juba; the Deputy Planning role, also in Juba; and two Military Liaison Officers who are deployed to Yambio and Malakal, in the south and north of the country respectively. The mandate for the commitment of these NZDF personnel extends to November 2018. We will look at the scope of the Mission in its totality and return to Cabinet for direction later in the year.

13. UNMISS has faced difficulties in terms of its relationship with the Government of South Sudan, [REDACTED] s6(a)

[REDACTED]. The Mission's shortcomings were evidenced in its response to the July 2016 outbreak of violence and the internal UN inquiry after the event. There has been recognition from the United Nations Security Council, and from key partners [REDACTED] s6(a), s6(b)(i) [REDACTED], that UNMISS's performance has demonstrably improved under the leadership of David Shearer, and that the Mission has played an important role in stemming the conflict and humanitarian suffering.

**UNMISS Chief of Staff Request**

14. The UN has invited New Zealand to fill the Chief of Staff role [REDACTED] s6(b)(ii)

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(g)(i)  
[REDACTED] The request reflects the UN's recognition of the quality and influence of the personnel New Zealand provides across UN missions.

15. The Chief of Staff occupies a position of significant influence within the Mission. In recent years the United Kingdom has provided the Chief of Staff [REDACTED] s6(b)(i)

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] s6(a), s6(b)(ii), s6(d)  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## **Safety, Security and Threat Assessment**

16. The security situation in South Sudan remains fragile, with continued low-level violence across the country. Juba is effectively a stronghold for the Government-aligned Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which provides a degree of stability for the capital's security environment. The presence of opposition forces in Juba is currently limited.

17. [REDACTED] s6(a) [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

18. Operational risk and in-theatre force protection in South Sudan are managed by the UN Mission. [REDACTED] s6(a), s6(d)  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

19. The Cabinet decision in November 2016 to renew the mandate for our four-person contribution to UNMISS considered this security environment. The decision proceeded based on a review and remediation of the Mission's security and response measures by both the NZDF and the UN. These changes included [REDACTED] s6(a), s6(b)(i)  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Given this remedial action and continued scrutiny, the Chief of Defence Force is satisfied that risks to personnel can be sufficiently mitigated.

20. The operational threat level in South Sudan is continually monitored by the NZDF, and should the security situation deteriorate significantly, the Chief of the Defence Force, in consultation with the Minister of Defence, would take what measures are appropriate to ensure the security of NZDF personnel, including the option of their withdrawal.

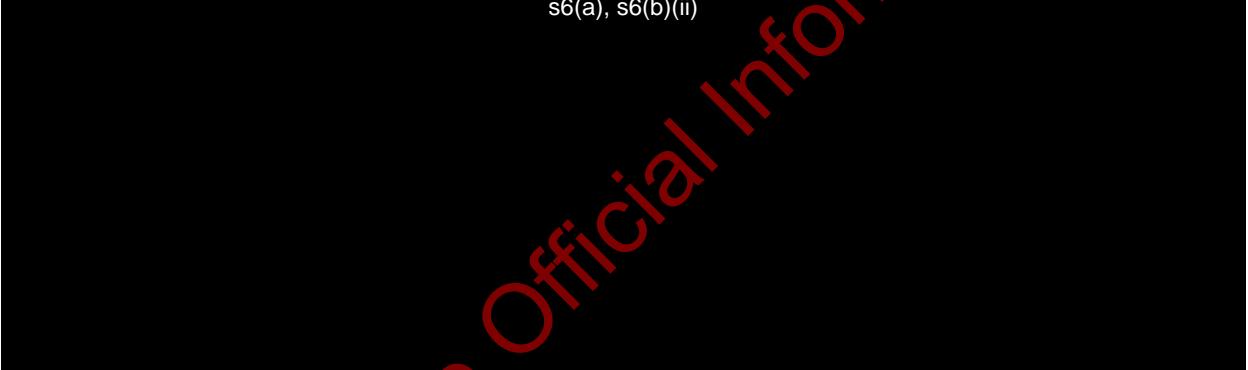
## **Benefits to New Zealand**

21. New Zealand currently contributes eleven personnel to two UN peacekeeping operations, UNMISS and United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation in the Middle East (UNTSO). In December 2017 Cabinet approved the deployment of an NZDF Colonel to an intelligence leadership role in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) for one year from early March 2018. New Zealand is currently ranked 99<sup>th</sup> out of the 125 troop and/or police contributing nations to UN peacekeeping operations in terms of the number of personnel deployed. While only one person, the UNMISS Chief of Staff is a key and senior role that will make a small but meaningful increase to our overall UN peacekeeping contribution.

22. New Zealand's deployment to UNMISS fits with New Zealand's foreign policy strategy in Africa. This strategy seeks to sustain and build on the increased tempo of engagement fostered by New Zealand's United Nations Security Council campaign and 2015-2016 term, and the growth of our relationships, expertise, and representation in the region. New Zealand's defence engagement, including active contribution to African security through peacekeeping, complements our growing political and economic relationships with key partners by demonstrating that we are an engaged and supportive international actor.

23. The security environment in South Sudan is a constant focal point of the United Nations and African Union Headquarters, and it is consistently featured in global media. As such, UNMISS is one of the most high-profile UN peacekeeping missions, and one of the most challenging. Additional support to UNMISS would build on the improvements that SRSG Shearer has made in the Mission. It would also reinforce New Zealand's positive profile in UNMISS and within the UN more broadly. The deployment would be appreciated by key troop-contributing nations, and New Zealand's key defence partners. The United Kingdom and United States have invested significantly in UNMISS in recent years, and in December 2017 Samoa deployed six police officers to the Mission for a 12-month term.

s6(a), s6(b)(ii)



### **Consultation**

25. This paper was prepared by the Ministry of Defence, the New Zealand Defence Force, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Treasury and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (Policy Advisory Group) have been consulted.

### **Financial Implications**

26. The estimated cost of the deployment is \$0.321M.

27. There is a shortfall in funding available from current appropriations of \$0.321M because funding for *Vote Defence Force: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests* is fully committed for 2017/18 and 2018/19 as a result of existing mandated missions.<sup>1</sup>

28. A tagged contingency was established at Budget 2017 to provide a funding source for future deployments to be approved by Cabinet under Output Expense *Military Operations in*

<sup>1</sup> The mandated missions include Iraq, [REDACTED] s6(a) [REDACTED] the wider Middle East region, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation.

*Support of a Rules-based International Order.* The additional funding required of \$0.321M is proposed to be charged against this tagged Operating Contingency for *Military Operations in Support of a Rules-based International Order*. The tagged contingency is set to expire in February 2018, and it is recommended that this is extended to June 2019. This would reduce the amount of operating funding that Defence would seek at Budget 2018.

29. The following table sets out the expenditure and funding arrangements for this deployment:

Vote Defence Force	NZ \$million				
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Total
Estimated cost of proposed deployment	0.054	0.267	-	-	0.321
Total funded from existing appropriation: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests	-	-	-	-	-
Additional Funding Required	0.054	0.267	-	-	0.321

30. The following table sets out the impact for this deployment on the tagged contingency established as part of Budget 2017 for *Military Operations in Support of a Rules-based International Order*.

Vote Defence Force	NZ \$million				
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Total
<b>Balance of tagged Operating Contingency</b>	<b>2.420</b>	<b>20.000</b>	<b>20.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>42.420</b>
Previously approved deployments	(2.809)	(4.283)	0.000	0.000	(7.092)
Funding for mission to Mali (MINUSMA)	(0.154)	(0.301)	0.000	0.000	(0.455)
Funding for this mission	(0.054)	(0.267)	0.000	0.000	(0.321)
<b>Remaining tagged Operating Contingency balance</b>	<b>(0.597)</b>	<b>15.149</b>	<b>20.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>34.552</b>

### Publicity

31. If Cabinet approves the deployment, the Minister of Defence and Minister of Foreign Affairs will issue a joint press release.

32. The United Nations and our partners will be informed separately through normal diplomatic and military channels. The UN initially requested a response by 2 February 2018 and is seeking our decision as soon as possible.

**Recommendations:**

33. We recommend that Cabinet:

- a. **note** that the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is a high profile and challenging peacekeeping mission that has played an important role in stemming the conflict and humanitarian suffering in South Sudan;
- b. **note** that New Zealand currently has four New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) personnel deployed to UNMISS, with a mandate until November 2018;
- c. **note** that the United Nations (UN) have requested that the NZDF deploy a Brigadier (or equivalent rank) to the role of Chief of Staff in UNMISS Headquarters in South Sudan;
- d. **note** that a positive response to the UN's request would be well received by the UN and key defence partners, and make a small increase to the New Zealand contribution to UN peacekeeping operations;
- e. [REDACTED] s6(a), s6(b)(ii)  
[REDACTED]
- f. **note** the volatile nature of the security situation in South Sudan, and that the operational risk is mitigated through continual monitoring of operational risk, NZDF force preparation, and UN force protection measures;
- g. **approve** the deployment of an NZDF officer at Brigadier level to the Chief of Staff role in UNMISS for one year from May 2018;
- h. **note** that the total estimated cost of the deployment is assessed as \$0.321M;
- i. **note** that there is a shortfall of \$0.054M in 2017/18 and \$0.267M in 2018/19 that is not able to be met within existing baselines;
- j. **approve** the following changes to appropriations to give effect to the policy decision in recommendation (g) above with a corresponding impact on the operating balance;

	NZ \$m – increase / (decrease)				
	2017/18	2018/19	2018/20	2020/21	2021/22 & out-years
Vote Defence Force Minister of Defence					
<b>Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure</b>  Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests MCA  <b>Departmental Output Expense:</b> Military Operations in Support of a Rules-Based International Order  (funded by revenue Crown)	0.054	0.267	-	-	-

- k. **agree** that the additional expenses required in 2017/18 and 2018/19 under recommendation (i) above be a charge against the tagged Operating Contingency established as part of Budget 17 for *Military Operations in Support of a Rules-based International Order*;
- l. **agree** that the proposed change to appropriations for 2017/18 above be included in the 2017/18 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from Imprest Supply.
- m. **note** that the tagged contingency established as part of Budget 17 for *Military Operations in Support of a Rules-based International Order* is set to expire on 1 February 2018; and
- n. **agree** to extend the expiry of this tagged contingency to June 2019.

Hon Ron Mark  
**MINISTER OF DEFENCE**

Rt Hon Winston Peters  
**MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Annex A: Map of New Zealand Deployed Personnel in South Sudan**

