

## HON JUDITH COLLINS KC, MINISTER OF DEFENCE

### STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT OF FUTURE PEACE SUPPORT OPTIONS FOR THE NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE

August 2024

This publication provides documents on Cabinet's 7 May decision of the New Zealand Defence Force deployments in Egypt (Multinational Force and Observers), South Sudan (United Nations Mission in South Sudan), and in the Lebanon/Israel/Syria (United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation) border regions. The deployments expire in September 2024 and require Cabinet decisions for renewal.

The pack comprises the following documents:

- the original Cabinet minute (no redactions required): *Strategic Assessment of Future Peace Support Options for the New Zealand Defence Force* [FPS-24-MIN-0010]
- the redacted Cabinet paper: *Strategic Assessment of Future Peace Support Options for the New Zealand Defence Force* [FPS-24-SUB-0010]

This pack has been released on the Ministry of Defence website, available at: <https://defence.govt.nz/publications/publications/strategic-assessment-of-future-peace-support-options-for-the-new-zealand-defence-force/>

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# Cabinet Foreign Policy and National Security Committee

## Minute of Decision

*This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.*

### Strategic Assessment of Future Peace Support Options for the New Zealand Defence Force

**Portfolios** Foreign Affairs / Defence

On 7 May 2024, the Cabinet Foreign Policy and National Security Committee:

- 1 **noted** that the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) peace support deployments in Egypt (Multinational Force and Observers), South Sudan (United Nations Mission in South Sudan) and in the Lebanon/Israel/Syria border regions (United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation) expire in September 2024 and require Cabinet decisions on renewal in the second quarter of 2024;
- 2 **noted** that peace support activities align with defence policy and strategy settings, and with the Government's priorities of working alongside likeminded partners in support of the international rules-based system;
- 3 **noted** that the range of potential peace support deployments available globally to the NZDF, and the existing deployments up for renewal in September 2024, deliver greater strategic return on investment than other potential alternatives;
- 4 **noted** that the companion papers submitted for consideration by the Cabinet Foreign Policy and National Security Committee on Egypt [FPS-24-SUB-0007], South Sudan [FPS-24-SUB-0006], and in the Lebanon/Israel/Syria border regions [FPS-24-SUB-0008], outline the costs, risks, and implications of renewing the mandates for New Zealand's contribution to these missions.

Jenny Vickers  
Committee Secretary

**Present:**

Rt Hon Christopher Luxon  
Rt Hon Winston Peters (Chair)  
Hon David Seymour  
Hon Nicola Willis  
Hon Judith Collins  
Hon Mark Mitchell  
Hon Todd McClay

**Officials present from:**

Office of the Prime Minister  
Office of the Chair of FPS  
Officials Committee for FPS  
New Zealand Defence Force  
Ministry of Defence

Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Office of the Minister of Defence

Chair, Foreign Policy and National Security Committee

## **STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT OF FUTURE PEACE SUPPORT OPTIONS FOR THE NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE**

### **Proposal**

1. To provide Cabinet with an overview of available peace support deployment opportunities, as a covering note to three Cabinet papers seeking to renew the New Zealand Defence Force's (NZDF) existing deployment mandates for peace support operations in the Middle East and Africa.

### **Relation to Government Priorities**

2. This strategic assessment, and the individual peacekeeping deployment mandates that this assessment supports, are in line with the Cabinet Paper *Resetting New Zealand's Foreign Policy* [CAB-24-MIN-0033], with the National Security Strategy 2023-2028, and with defence strategy and policy settings. These highlight the importance of working collectively with likeminded partners to defend and advance core New Zealand values and freedoms, including the international rules-based system.

### **Executive Summary**

3. Officials have undertaken an assessment of the range of peace support deployments globally that New Zealand could contribute to. That assessment concludes that New Zealand's interests would best be supported by a continuation of New Zealand's contributions to the three existing New Zealand peace support deployments in the Middle East and Africa, rather than by seeking to enter new peace support missions.

4. Of the options available, the existing combination of deployments delivers the best strategic return on investment, by ensuring meaningful contributions to a varied set of global peace support challenges across a geographic area; and ensuring valuable opportunities to develop requisite NZDF skills and experience.

5. This paper is a covering note for the attached papers seeking Cabinet consideration of potential mandate renewals for NZDF's contribution to peace support operations in the Middle East and Africa: the Multinational Force and Observers mission in Egypt (MFO), the United Nations (UN) Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the UN Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) in the Lebanon/Israel/Syria border regions.

6. Detailed opportunities, costs, risks and implications of MFO, UNTSO and UNMISS are considered separately in the attached three Cabinet papers.

### **Context**

#### *Peace support activities*

7. Peace support deployments are a critical element of New Zealand's contribution to the international rules-based system, and offer additional benefits for New Zealand's interests, including providing opportunities to counter security challenges and to strengthen partnerships with likeminded partners.

8. Peace support activities align with defence strategy and policy settings, particularly:

- 8.1. New Zealand's interest in a strong and effective rules-based international system; and
  - 8.2. the objective to contribute globally to collective security efforts that protect and promote New Zealand's other interests and values.
9. There are a range of ways the NZDF can, and does, contribute to global peace support activities, for example:
- 9.1. NZDF deployments to peace support operations;
  - 9.2. Training and capacity building, and funding for these, for example:
    - 9.2.1. Experienced peace support nations sharing knowledge with emerging peacekeeping nations (for example, the NZDF has provided training to Fiji, Tonga and Papua New Guinea).
    - 9.2.2. Contributions to the UN Triangular Partnership Programme (TPP) which brings together a range of countries as trainers or trainees to enhance peacekeeper capabilities.
    - 9.2.3. Supporting the UN's Women, Peace & Security initiative, for example through the Pacific Defence Gender Network.
10. This paper focuses on the strategic assessment of NZDF peace support deployment options. NZDF deployments carry inherent risk and are more resource intensive than other options outlined above but have a unique and important role to play in maintaining New Zealand's credibility as a serious contributor to peace support efforts and giving a strong demonstration of our support for the international rules-based system. Deployments also have the benefit of building our understanding and awareness of strategic and operating environments and making sure our military capability remains effective as a result of the experience gained.

11. In the Middle East and Africa, the NZDF currently contributes to peace support operations with the Multinational Force and Observers mission in Egypt (MFO), the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the UN Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) on the Lebanon/Israel/Syria border. The Cabinet mandates for these missions all expire in September 2024 requiring decisions in May 2024 to allow sufficient time to notify and complete a withdrawal if Cabinet chooses that option. Three accompanying Cabinet papers set out mandate renewal recommendations for these deployments.

### **Analysis of peace support deployment options**

12. Defence officials have undertaken a comparative analysis of the peace support operations around the world to which New Zealand is contributing, or could potentially contribute. An analysis of these against defence policy and strategy settings is attached at the Annex. The criteria used in assessing each option are:

Does the deployment:

- 12.1. contribute to global activities that reinforce the international rules-based system;
- 12.2. build situational awareness of key operational theatres, and help identify and understand state and non-state actions that threaten New Zealand's interests;
- 12.3. enhance New Zealand's influence and freedom of action in our region;
- 12.4. prevent actions counter to New Zealand's interests;
- 12.5. see the NZDF collaborate with key partners to address shared security challenges;

- 12.6. partner in the Pacific or with Pacific Island countries; and
- 12.7. improve the effectiveness of our combat and other military capabilities.

*Deployments assessed as delivering strongly against New Zealand's interests*

13. The assessment process confirms that New Zealand's current deployments to the UN Command and UN Military Armistice Commission (UNC/UNCMAC) on the Korean Peninsula, and the MFO mission in Egypt deliver most strongly against these criteria.

14. These deployments offer considerable opportunities to collaborate with likeminded security partners [redacted] s6(a) [redacted] Both prevent actions counter to New Zealand interests (respectively, protecting against instability on the Korean Peninsula; and countering a potential source of violent extremism in the Middle East). These deployments also provide a valuable opportunity for the NZDF to develop relevant and needed skills and experience.

*Deployments assessed as delivering moderately against New Zealand's interests*

15. A second tier of prospective and current peace support missions would contribute strongly, or moderately strongly, against the identified criteria. This tier of deployments provide good opportunities for collaboration with likeminded partners [redacted] s9(2)(g)(i) [redacted]

[redacted] New Zealand contributes to two of these missions: UNTSO (in the Lebanon/Israel/Syria border regions) and UNMISS (in South Sudan). This tier also includes the following missions which the NZDF is not involved in: the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), focused on the Golan Heights between Israel and Syria.

16. In this tier, UNMISS is alone, geographically, in providing the opportunity for New Zealand to contribute to African peace and security [redacted] s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i) [redacted]

[redacted] Each of the other missions is located in the Middle East region.

17. Finally, the peace support missions in this tier deliver strongly against the criteria to support the international rules-based system as all of these missions are UN-led efforts.

[redacted] s9(2)(g)(i) [redacted]

**Overarching assessment of best direction of effort**

18. There remains considerable value, as the strategic context facing New Zealand becomes more complex, in ensuring that New Zealand continues to contribute globally to collective security efforts, including peace support operations, which protect and promote New Zealand's interests and values.

19. At the same time, it is also important to ensure that, in light of the inherent risk and resource commitment for deployments, we maximise the return on our strategic interests from the deployment investments that we make.

20. For these reasons, officials recommend that New Zealand continue to sustain our existing peace support operations (to first and second tier missions MFO in Egypt, UNTSO on the Lebanon/Israel/Syria border and UNMISS in South Sudan, as well as UNC/UNCMAC on the Korean Peninsula).<sup>1</sup> This recommendation is offered because these deployments offer a credible contribution to peace and security challenges in the

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<sup>1</sup> The NZDF contribution to the UN Command/UN Military Armistice Commission on the Korean Peninsula is on a different mandate renewal schedule and therefore will be considered separately to the above in a subsequent Cabinet paper.

Middle East, Africa, and Asia; as well as ensuring that both UN-led and other peace support missions are supported to provide wide partnership benefits and ensure a credible contribution to supporting the international rules-based system.

21. Other UN missions (namely UNFICYP in Cyprus, UNIFIL in Lebanon, and UNDOF in Golan Heights) were assessed as moderately aligned with New Zealand's interests. However, officials assess that New Zealand's existing contribution to UNTSO in the Lebanon/Israel/Syria border region offers a credible contribution to this geostrategic area, and the three other missions would not offer any additional operational or experiential benefits to the NZDF.

22. s9(2)(g)(i)

23. On that basis, officials assess that there is not a case for changing or expanding our peace support deployment footprint beyond our existing contributions. However, if Ministers directed, officials could investigate the three other second tier missions (UNFICYP, UNIFIL and UNDOF) in greater detail.

#### **Attached Cabinet Papers**

24. Detailed opportunities, costs, risks and implications of MFO, UNTSO and UNMISS are considered separately in the three attached Cabinet papers, and advice on UNC/UNCMAC on the Korean Peninsula will follow in a later paper.

#### **Legal Considerations**

25. Legal considerations for each deployment are to be considered in their respective mandate renewal Cabinet papers attached.

#### **Consultation**

26. This paper was jointly prepared by the Ministry of Defence, the NZDF and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (National Security Group and Policy Advisory Group), the Government Communications Security Bureau, the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service and the Treasury were consulted.

## Recommendations

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence recommend that the Committee:

1. **note** that the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) peace support deployments in Egypt (Multinational Force and Observers), South Sudan (United Nations Mission in South Sudan) and in the Lebanon/Israel/Syria border regions (United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation) expire in September 2024 and require Cabinet decisions on renewal in Q2 2024;
2. **note** that peace support activities align with defence policy and strategy settings and with the government's priorities of working alongside likeminded partners in support of the international rules-based system;
3. **note** that of the range of potential peace support deployments available globally to the NZDF, the existing deployments up for renewal in September 2024, as noted in recommendation 1, deliver greater strategic return on investment than other potential alternatives; and
4. **consider** the three attached papers outlining the costs, risks and implications of renewing the mandates for New Zealand's contribution to these missions.

Authorised for lodgement

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

Hon Judith Collins KC  
**MINISTER OF DEFENCE**

## Annex

- A. Peace Support Options Strategic Analysis (based on Defence and Policy Settings)

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ANNEX A: Peace Support Options Strategic Analysis (based on Defence and Policy settings)

Key:	Fully meets the criteria	Partially meets the criteria	Doesn't meet the criteria
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<b>OUR DEFENCE STRATEGY</b>		Understand: Defence will have increased awareness of our strategic operating environments by maximising the use of defence capabilities and technologies			Partner: Defence will improve and enhance our partnerships within and beyond New Zealand to support collective security approaches to shared challenges, and maximise interoperability with security partners			Act: Defence is more ready and able to promote and protect New Zealand's interests by shaping our security environment with a credible, combat-capable, deployable force able to operate across the spectrum of operations (from humanitarian assistance through to combat)	
<b>OUTCOMES</b>	Existing deployment?	<i>Defence has a key role in proactively collecting, processing, and sharing information to build situational awareness of key operational theatres, and identifying and understanding state and non-state actions that threaten NZ's interests.</i>	<i>Collaborating more to address shared security challenges</i>	<i>Partnering in the Pacific</i>	<i>NZ's freedom of action and influence in our region is enhanced</i>	<i>Preventing actions counter to NZ's interests in denying opportunities to other actors, increasing our presence and providing assurance in the Pacific, and in security in our broader maritime domain</i>	<i>Improving the effectiveness of our combat and other military capabilities</i>	<i>Contributing to global activities that reinforce the international rules-based system</i>	<b>OVERALL SCORE</b>
<b>MISSION NAME</b>		<b>DELIVERY AGAINST DEFENCE'S POLICY AND STRATEGY SETTINGS:</b>							
UN Command/UN Command Military Armistice Commission <sup>1</sup> (Korean Peninsula)		Yes							
Multinational Force and Observers (Egypt)		Yes							
United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (Israel/Lebanon/Syria border)		Yes							
United Nations Mission in South Sudan		Yes							
United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (Israel/Syria border)		No							
United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon		No							

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s6(a)



United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus	No
United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara	No
United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo	No
United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic	No
United Nations Regional Service Centre in Entebbe	No
United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia	No
United Nations Mission in Kosovo	No
United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan	No
United Nations Mission to support the Hudaydah Agreement (Yemen)	No
North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Force in Kosovo	No

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European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia	No
European Union Force Bosnia and Herzegovina	No



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