



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

10 October 2025

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to update you on the financial status of United Nations peacekeeping operations and what it means for us all.

Our peacekeeping operations are facing an extremely difficult financial situation. The current liquidity crisis is the direct result of arrears and the non-payment of assessed contributions in full and on time. Over the past few years, we have actively engaged with Member States to find solutions to this growing challenge. As a result, the United Nations General Assembly in 2019 and 2022 approved some measures that have enabled us to deal with the operational impact of late or non-payments. However, while the level of peacekeeping budgets has been steadily declining, the outstanding contributions have increased significantly, especially in recent months. At the start of this peacekeeping budget cycle on 1 July 2025, arrears amounted to US\$2.066 billion. Our collections for the financial period may fall short by about US\$880 million, putting a further strain on our liquidity situation.

In addition to actively engaging with Member States, we introduced measures in 2024 to restrict spending and align it with cash inflows. Thanks to these measures, and your dedication and commitment, and the generosity of troop- and police-contributing countries, we have managed to carry on. The troop- and police-contributing countries are, in effect, financing the system, waiting many months and sometimes over a year for reimbursement of their personnel and equipment costs. This is unsustainable. The margin of manoeuvre gained from earlier liquidity measures approved by the General Assembly, as well as our own spending restrictions, is now exhausted. Despite recent positive news that a sizeable amount from a major contributor will be entirely available to distribute flexibly across the peacekeeping missions and to establish a reserve for the United Nations Support Office in Haiti (UNSOH), the reality remains: the overall shortfall is grave.

In a context of deep uncertainty and a worsening cash position, I asked all peacekeeping missions funded under the peacekeeping budget to prepare contingency plans based on possible reductions of 15 to 25 per cent of their expenditures. Troop- and police-contributing countries were also informed, together with the relevant host countries. I am grateful to our missions for working hard over the past few months to prepare these different scenarios.

All United Nations Personnel

Based on our current financial estimates and after a careful review, I have decided to request all peacekeeping missions funded under the peacekeeping budget to implement their contingency plans for a 15 per cent reduction in expenditures, the lower of the two scenarios. These reductions will affect all areas: uniformed components, civilian personnel and operations. Separately, the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) will be required to achieve a 25 per cent reduction in expenditures within the current fiscal year, reflecting unique budgetary pressures that will need to be addressed in close coordination with the African Union.

These reductions must now be achieved within the remaining nine months of the budget period. Therefore, the impact on the reduction of capacities – and thus on operations and mandated activities – will be proportionally greater. The consequences will be painful. With the exception of UNSOS, we will need to repatriate around 25 per cent of the uniformed personnel and their equipment in the coming months. Peacekeeping operations – together with the Department of Peace Operations and other relevant departments – have carefully identified the contingents and individual uniformed personnel that should be repatriated.

On 7 October 2025, I briefed the members of the United Nations Security Council and the troop- and police-contributing countries on the contingency plans. We will continue to update them on the implementation and impact on our operations. Repatriating around 25 per cent of troops and police in the space of a few months will be a major and complex logistical exercise.

The impact on civilian, international and locally recruited staff and affiliate personnel will be significant. Some separations will be inevitable, and missions will soon need to invoke the downsizing policy to reduce their civilian staffing, in consultation with staff representative bodies. I know the impact on affected staff, personnel and their families will be enormous, and I want to acknowledge the personal toll such measures entail.

The work of identifying which contingents and individual personnel will be repatriated has been carried out with care, weighing mandate priorities, operational requirements and, above all, the safety and security of those who will remain. While our missions carry out their contingency plans to address their funding shortfalls, they will continue to implement their mandates to the extent possible under these financial circumstances. The protection of civilians, the advancement of peace processes and support to fragile communities cannot and will not be abandoned. However, given the magnitude of the problem and the challenging context in which our missions operate, it is difficult to predict the impact on the ground. We have planned for this scenario and our staff in the field and at Headquarters will continue to work with dedication and professionalism. But this is a situation that the Organization has never faced before, and the impact remains uncertain.

I want to express my deep appreciation to all peacekeeping personnel for their service and sacrifice. I deeply understand the concerns that carrying out these plans raises, and the impact it may have on missions and personnel. Unfortunately, the Organization has no choice but to move forward with the implementation, despite the difficult impact it will have. I am determined to continue advocating for peacekeeping as a collective and shared responsibility. Without the support of Member States, the Organization cannot function properly. I will continue to appeal to all Member States to pay in full and on time so that our peacekeeping operations can remain a strong and dependable instrument of the United Nations. I remain hopeful that we will be able to resolve the current liquidity crisis, and I will work tirelessly towards that end.

I want to, once again, thank you for undertaking your essential work with enormous strength and resilience under these very difficult circumstances. You have continued to serve in some of the world's most difficult and dangerous situations, not for recognition, but for the cause of peace. That spirit is the heart of this Organization. Together, I am confident that we can take on the challenges, uphold our values and create the opportunities needed to address our unstable and uncertain world.

Yours sincerely,

with my warmest personal regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'António Guterres', with a stylized, flowing script.

António Guterres