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# Crucial Technologies for the Protection of Civilians by UN Peace Operations

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## Abstract

To protect people under attack, what kinds of tools do peacekeepers need? The United Nations is gradually gaining valuable experience with sophisticated technologies for protection of civilians (POC). However, most remain underused and underevaluated, especially attack helicopters, night vision devices, and nonlethal weapons. This article presents case studies of these three crucial tools to examine their utility and to identify their shortcomings. Attack helicopters are demonstrated as a powerful through ironic symbol and an important means of robust peacekeeping in Central African Republic. Night vision devices proved essential for POC in protecting Haitians from gangs in 2007. Nonlethal weapons, like those developed on the spur of the moment in the Democratic Republic of Congo, helped the UN deal with civilian threats without recourse to lethal force. All these proven technologies have helped peace operations save lives and thus need detailed study to gain lessons. Some novel but untested technologies are also introduced, including laser signaling and digital simulation.

## Keywords

protection of civilians (POC) – technology – peace operations – peacekeeping – United Nations – weapons

## 1 Introduction

When UN peace operations began after World War II, the field personnel were military observers deployed *unarmed* to monitor cease-fires in conflict zones.<sup>1</sup> In 1956, the first peacekeeping force, which Canada's Lester B. Pearson envisioned as a "truly international peace and police force,"<sup>2</sup> was armed for self-defense only and interposed between conflicting armies. After the Cold War and in the face of the ugly internecine conflicts, the UN needed multidimensional operations to support multidimensional peace processes and agreements. But the United Nations had great difficulty adjusting the traditional rules and tools to the new realities—witnessing genocide, ethnic cleansing, and other mass atrocities. The Security Council began in 1999 to give UN peacekeeping missions explicit mandates to protect civilians within mission capabilities and areas of deployment. To fulfill these new mandates, peace operations required new tools and technologies as well as new policies, tactics, and procedures.

UN missions have wrestled with the challenge of acquiring and using the proper tools to accomplish protection of civilians (POC) mandates. Often protection was not possible but, in some cases, missions could take POC action, thanks in part to tools and technologies made available by troop- and police-contributing countries that are simultaneously technology-contributing countries. Case studies provide positive examples to illustrate how technologies were used effectively, and how valuable lessons can be learned for appropriate future usage.

## 2 Attack Helicopters for POC in Central Africa

In the twenty-first century, the UN turned to the attack helicopter (AH) as its most robust tool for protection of civilians. As one of the two main types of military helicopters—the other being utility helicopters (UH) used for transport—AHs are specifically designed for deterrence and combat, concepts not tradi-

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1 While the United Nations considers its first peacekeeping operation to be the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), created in 1948, there were earlier forms of peacekeeping in missions in Greece, Indonesia, and Korea. As well, the UN mission in Kashmir was established in Security Council Resolution 35 (1948) before UNTSO was created in Resolution 50 (1948), though it did not become operational until after UNTSO. All these missions deployed unarmed military observers. See Wainhouse 1966.

2 Pearson, 1956.

tionally associated with peacekeeping. The first AHs provided to UN missions were Mi-24s from Ukraine. Seeing the need for robust force in the Balkans after the debacle in Bosnia, the United Nations obtained two Mi-24 units from Ukraine for the mission in Eastern Slavonia (UNTAES, 1996–1998).<sup>3</sup> India provided the same type of helicopters to allow two operations to apply armed force: first in the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) in 2000, where they proved useful during dramatic hostage rescue operations; then in the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (known by its French acronym MONUC), for example, to save Goma from attack in 2007.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) used Ukrainian Mi-24 AHs to prevent attacks on civilians by the forces of illegitimate president Laurent Gbagbo and to secure his arrest. During peace operations, these versatile AHs were also used for observation and transporting troops in addition to the application of lethal force.

Before becoming a symbol of robust peacekeeping, the Mi-24 helicopter had a different history. During the Cold War, the Soviet Mi-24 was infamously known to NATO as “Hind” and viewed with great concern as a “tank buster.” In the same period, the helicopter was an instrument of oppression by African dictators supported by the Soviet Union. The deployment of the Mi-24 in peacekeeping signified a remarkable conversion from a fearsome war fighting aircraft, typically painted in camouflage colors, to a peacekeeping tool, painted white with UN lettering. The aircraft remained equipped with a Gatling gun and pylons on stub wings for missiles and rockets, but the purpose, rules of engagement, and mind-set governing its use were all very different.

Like the use of force in modern peace operations more generally, the story of AH use has rarely been told, particularly as it relates to POC. The following paragraphs summarize one case, offering an overview of the successful use of the Senegalese Mi-35 (export version of the Mi-24) in Central African Republic (CAR).

The UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) was given POC responsibilities in its initial mandate of 2014. So when two armed groups threatened population centers, the UN felt compelled to act. The *Unité pour la Paix en Centrafrique* (UPC) and the *Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de Centrafrique* (FPRC) were at war. The

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3 The acronym UNTAES stands for UN Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium. Ukraine provided two squadrons of Mi-24 for a total of ten helicopters.

4 For an elaborate description of Mi-35 use in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 2006–2007, see Dorn 2014.

UPC along with its leader, Ali Darassa, was based in Bambari, while FPRC and its leader Azor Kalite had a stronghold in Bria. In late 2016 and early 2017, after numerous clashes, the FPRC moved to attack Bambari and remove Darassa by force. To prevent such an attack, MINUSCA declared a redline around Bambari—that was not to be crossed by attackers—and set up a UN temporary operating base (TOB) in nearby Ippy, which is along the road between Bambari and Bria. The UN also sponsored high-level talks with the leaders of the two groups to stop human rights violations, enhance POC, and promote peace, while at the same time declaring its determination to use robust measures to prevent attacks against civilians.<sup>5</sup>

On 21 January 2017, a UN patrol spotted FPRC coalition elements, about 150 armed men in total, near Mbrouthou, about thirty-five kilometers west of Bria. The UN mission instructed the FPRC fighters to stop any movement westward toward the UN-declared redline. The warning proved effective and the fighters turned back. However, on 10–11 February, the FPRC moved a larger attack force of about 300 men in a column toward Bambari. They were armed with automatic weapons (AK-47s) and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) and were assisted by seven pickup trucks on the Ippy-Bambari road. Their goal was to attack and sack the town of Bambari and remove the UPC leader Darassa. With this crossing of the UN's redline, the UN force sent an Mi-35 attack helicopter on 11 February to a location near the village of Ngawa (12 kilometers east of Ippy), where it observed and reported the rebels' movement with the Mi-35's high-zoom cameras in a pod fixed to the front of the helicopter. The pod could take images in both the visible and infrared parts of the electromagnetic spectrum with its gyro-stabilized cameras. This achieved positive identification of the armed and uniformed personnel on the ground and was part of the targeting system for the helicopter's weapons.<sup>6</sup>

Prior to launch, the Mi-35 had been authorized to use armed force. No UN troops were sent and the command and control (C2) had been delegated from the Force Commander to Joint Task Force Bangui, which was in communication with the helicopter. After firing a warning shot, at 1421 hours, the Mi-35 engaged the armed convoy with rockets and machine-gunfire, destroying four pickup trucks and scattering the rebels into the bush. The rebels may have fired at the helicopter with their semiautomatic rifles but, on return to the UN air-

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5 MINUSCA 2017a, 2017b.

6 A pilot in the Senegalese Mi-35 aviation unit, interviewed by the author, 1 March 2018. The Senegalese Mi-35 incorporated a Controp DSP-1 camera pod, which contained a high-definition visible light camera and an infrared (IR) camera, along with a laser range finder to determine the distance to targeted objects.

base in Bangui, postflight checks found no damage to the aircraft. Most of the rebels retreated to Ippy.

The UN action successfully stopped the rebel attack on Bambari and demonstrated the UN's use of force and deterrence capabilities. A direct threat of rebel action against a regional capital was averted. However, the use of force also had predictably negative consequences. The FPRC leader, Azor Kalite, accused the mission of favoring his enemy, the UPC. When a MINUSCA representative contacted him, he threatened that, if his FPRC forces were not allowed to move on Bambari, they would "target MINUSCA staff, vehicles and NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] wherever they can."<sup>7</sup> He also threatened to use antiaircraft weapons against MINUSCA helicopters and attack UPC members in Bria and other locations. Kalite stipulated that "the only way to prevent further clashes is to remove the UPC leader Ali Darassa from Bambari."<sup>8</sup>

The UN mission realized that the continuing presence of UPC leader Ali Darassa in Bambari was a liability. MINUSCA had to act impartially and be seen to be doing so, even by the FPRC. In coordination with the CAR government, it requested the Darassa to leave Bambari. He had been using the town's population as a *de facto* human shield against attack, and the UN could not permit the possibility of fighting in populated areas. To encourage his departure, MINUSCA made a strong show of force, surrounding Darassa's house and even positioned the attack helicopter directly above it.<sup>9</sup> Known as Operation Bekpa, the action also sought to increase the MINUSCA presence in the town and stabilize the security situation in case of pro-Darassa demonstrations, which were often fomented by Darassa himself.

The crisis was averted on 21 February, when Darassa announced that he would leave Bambari. The FPRC and UPC signed a cease-fire agreement on 9 October in Ippy, though both groups continued to commit human rights violations afterward.

FPRC leader Kalite was arrested by UN forces in May 2020, after his forces conducted a series of attacks against civilians and brazenly attempted to rush against the Portuguese Quick Reaction Force, one of MINUSCA's most robust units. He went on trial before the Special Criminal Court, established in 2018 to judge mass atrocity crimes in CAR.

Despite some blowback, MINUSCA demonstrated in 2017 that it could engage in POC tasks and protect civilians threatened with imminent attack

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7 MINUSCA 2017b and MINUSCA 2017c.

8 MINUSCA 2017b and MINUSCA 2017c.

9 Balla Keïta, lieutenant general, MINUSCA Force Commander, conversation with the author, Montreal, 12 June 2019; UN 2017, 3, 6.

using Mi-35 attack helicopters provided by a developing African country. Not only were these helicopters equipped with effective weapons systems and defensive armor, they also had surveillance technology for intelligence gathering. Being deployed from Bangui, the Mi-35 had significant freedom of movement for several hundred kilometers and easily overcame the natural barriers that ground forces face, like poor and impassable roads. It was a technology that worked robustly and provided the UN with a key enabling capability.

Despite the success stories, the UN is chronically short of attack helicopters, as evidenced by the recurrent requests in the “Uniformed Capability Requirements” document issued quarterly by UN headquarters.<sup>10</sup> There is typically a shortfall of ten AHs in UN peace operations. In CAR, the DRC, and Mali, attack helicopters were frequently not available when needed. They may have been already employed elsewhere in the mission, undergoing maintenance, or out of range (typically beyond 200 kilometers). When they were available, sometimes they arrived too late to be effective (even after travelling at 250 kilometers per hour), and sometimes could not locate well-hidden targets, even with a suite of advanced sensors for day and night viewing.

Other technologies are also crucial to fulfilling POC mandates through robust operations. Night vision equipment can be placed not just on aircraft, but also on vehicles and individually on soldiers’ helmets. The utility of night vision was highlighted in UN operations to restore the rule of law in the Haitian slum of Cité Soleil.

### 3 Night Vision: Reestablishing Law and Order in Haiti<sup>11</sup>

In the slums of Haiti, where pistol- and machete-wielding gangs dominated the populace through murder, intimidation, extortion, and terror, the UN Mission for the Stabilization of Haiti (MINUSTAH<sup>12</sup>) managed to establish law, order, and government control in 2006–2007. MINUSTAH succeeded by “taking on” the gangs in a series of military and police search and arrest operations. The achievement was made possible by “intelligence preparation of the environment” using advanced technologies, especially aerial reconnaissance and night vision.<sup>13</sup>

10 UN 2023.

11 This section draws material from an earlier paper by the author: Dorn 2009.

12 The acronym MINUSTAH comes from the French name of the operation: Mission des Nations Unies pour la Stabilization en Haiti. It existed from 2004 to 2017.

13 Intelligence preparation of the environment (IPE) and Intelligence preparation of the operational environment (IPOE) are standard military terms that are derived from the term intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB).

Night operations were preferred by the force commander because there were fewer people on the streets and less chance of collateral damage (civilian fatalities). Night operations also increased the element of surprise. UN forces could use the cover of darkness, something that bandits had habitually used to support their own criminal activities (by using vehicle headlights and flashlights). When the UN acquired night vision technology, it enjoyed a substantial technological and tactical superiority at night. The soldiers' headgear was equipped with image intensifiers and their rifles with night sights and infrared sensors to detect heat. The gangs were practically blind in comparison. Thus, the UN could seize the initiative at a time and place of its own choosing. When UN forces saw oncoming hostiles or shooters, they could engage them more easily than in daytime when there were many distractions and greater fear of civilian casualties in busy streets. In some night operations, however, night vision devices were not sufficient. A clear view of the surroundings was needed, if only briefly, so illumination grenades launched from eighty-one-millimeter mortars were sometimes used, especially at the start of an operation.

During nighttime operations, Forward-looking infrared (FLIR) cameras on helicopters allowed UN forces a useful view from above. Liaison officers on board also employed image intensifiers (monoculars and binoculars) to describe what they saw to ground elements such as troops and UN police. Unlike MINUSCA, MINUSTAH helicopters were not armed. Heliborne FLIR helped identify the hideouts of kidnappers and gang chiefs. In one case, in early 2006, the gang leader "Belony" had kidnapped three Filipino businessmen shortly after they visited MINUSTAH headquarters, releasing them only after a ransom was paid. The victims described to UN intelligence personnel in the Joint Mission Analysis Centre (JMAC) the physical conditions of their captivity, including the position of a water tank and a specially painted wall. JMAC personnel then determined three possible locations from aerial photographs. Flying a FLIR-equipped helicopter over these locations, JMAC personnel positively identified the hideout within ten minutes.<sup>14</sup> This critical step in the intelligence process was entirely technology enabled, and led to the arrest and conviction of the gang leader Belony.

During one heliborne observation flight with night vision goggles and FLIR, other gang members were seen escaping after firing on UN patrols. As the bandits withdrew to their base, UN forces counted thirty gang members. The escape routes were identified. Potential hiding places, such as shelters under bridges, were also identified using oblique photography from the air.

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14 JMAC officer, personal communication to the author by electronic mail, 6 February 2009.

The largest operation, *Jauru Sudamericana*, was launched at 0300 on 9 February 2007 to utilize the advantage of night vision. MINUSTAH forces captured the main rebel base after a thirteen-hour battle that continued into the afternoon. After the main gang surrendered, UN forces established new Strong Points and started patrolling day and night along previously dangerous routes in the former gang-controlled area called “Boston.” The joint patrols of UN police, Haitian National Police, and MINUSTAH soldiers secured the district. Within a few weeks, all of Cité Soleil was returned to government control and the UN mission head, Edmond Mulet, was able to walk the streets to the cheers of jubilant crowds.

Commander of MINUSTAH (at the time) Major General Carlos dos Santos Cruz went on to use some of the same tools and techniques to neutralize the M23 in the DRC in 2013.<sup>15</sup> In 2017, in a report on the security of peacekeepers, unofficially but widely called the “Santos Cruz report,” he emphasized the need for night capabilities:

- “Missions should also push combat to the night, to take advantage of their superior technology.”
- “Commanders should intensify night operation and activities, using more technology including night vision systems, special weapons and special ammunition.”<sup>16</sup>

The special weapons include a key underused category: nonlethal weapons (NLW).

#### 4 Nonlethal Weapons: Ad Hoc Tool in the Field<sup>17</sup>

In peace operations, like other military operations, soldiers are customarily equipped with deadly weapons. This acts as an important deterrent and are essential in cases where lethal force is required. However, the UN naturally seeks to minimize killing. Far too often, peacekeepers do not fire their weapons, even when a forceful response is needed, because they fear the lethal effects. It is, therefore, surprising that the world organization has not explored further the options for nonlethal weapons, also called less-than-lethal weapons. On occasion, however, military personnel in the field have come up with creative nonlethal solutions to deal with problems that should not require lethal force.

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<sup>15</sup> Dorn 2023.

<sup>16</sup> Santos Cruz 2017, p. 5 and p. 27.

<sup>17</sup> This section draws from Dorn 2016.



In Somalia, in the early 1990s, US forces had to deal with rock-throwing children and people stealing equipment from vehicles, even as they were moving. The soldiers needed nonlethal responses. So, soldiers explored alternatives, including “tent pegs, batons, sticks and cayenne pepper spray to repel unarmed Somalis who harassed them.”<sup>18</sup> The pepper spray became so effective that, by the end of the tour, “the troops found that simply waving a can in the air was enough to warn Somalis off.” Trevor Findlay reports, however, that Australian forces ruled out the use of “full-strength riot control agents because of the threat to Somalis’ health, which in many cases was poor.” Some US soldiers gave electric shocks to Somalis climbing onto armored personnel carriers (APCs) by connecting the vehicle’s battery to parts of the APC. While useful, there is potential for abuse and civilian harm, so this use of NLW, like others, must be adequately controlled within the context of operational orders, guidance, and policy, of which the UN has little.

Another case of NLW innovation, also born of necessity, comes from the UN mission in the DRC in 2012. A mob of Congolese civilians began to plunder shop after shop in the upper (northeastern) part of Goma. The mob grew in numbers as it steadily moved southward while pillaging. The UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), which had a POC mandate, needed to stop the ransacking of the stores and the associated violence. It feared that the stealing would spread to the entire city and cause widespread civilian-on-civilian violence. However, UN soldiers felt they could not use their weapons because they possessed only lethal ones. Finally, someone suggested the fire truck at the airport, normally on standby to put out fires on aircraft, be sent to spray the looters. This was done, and it successfully halted the looting.

Despite the apparent fit to peace operations, nonlethal weapons have been little explored by the UN.<sup>19</sup> There is still strong military resistance to equipping soldiers with them, though the police officers are much more inclined to accept them. To deal with individual offenders, hostile crowds, and a host of threats to UN personnel and civilians, nonlethal weapons should be an available option to both soldiers and police. Such weapons can also assist with arrests while posing little or no danger to the local population. Tasers (often with laser sights and LED lights) are now routinely used by police forces in developed countries. With proper training and supervision, they could become a part of the UN’s arsenal for peacekeeping.<sup>20</sup> To counteract theft, such weapons can incor-

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18 The quotes in this paragraph are from Findlay 2002, 176, 171, 172.

19 Foster 2016.

20 The Taser was first included in the Contingent-Owned Equipment (COE) Manual under the category of “Major Equipment” in 2014. UN 2020.

porate passwords and biometric identification, such as digital locks, to ensure the intended user is the one operating the device.

Crowd control is but one of many scenarios where nonlethal weapons can be useful in peacekeeping. Other scenarios include stopping civilian-on-civilian killing, thieves stealing goods from UN camps, cars racing toward UN checkpoints, child soldiers on a rampage, drugged or delusional individuals, and conflicting parties escalating an armed fight without restraint and without heeding UN warnings. The range of possible nonlethal weapons is also broad. They are usually classified by type: conducted energy weapons (e.g., Tasers); soft projectiles (e.g., bean-bag rounds or rubber bullets shot from regular or special rifles or air guns, or even inert bombs dropped from aircraft); stun (“flash-bang”) and smoke grenades; riot control agents (e.g., tear gas or pepper spray for domestic riot control); acoustic weapons (directed sound like the long-range acoustic device [LRAD]) and “active denial” systems that heat the surface of the skin so that individuals or groups must move to exit the “heat ray.” Even unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for close surveillance to follow, monitor, and “buzz” perpetrators by flying low overhead can be useful to restrain their actions.

Low-tech nonlethal weapons can also be used to destroy or damage the equipment and facilities used by human rights abusers. There are devices to stop vehicles or persons such as spikes (caltrops), immobilizers, and entangling nets. One immobilizer, sticky foam, was used by US Marines during the withdrawal of US forces from Somalia in 1993. Antitraction materials can slow attackers or intruders by making it difficult to walk or drive over an area (the high-tech version of the proverbial banana peel). The effects of these area-denial systems can be colloquially described as “stick’m or slip’m.”

UN peacekeepers should be able to pick from the range of lethal and nonlethal weapons to manage violence against UN forces and against civilians. This can allow for more operational flexibility and a spectrum of force options. While UN police, especially in Formed Police Units from police-contributing countries, have some experience with nonlethal weapons, the UN lacks documented experience with them.

Nonlethal weapons can, under certain circumstances, be lethal and weapons of any type must be carefully proscribed. The UN has placed reasonable limits on the types of rubber bullets, bean-bag rounds and other soft projectiles that can be used. The UN already has technical specifications such that they must be of large calibre, slow speed, low impact energy, soft/blunt, light, and not long-range.<sup>21</sup> However, there are no specifications or even mentions of other types of NLW.

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21 Ladsous 2015.

## 5 Additional Technologies

A host of other technologies can be explored in peace operations to assist with POC. Not all of them are weapons. Here are a few examples:

- *Laser signaling.* This new technology can be used by peacekeepers to display messages at night to nearby locals, criminals, or perpetrators of violence (in any language or as symbols). Eye-safe laser images can be aimed at the ground to let night violators know they are being watched. They can also be switched to operate outside of the optical part of the spectrum as invisible laser designators for targets. Both visible and invisible beams can be generated from UN weapons (gunsights), vehicles, or UAVs. Peacekeepers could even shine a visible beam on a perpetrator's chest to make the individual think twice about nighttime atrocities, including conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV).
- *Signals intelligence (SIGINT).* Signals interception from well-defined targets and well-defined purposes can save lives, for example, in finding and rescuing hostages. The UN can also use scanner technology to find cell phone signals to locate kidnappers and determine their intent. But for sensitive activities like SIGINT the UN must follow clear rules: only for very targeted interception of specific individuals or groups with approvals at high levels. UN eavesdropping on cell phone conversations in the general population, while technologically possible, is an anathema. Finding the proper balance for SIGINT is like finding the proper balance for the use of force: it requires judicious choices and growing experience. Peace operations have limited experience with SIGINT.
- *Communications with the local population.* To better protect the local population, it is essential to have instant communications with the people. Here, the cell phone and social media revolution can help locals contact the UN and vice versa. Under the developing concept of “participatory peacekeeping,” the mission can engage the local population, allowing the locals to provide inputs and warnings of threats and take some responsibility for their own security. In the digital age, it is possible to create a “coalition of the connected” that includes locals, thereby providing “protection through connection.” UN-hired locals or UN international staff can receive and possibly verify early warnings from citizen reporting and social media. This needs to be followed up by quick responders on the ground.<sup>22</sup>
- *Remote-controlled robots.* These may be used, for instance, in special operations (e.g., by SWAT teams). They can move into spaces that are too con-

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22 Dom 2016.

strained or dangerous for human peacekeepers. They could be sent to observe hotspots, disarm explosive devices (e.g., improvised explosive device [IEDs]), and facilitate communicate with combatants (through a loudspeaker and receiver for transmission to a remote operator). The robots would be unarmed. The world is a long way off, thankfully, from autonomous robo-peacekeepers.

- *Digital simulations.* To train peacekeepers in scenarios they may face, digital simulations can provide experiential learning. While not yet incorporated into UN training, this new and adaptable technology can be used in the predeployment phase or even during deployment (see <https://www.peacekeepingsim.net>). The simulations can be played on computers as single player or multiplayer, with virtual reality headsets as an option.

## 6 Conclusion: Learning from Success

Technologies like the attack helicopters in CAR, night vision devices in Haiti, and improvised nonlethal weapons in the DRC have proven to be crucial enablers for POC. Nevertheless, the lessons need to be tempered by a realistic estimate of the degree of technology deployed: the UN remains underequipped in technology, despite making improvements over the past decade. Moreover, populations still complain that the UN is not doing enough to protect them. The UN has sparingly few attack helicopters and has limits on the amount of technology it can deploy, given that the main troop contributors are from the developing world with limited technological capabilities. However, some nations have to be lauded for providing key technologies, such as Senegal and India, with the Mi-35 AH. Furthermore, some technology-contributing countries (TechCCs), such as the Netherlands and Germany, have deployed even more advanced aircraft such as Apache and Tiger AHs in Mali. Even if TechCCs are not able to contribute large numbers of troops, they can help to provide equipment, technology, and training to make peacekeepers from other nations more effective.

When civilians are under attack or are in imminent danger of attack, peace operations have a responsibility as well as a mandate to save them, particularly when the host state is unable or unwilling to do so. But peacekeepers need the proper tools to protect civilians as well as themselves. If the nations of the world do not provide UN peacekeepers with the required tools, then the responsibility for needless civilian deaths lies in part on those nations.

Ideally, UN missions would be adequately equipped and staffed to demonstrate to the conflicting parties the capacity for overwhelming force, exert

deterrence, show excellent situational awareness, and act proactively and preemptively. This way, they can deter violence and, ironically, through the show of force, reduce the degree of violence in these conflict zones. For this, UN missions need proper tools. Peace-enabling technologies, especially attack helicopters and night vision devices, remain crucial for peace enforcement and POC.

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