

UN peacekeeping chief seeks Security Council support for speedy deployment of uniformed personnel

5 October 2017 – The United Nations peacekeeping chief today said rapid deployment of uniformed personnel to the field is a costly, complex and difficult process that requires the commitment of the contributors, the host country and neighbors, as well as the support of the Security Council.

“Generating uniformed personnel for UN peacekeeping is a tireless and enormous task,” said Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for UN Peacekeeping Operations, in a briefing, noting that this is the first time the Council has dedicated a meeting to this issue – strategic force generation.

A small team of dedicated officers is in charge of generating and rotating more than 300 units – including 76 infantry battalions – with tens of thousands of troops and police from over 120 countries, while selecting and deploying several thousand individual staff and police officers throughout the year, Mr. Lacroix explained.



Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, addresses the Security Council meeting on strategic force generation for United Nations peacekeeping operations. UN Photo/Cia Pak

In the weeks and months that pass from the issuance of a mandate by the Security Council, until a mission reaches a minimum operating capacity, lives can be lost. There are financial implications of long deployment timelines as well, as a peacekeeping operation deployed too late will have a more intractable situation to address, potentially requiring a larger footprint and prolonging the life of that mission, he stated.

The peacekeeping chief noted significant progress made towards more rapid deployment. For example, a battalion in the UN mission in the Central African Republic that was facing conduct and discipline issues has been replaced in less than 60 days.

He also said that his office recently received sufficient pledges to fulfil nearly all the requirements for a Vanguard Brigade of roughly 4,000 troops and police for the remainder of 2017 and the first half of next year.

Despite the success of the last two years, a number of specialized capabilities remain in short supply, particularly high-value enablers, such as helicopters, quick reaction forces, and units trained to dispose of explosive ordnance.

There is also a lack of progress towards targets for deployment of female peacekeepers.

He highlighted a crucial role the Security Council plays in defining and helping meet the capability requirements of UN missions, encouraging Council Members to come forward with new, innovative contributions, including through the provision of tailored and sustained training and capacity building efforts to address mid- to long-term capability gaps. The trilateral partnership between Japan and several African troop-contributing countries is a good example of this kind of initiative, he added.

The Council can also take into account current or potential capability gaps, such as those in the UN Mission in Mali, when drafting or renewing mandates. For missions like that in South Sudan, the Council should engage collectively and individually to ensure that host governments fully comply with status of mission agreements; and that the Council act accordingly when host governments fail to do so, he said.

The Council can also ensure the full implementation of performance, training and conduct requirements, and in cases of underperformance or misconduct, the UN Secretariat relies on the Council's consistent support to address them.

The Council can also back UN efforts to foster a culture of continuous improvement and adaptation through strategic force generation and other reform efforts.

"Strategic force generation is an important and still relatively new initiative," he said, stressing that it should be seen as only one part of a broader, ongoing effort by the Secretariat to make peacekeeping operations a more efficient, effective and accountable tool for the international community.