

Keeping Peace in a Turbulent World

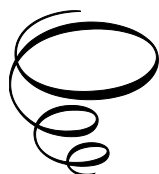
Keeping Peace in a Turbulent World:

Reflections from the Field

Edited by

Kawser Ahmed and Del H Khan

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To the fallen UN peacekeepers,

We dedicate this book to you. You sacrificed your lives in the line of duty to restore global peace and make this world a better place to live.

We hope that this book will help to raise awareness of the important work that UN peacekeepers do and the sacrifices they make. We also hope that it will inspire others to follow in your footsteps and work to make the world a more peaceful place.

Thank you for your service.

“Courage is not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave peacekeepers of our time stand as beacons of hope in the face of adversity.”
—Nelson Mandela

“The pursuit of peace is a noble journey that transcends boundaries and unites humanity in its quest for a better future.”
—Kofi Annan

“The brave peacekeepers who serve in the world’s most dangerous places are the guardians of our collective security.”
—Ban Ki-moon, former UN Secretary-General

“UN peacekeepers are the embodiment of the UN’s commitment to peace and security. They are the front-line soldiers in the fight for a better world.”
—Samantha Power, former US Ambassador to the UN

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FOREWORD

United Nations peacekeepers perform multifaceted roles that are crucial in ensuring global peace and security. Indeed, the peacekeepers prevent conflict and ensure more rooms of manoeuvre for diplomatic and political efforts, which signifies their great contributions to world peace and stability. In this connection, the involvement of Bangladesh Army in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKOS) is a narrative of more than three decades. We are proud to earn the glorious top position as Troop Contributing Country (TCC). But, the journey of achieving such a noble reputation was not easy. Rather, it is the outcome of distinguished services, unwavering dedications and considerable sacrifices made by the peacekeepers who have left the warmth of their homes and families to uphold justice and order in the world's most perilous regions.

I am delighted to introduce the seminal work on peacekeeping titled 'Keeping Peace in a Turbulent World: Reflections from the Field' authored by the esteemed veterans. This volume is basically an anthology of narratives which reflects the lived experiences, enduring commitments, indomitable valour and great sacrifices made by the gallant men and women who have served under the Blue Helmet as United Nations Peacekeepers. It explores the multifaceted domain of peacekeeping from the vantage points of those who have been directly involved, especially the candid insights of the commanders offering invaluable observations on the conduct of various UNPKOS. The write-ups also serve as lenses through which the readers can comprehend the present challenges and envision the future role of the United Nations in an ever- changing global landscape. Thus, 'Keeping Peace in a Turbulent World: Reflections from the Field' stands as an important record of indomitable spirit, courage and dedication of UN peacekeepers.

I convey my felicitations to the authors and editors for their exemplary scholarship and dedication in bringing this enlightening volume to life. I am sanguine that the richness contained within its pages will not only educate but also palpably inspire succeeding generations to take up the sacred mantle of peacekeeping for a more peaceful, just and harmonious world.

May Allah bless us all.

Joy Bangla.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several stylized, overlapping strokes that form the name of the signatory.

GENERAL SM SHAFIUDDIN AHMED
Chief of Army Staff
Bangladesh Army

PREFACE

Amidst a world rife with conflict and the unsettling unknown, the relentless quest for peace emerges as a resolute symbol of optimism and fortitude. The expedition to compile the volume “Keeping Peace in a Turbulent World” was impelled by an unwavering reverence for the often-uncelebrated champions who commit their lives to this noble undertaking – the valiant UN peacekeepers.

The pages ahead witness the culmination of numerous hours of collaborative effort, heartfelt dialogues, and meticulous curation. As both scholars and proponents of global harmony, we sensed an obligation to spotlight the narratives of Bangladeshi UN peacekeepers who have dared to venture into the most arduous and far-flung corners of our globe.

Within these subsequent pages, a portal opens into the existence of these extraordinary individuals, whose toils often transpire in the shadows, far removed from the glare of media coverage. Through their chronicles, we are afforded an intimate insight into the sacrifices, unwavering tenacity, and steadfast devotion that define the essence of peacekeeping. These anecdotes transcend geographical boundaries and cultural divides, resonating with the universal principles that underlie their mission.

However, this compendium transcends the confines of mere narration; it stands as a testament to the potency of collective endeavor and the shared resolve towards a world suffused with tranquility. Alongside the resonant voices of peacekeepers, we have interwoven the perspectives of former high-ranking architects of UN peacekeeping operations, thus enriching the narrative with a deeper comprehension of the tribulations encountered on the frontlines of conflict interception and resolution.

“Keeping Peace in a Turbulent World” is not merely a tribute to the gallant men and women who serve as custodians of peace but a clarion call for all those who harbor faith in the potentiality of a more harmonious global fraternity. We hope these narratives will kindle inspiration in readers across all walks of life – students, erudite, practitioners, and concerned global citizens – propelling them to unite with us in advocating for enduring serenity, empathy, and collaboration.

Our sincerest appreciation extends to all those who contributed to this endeavor – from the peacekeepers who candidly shared their experiences to the savants who graciously imparted their insights. This tome would have remained an unrealized ambition without unwavering commitment and support.

May the subsequent pages serve as a fount of inspiration, contemplation, and a poignant reminder that even amidst the tumult, the pursuit of peace perseveres as an aspiration deserving of our most earnest endeavor.

Kawser Ahmed, PhD
Del H Khan

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all those who have contributed to the publication of “Keeping Peace in a Turbulent World: Reflections from the Field.” This book would not have come to fruition without the unwavering support, dedication, and collaboration of numerous individuals and organizations. Their collective efforts have made this publication possible, and for that we are truly grateful.

First, we would like to extend our deepest appreciation to the brave men and women who have served as UN peacekeepers from Canada, Bangladesh, and Argentina (all the contributors’ countries) and shared their remarkable stories for this book. Your willingness to open up about your experiences and challenges is commendable. By sharing your narratives, you have not only enriched peacekeeping theories and practices but also touched the hearts of readers around the world. Your courage and commitment to peace serve as an inspiration to us all.

We would like to express our profound gratitude to the ex-UN force commanders from Norway and Bangladesh, who generously shared their memoirs, providing unique insights into the complexities of peacekeeping operations. Your contributions have added depth and perspective to this book, allowing readers to gain a deeper understanding of the leadership and decision-making processes involved in maintaining peace in challenging environments.

We would also like to acknowledge the subject matter experts (researchers, scholars, and officials) who contributed chapters on next-generation UN peacekeeping. Your expertise and forward-thinking ideas have broadened the scope of this book, exploring innovative approaches to tackle emerging challenges in the field. Your contributions will undoubtedly shape the future of peacekeeping operations.

A special mention goes to Niaz Mahmud Sakib (Bangladesh), whose exceptional translation skills brought the original Bengali stories to life in English. Your meticulous attention to detail and dedication to preserving the authenticity and essence of the narratives are deeply appreciated. Your

contribution has enabled these stories to reach a wider international audience.

We express special appreciation to Wing Commander Raqib Mahmud, who has not only offered his stories as an author but has also generously provided his captivating photograph, which now graces the cover of this publication. Your unique position as both a storyteller and the source of the book's cover image has significantly enriched the overall influence of this project.

We extend our sincere thanks to Cambridge Scholars Publishing for believing in the value of this project and agreeing to publish “Keeping Peace in a Turbulent World.” Your commitment to academic excellence and your support in sharing these powerful stories with the world are invaluable. We are grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with such a reputable publishing house.

Last but not least, through this project, CRRIC has fulfilled one of its research mandates, UNPKO, in order to contribute to the larger debate on bringing peace to this turbulent world. As of writing this book, the world is witnessing three intense armed conflicts: the Russian war on Ukraine, Azerbaijan’s capture of Nagorno Karabakh, and the Hamas-Israel war in Gaza, resulting in millions of people being displaced and an unknown number of lives being lost. Thus, we all need to work together in order to bring peace by peaceful means.

Thank you all for your invaluable contributions, support, and belief in the power of sharing these stories. Together, we can make a difference in keeping peace in our turbulent world.

INTRODUCTION

Peacekeeping is not a job for soldiers, but only soldiers can do it.
—Dag Hammarskjöld

In an era where the world is experiencing a multitude of conflicts and crises on multiple fronts, keeping the peace has become increasingly challenging. However, one might ask, what does ‘peace’ mean in the context of social unrest, political instability, or even an outright armed invasion of a nation-state against its neighbor? When discussing peace in the context of social unrest and political instability, it is useful to note that peace refers to a condition in which groups or nations resolve their conflicts in a non-violent way as well as strive to collectively achieve social, political, and economic goals. Peace is not only the absence of hostility (i.e., negative peace) but also ‘positive peace’, which denotes, “a more lasting peace that is built on sustainable investments in economic development and institutions as well as societal attitudes that foster peace” (Positive Peace, 2023). It should also be emphasized that conflicts are inevitable in societies, but it is possible to reduce their negative consequences and aim to achieve peaceful and non-violent resolutions.

One of the essential components of promoting peace among nations and its peoples is nurturing a ‘culture of peace’ (Daily Star, 2023). During the Cold War period, an Anglo-American approach to peace that largely focused on military might and hegemonic power dominated peace intervention discourse. However, as the understanding of peace has evolved, it is widely accepted that nurturing a culture of peace requires nations to contain their aggression and exhibit cooperative behavior in order to avoid conflicts and violence. The United Nations (UN) defines a “culture of peace” as a “set of values, attitudes, modes of behavior and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations.” Since its founding over 60 years ago, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) opined that, “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed” (UN, 2023).

Additionally, Sommerfelt and Vambheim (2008) define a culture of peace as one that upholds tolerance among people, encourages the avoidance of situations where ethno-religious or class differences would lead to conflicts and violence, promotes cooperative behavior, and fosters a willingness within citizens to contain their aggression. The UN defines a culture of peace as promoting non-violence through education, dialogue, cooperation, respect for human rights, and fundamental freedoms. Creating a culture of peace requires individuals and nation states to embrace values, attitudes, and traditions that respect life, promote non-violence through education and dialogue, support equality for men and women, and encourage all individuals to participate in the resolution of conflicts by peaceful means.

Since the end of the Second World War, the UN and other international organizations have been at the forefront of promoting and maintaining peace among nations. One of the most vital methods for reducing violence and advancing world peace and security for the past 75 years has been UN peacekeeping operations (UNPKOs). Amidst the chaos and uncertainty that often pervade regions torn apart by violence, UN peacekeeping missions stand as beacons of hope. Peacekeepers' tireless efforts to restore stability, protect civilians, and facilitate dialogue among parties have proven instrumental in resolving conflicts. Since its inception, over one million brave men and women peacekeepers across 71 missions worldwide have ventured into the centre of turmoil, navigated treacherous terrain and survived in volatile environments for the sake of world peace. The challenges they face are immense. From armed insurgencies and humanitarian crises to political uncertainties and cultural barriers, peacekeepers confront myriad obstacles in their missions to keep the peace.

The UN also runs special political missions (SPMs) that work on post-conflict peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and mediation in addition to peacekeeping operations (PKOs). The UN Security Council (UNSC) empowers SPMs to carry out a variety of tasks, such as assisting in political dialogue and reconciliation efforts, facilitating free and fair elections, keeping an eye out for human rights violations, organizing international development and humanitarian aid, and promoting the growth of strong rule of law institutions. While turning the page of history, we find the first UN mission was called the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), whose objective was to monitor the Armistice Agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbors (UN). Since then, the UN has sent out more than 70 peacekeeping missions. Over the years, hundreds of thousands of military men from more than 120 countries have joined UN peacekeeping missions, along with tens of thousands of UN police and other civilians.

“Since 1948, over 2,400 peacekeepers have made the “supreme sacrifice” while serving in UN operations. Thus, the UN has suffered a historic average of 40 fatalities of uniformed and civilian peacekeepers a year”.¹

During the Cold War era, we witnessed several armed conflicts as colonial powers withdrew from their colonies and tensions rose between superpowers. The Suez Crisis is a case in point that formally launched the concept of modern-day PKOs. However, the nature of conflicts has evolved since then, becoming increasingly complex and protracted. In response to these challenges, the UN has developed peace-building missions as a means of promoting security and stability once conflict stabilization has occurred (Sens, 2004). As a result, complex peace-building missions that seek to eradicate the root causes of conflicts and advance lasting peace have increased in post-war environments along with the transition to capitalism.

First-generation PKOs were primarily deployed to monitor ceasefires between warring countries. Second-generation PKOs were deployed in the context of intrastate conflict and aimed to establish negative peace through disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs. The third generation of peacekeeping missions goes beyond traditional observer and monitoring tasks, incorporating complex multidimensional and integrative missions with more ambitious goals to promote comprehensive peace agreements and sustain peace in post-conflict periods. Finally, hybrid PKOs focus on working closely with local actors and building trust between conflicting parties, thereby facilitating reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts. Overall, the evolution of peacekeeping missions has been significant in keeping peace in a turbulent world.

United Nations Peace Mission Mandate data are useful for analyzing the types, goals, and particular tasks of 113 peace missions that took place between 1991 and 2020 to capture the trends of such a change (Hellmüller, Tan, & Bara, 2023). Scholars in this study considered three different periods to detect patterns throughout time: the post-Cold War period (1991– 2000), the War on Terror period (2001–2010), and the emerging multipolarity period (2011–2020). A transition in mission types away from PKOs and toward political missions is shown. The number of newly created UNPKOs has decreased; 36 new PKOs were established in the post-Cold War period, and this number dropped to 10 in the War on Terror period. In the recent

¹ Who Is Dying for Peace? An Analysis of UN Peacekeeping Fatalities, A. Walter Dorn, https://www.walterdorn.net/pdf/WhosDyingForPeace_Pkg-Fatalities_Scan_GPO-2008.pdf

multipolarity period, only six new PKOs were deployed, only one of which was established in the most recent five years. Since 2000, the number of political missions has consistently outnumbered PKOs. For SPMs and SE/SAs, the same is not true.

During the post-Cold War era, the dynamics of PKOs have also evolved. The UN Under-Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's report "The Agenda for Peace" emphasized the role of peacekeeping missions in supporting the transformation of deficient national structures and capabilities as well as strengthening new democratic institutions. Moreover, since then, peacekeeping missions have expanded their mandates to include maintaining internal security and order, promoting institution-building and economic development, and ensuring humanitarian aid delivery. To effectively carry out their mandates, peacekeeping missions are required to work in coordination with a range of humanitarian and development actors.

The United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) 2008 Manual for Integrated Peacekeeping Missions² highlights this changed reality and emphasizes the importance of coordination between UN peacekeeping missions and a range of humanitarian and development actors involved in international crisis management. This evolution of peacekeeping missions has been driven by the belief that conditions have deteriorated to such an extent in post-war environments that only military intervention is likely to be successful in managing conflict.

The DPKO was established to give the UN a stronger institutional ability to respond to global emergencies. The Department was initially conceived in 1948 as a result of the foundation of the first UN peacekeeping missions, the UNMOGIP and the UNTSO. The UN Office of Special Political Affairs managed peacekeeping missions until the late 1980s. Early in the 1990s, the strategic framework for UNPKOs had changed from that of military surveillance to that of multifaceted initiatives created to assure the execution of comprehensive peace accords and to aid in establishing the groundwork for a lasting peace. Later, the current form of DPKO was established in 1992 as part of the UN secretariat's reform initiated by the newly appointed Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. The broader range of tasks performed by peacekeepers now includes demining, human rights monitoring,

² United Nations. Department of Peacekeeping Operations. United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines (Capstone Doctrine). https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/capstone_eng_0.pdf, chapter 5-1, p 53. August 2023.

electoral reform, humanitarian aid, security sector reform, and the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former combatants. The Office of Planning and Support and the Office of Operations were created as two separate divisions of the DPKO in 1994 (Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)).

There is an assistant secretary-general in charge of each section. A Planning Division and a Field Administration and Logistics Division were established that comprised the Office of Planning and Support. The Africa Division, the Asia and Middle East Division, and the Europe and Latin America Division were the three divisions that made up the Office of Operations. The Situation Center and the Policy and Analysis Unit were established in 1993, while the Lessons Learned Unit was established in 1995. The Department of Field Support (DFS) was established in 2007 as a result of Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon's desire to solve structural issues with the Department of PKOs, which included recruiting, logistical, and transportation issues. Through common functional and operational domains, close communication between the DPKO and DFS is maintained. The Office of Operations, the Office of the Rule of Law and Security Institutions (founded in 2007), the Office of Military Affairs, and the Policy Evaluation and Training Division were the DPKO's four primary offices as of 2012.

Under the UN Charter, Chapter VI (Pacific Settlement of Disputes)(United Nations, 2023a) allows member states of the Security Council to have the power to review and assess situations when opposing parties are in a dispute and struggling to engage in peaceful relations. Chapter VII (Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression) (United Nations, 2023b) allows the UN to take action more forcefully, using measures such as sanctions or military force. Chapter VIII also gives the UN the authority to organize regional peacekeeping arrangements. The traditional peacekeeping missions carried out by the UN serve as a way to observe the progress of ceasefire and peace agreements, especially in situations where formerly warring parties require assistance in transitioning towards peaceful coexistence.

The re-conceptualization of global security during the post-Cold War and War on Terror periods has gained widespread recognition, reflecting an emerging consensus among states, NGOs, and international organizations around the world. Several studies have also linked peacekeeping missions to humanitarian emergencies, which has provided greater legitimacy for interventions in domestic conflicts when human rights are threatened on a large scale. This gave rise to the concept of the Responsibility to Protect. As

such, the nature of peacekeeping has evolved from traditional observer missions to multidimensional and integrative missions that involve a wide range of tasks, including peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and the promotion of human rights.

On so many instances, UN peacekeeping missions have acted as a crucial instrument for conflict resolution, de-escalation, and post-conflict peacebuilding. From the Suez Crisis to the Balkans, from Rwanda to East Timor, UN peacekeepers have played a pivotal role in mitigating violence, protecting civilians, and facilitating the restoration of normalcy. Thus, understanding the historical significance of UN peacekeeping allows us to appreciate its evolution and the lessons learned from past experiences. By delving into the historical context, we can identify the challenges faced, the successes achieved, and the areas that require further improvement. This understanding is essential for refining strategies, adapting to new complexities, and shaping the future of peacekeeping efforts.

The evolution of the literature on peacekeeping can be characterized as follows: initially, only a minimal number of studies were conducted during the Cold War. Then, in the 1990s, there was a surge of attention directed towards peacekeeping, which soon shifted to highlighting its shortcomings and unintended effects. Subsequently, systematic qualitative and quantitative investigations have emerged that have assessed the actual impact of peacekeeping through empirical evidence demonstrating that, despite its limitations, it is an immensely powerful policy instrument. Recent studies on peacekeeping have demonstrated an increased level of theoretical and methodological sophistication, giving way to more substantive discussions about its effectiveness. Among the issues being debated are the optimal organization or regional actor responsible for carrying out peacekeeping activities; whether utilizing force is effective; whether longer and more intrusive transitional administrations are effective; and how it affects other goals such as democratization beyond just establishing a stable peace. The latest research has also delved into nuanced analysis regarding local political actors and communities, highlighting their impact on this matter (Fortna & Howard, 2008). In conclusion, the literature on peacekeeping has evolved significantly over time.

This book focuses on UN-sponsored peace missions only, though other supranational organizations like NATO, the European Union (EU), and African Union (AU) carry out PKOs either independently or in collaboration with the UN. For example, as of today, as part of NATO's Kosovo Force, approximately 3,700 troops operate in Kosovo (NATO,

2023). NATO also actively takes part in securing the Mediterranean Sea (to expand the options available to counter the threat of international terrorism); in conducting a training mission in Iraq (the “NATO Mission Iraq” at the request of the Iraqi government and in coordination with the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS) since 2018; and in providing air and sealift support for AU peacekeepers in 2005 and 2007. At the request of the AU, NATO is also offering the African Standby Force (ASF) concept support for capacity-building and expert training. The ASF is a component of the AU’s attempts to build long-term peacekeeping capabilities.³ The Common Security and Defence Policy of the EU gives the union the operational capability to send out both military operations and civilian missions. The scope of activities is outlined in the EU Treaty and includes tasks related to humanitarian aid and rescue, conflict prevention and peacekeeping, and the use of combat forces in crisis management, including efforts to promote peace, cooperative disarmament operations, military advice and support, and post-conflict stabilization (EU, 2018). The AU’s Peace Support Operations Division (PSOD), also known as the African Standby Force Continental Planning Element, was established in 2004. Within the Peace and Security Department, PSOD responds to issues relating to Peace Support Operations (PSOs). It sets together policies, guidelines, agreements, frameworks, and processes to bring together regional peace and security institutions. All PSOs are authorized by the AU Policy Organs, including the Peace and Security Council and/or the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (Assembly) (AU, 2023).

Today, PKOs are faced with new challenges that require them to adapt their strategies. Modern peacekeepers are now deployed in the midst of civil wars with active insurgencies, rebel organizations that recruit transnationally, and armed groups that employ terror tactics. Moreover, PKOs are also grappling with doctrinal changes and expansive mandates that sometimes make the mandates unachievable.

In this volume, we aim to shed light on the experiences and perspectives of UN peacekeepers, with an emphasis on the significant contributions made by Bangladeshi peacekeepers. Bangladesh, a country renowned for its commitment to peacekeeping, has consistently been one of the largest contributors of troops to UN missions. This book provides a platform for these peacekeepers to share their personal stories, insights, and lessons learned. Their firsthand experiences offer a glimpse into the realities of PKOs, exposing the human dimensions of this noble endeavor. By elevating

³ Ibid

their voices, we not only celebrate their noble contributions but also offer valuable lessons and inspiration to future generations of peacekeepers.

This book has taken a novel approach to understanding the challenges of PKOs through the eyes of peacekeepers using storytelling. Being one of the world's oldest crafts, the power of storytelling reminds us of the sacrifices made by peacekeepers in foreign lands. Here, 37 peacekeepers from Bangladesh, Norway, Peru, and Argentina tell their stories of duty, responsibilities, and sacrifices, which inspire us to appreciate the crucial role played by PKOs in keeping peace in a turbulent world.

In this book, we have adopted a 'narrative inquiry approach' that enables us to explore and understand peacekeepers' lived experiences in UNPKOs. Through narrative inquiry, we seek to gather and analyze stories shared by individuals to gain insights into the ways in which we (the readers) can make meaning of their life experiences. Central to this methodology is the concept of meaning-making, which emphasizes how individuals construct and interpret personal narratives that shape their lives. The use of narrative inquiry in our research has been particularly useful in the exploration and understanding of sociocultural and institutional dimensions that peacekeepers witnessed during their tours of duty. Furthermore, this methodology is closely associated with the exploration of both lived experiences and cultural perspectives.

It is pertinent in this book to see how we used "new narrative research" (Casey, 1995), also known as narrative inquiry, which focuses directly on UN peacekeepers' lives and lived experiences. The shift to a teller's point of view has not only been observed in storytelling in the strictest linguistic sense in this book. For instance, some stories here do not have protagonists or climactic moments; instead, they present brief moments from the past that are thematically related (Kamil et al. 2001). While there are different interpretations of narrative inquiry, we agree that storytelling is at its core. In this book, the peacekeepers have shared significant events along an evolving timeline as a means of capturing meaningful experiences and insights.

Referring to Mead's lectures on 'mind, self, and society' at the University of Chicago in 1934, (Mead, 1934) narrative research on personal identity has coexisted alongside a history of relational-self thinking. The focus is primarily on the self within social contexts as we interact with others and how our experiences shape our understanding of ourselves. In this perspective, the 'peacekeeper' identity is more about relationships with

people and the environment where they worked rather than individualism; it comprises narratives that reflect their daily accounts as they engage with the world around them (ibid, p, 243).

Narrative analysis examines how stories reflect the identities of storytellers (i.e., peacekeepers). These stories offer insights into unique social environments and are considered “documents of life”. A person’s experience is shaped by their social life, and so a story about them only makes sense in this context. Narratives can strengthen and rethink the relationships between individuals, communities, and their languages (Falconi & Graber, 2019).

The writing of the book involved a meticulous and rigorous approach to ensure the selection of high-quality narratives and expert insights. The compilation process began by reaching out to a diverse range of Bangladeshi and other peacekeepers, including those currently serving or retired from UN missions. Their stories were collected through interviews, written submissions, and collaborative discussions, allowing for a comprehensive representation of their experiences.

For the memoirs of ex-UN force commanders, a similar approach was employed, with in-depth interviews conducted to capture their reflections and insights. These interviews served as the foundation for crafting the memoirs, ensuring a balanced portrayal of their experiences and leadership journeys. The memoirs underwent a thorough review process to maintain accuracy and consistency.

In selecting expert contributions for the book’s third section, researchers from various disciplines and backgrounds were invited to provide their perspectives. These experts were chosen based on their extensive knowledge, research, and practical experience in the field of peacekeeping. Their insights and recommendations were carefully evaluated to ensure relevance, originality, and alignment with the book’s objectives.

Throughout the compilation process, rigorous selection criteria and quality control measures were implemented. The aim was to present a diverse range of voices and perspectives while upholding the highest standards of authenticity, credibility, and relevance. Each story, memoir, and expert contribution was thoroughly scrutinized to ensure its value and contribution to the overall narrative.

Preserving the authenticity of personal accounts while maintaining confidentiality and sensitivity was of utmost importance throughout the book’s creation. Considering the potential risks and ethical considerations

associated with sharing personal experiences from conflict zones, measures were taken to protect the identities and personal details of the individuals involved.

Pseudonyms or other forms of anonymization were used to safeguard the privacy and security of the peacekeepers and their counterparts. Where necessary, specific details that could compromise individuals' safety or violate confidentiality agreements were omitted or modified without compromising the essence of their stories or insights.

The book's contributors, including the peacekeepers, ex-UN force commanders, and research matter experts, were provided with clear guidelines and consent processes to ensure that their involvement was voluntary and conducted in an environment of trust and respect. The importance of informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for personal boundaries was emphasized at all stages of the compilation process.

By adhering to these principles, the book aims to present a truthful and authentic representation of the experiences and perspectives of the individuals involved in UN peacekeeping while upholding their confidentiality and ensuring their personal safety.

Although Canada is considered a pioneer peacekeeping country, the book offers a comparative analysis of research data from different nations' military organizations and, most importantly, the largest troop-contributing nation in the UN: Bangladesh (as of 2023). Canada's contribution to UNPKOs goes back decades since Pearson's ideas of using uniformed personnel with the consent of conflict parties were implemented as a PKO model. After all, Canada was a pioneer country in terms of troop contributions, and Canadian soldiers and leaders not only participated in UN peacekeeping missions but also helped shape the mandates and strategies employed in those missions. So far, Canada has participated in 12 UN PKOs, but its commitment to UNPKOs has been limited in recent years. Canada was also home of the premier UNPKO training center called Pearson's Peacekeeping Centre (1994–2013).

Recently, Canadian Peacekeeping Veterans Association, has published the inaugural edition of the anthology titled "PK75: Stories of Canadian Peacekeepers," accessible at <https://www.cpva.ca/cpva-pk75-anthology>. Additionally, for those seeking insights from a strategic military perspective in UNPKO, the works of Hanrahan, Maisonneuve, Caron, Cox, Crabbe, Elms, Goodspeed, Hale, Howard, Jorgensen, Labbe, Lightburn, Liston,