

Contributor Profile: Malawi

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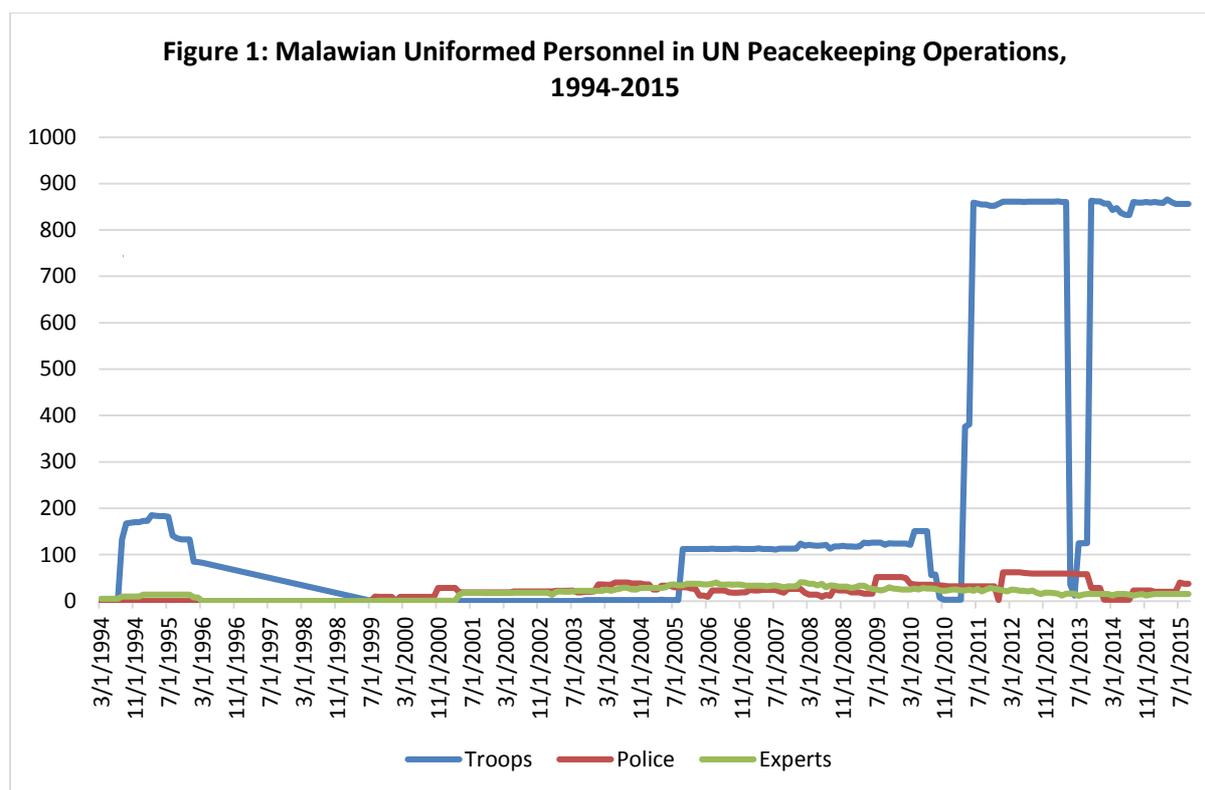
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Active armed forces ¹	Helicopters & fixed-wing transport	Defense Budget	UN Peacekeepers	UN Contribution Breakdown	Other Significant Deployments
5,300 World Ranking (size): 133 Army: 5,300 Navy: 220 Airwing: 200 + Paramilitary: 1,500	AIRCRAFT Transport: 4 HELICOPTERS Multirole: 2	2014: US\$42m (0.95% of GDP) 2013: US\$24m (0.63% of GDP) 2012: US\$31m (0.75% of GDP)	944 (76 women) (31 Oct. 2015) Ranking: 30	MONUSCO: 866 (10 experts, 856 troops) UNAMID: 69 police officers MINURSO: 3 experts UNISFA: 1 troop UNOCI: 5 (3 experts, 2 troops)	None
Defense Spending / Troop ² : US\$8,400 (compared to global average of approximately US\$65,905 and regional average of approximately US\$537).					

Part 1: Recent Trends

Malawi first provided UN peacekeepers in 1994 when the country became a democracy after thirty years of one party rule. The overt security sector reforms facilitated by the country's democratization won it international recognition and erased the pariah status it faced under Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda (the first post-colonial ruler who held office for 30 years). Since then, peacekeepers from Malawi have served in several missions, mainly in Africa but also beyond, such as in Kosovo. Malawi's stature in international peacekeeping increased in 2013 when it started contributing a battalion to [MONUSCO's Force Intervention Brigade \(FIB\)](#) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Before that, from 2011 to mid-2013, Malawi's other major deployment was a battalion in UNOCI in Côte d'Ivoire.



The Malawi Defence Force (MDF) started with small numbers of peacekeepers, in large part because it experienced many years of neglect under Dr Banda's rule. (Banda had favored the Malawi Young Pionners (MYP), a paramilitary wing of the Malawi Youth.) Its deployments to Rwanda and DRC in 1994 and 2005 respectively were of company size. However, the financial benefits this brought prompted MDF and national command authorities to explore avenues for expanding Malawi's peacekeeping role.³

In the FIB in DRC, Malawian troops fought together with battalions from Tanzania and South Africa, and played an instrumental role in neutralizing the M23 rebels in November 2013. Malawian soldiers fought alongside their Tanzanian counterparts (as part of combined Task Groups) in key battles in defense of Kiwanja and Rutshuru Areas which are 70km (43 miles) north of the provincial capital Goma. They also played significant roles in the final decisive battles at M23's logistical and command strongholds at Mt Tchanzu on the border with Uganda where Malawi, Tanzania and South Africa provided mortar, artillery and close air support respectively to the Congolese army (FARDC) units. In addition, the FIB units provided intimate tactical, logistical, first line medical treatment and casualty evacuation support to FARDC soldiers on the front line. After the defeat of M23, the Force Intervention Brigade is turning its focus toward other armed groups in the eastern DRC, including the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR, Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda) and the Ugandan rebel group the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF).

In recent years, Malawi's police contribution has hovered around 50, though the Inspector General of Police (IG) has at times requested the training of up to three times that figure in order to cater for rotations and build a steady pool of officers ready to deploy when needed. The Malawi Police Service (MPS) also faces training capacity challenges due to the growing complexity of police tasks in UN missions and the rigorous nature of UN Selection Assistance Team (UNSAT) examinations. To ensure that more officers qualify for deployment, the MPS

has previously requested peacekeeping training assistance to augment its foundational training. To this end, since 2005, the Norwegian Government has been central in sponsoring UN Police Officers Courses through the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation (SARPCCO).⁴

Part 2: The Decision-Making Process

The President, who is the Commander-in-chief of the MDF, has the final authority and responsibility for decisions to deploy troops and/or police abroad for peacekeeping according to Section 161 of the [Constitution of the Republic of Malawi](#). The MDF Commander and the Inspector General are key advisers and influencers in the process while the Defence Force Council and the Ministry of National Defence also have an oversight role.

Other crucial players in getting Malawi a slot, in particular UN missions, are the country's lead negotiators on this issue: its Permanent Representative to the UN and the Defence Adviser in New York, who act under the umbrella of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Once there is an opportunity for peacekeeping participation, the Directorate of Military Operations (DMO) at MDF Headquarters calculates proportionate figures of troops for each Brigade, Department or Service to contribute to the composite battalion. The units Malawi has sent to all peacekeeping theatres have been composite units and not pre-formed. As such, the brigades and units (including all departments) are advised to submit names. Once the nominal roll is compiled, a date is set for the troops to report to the Malawi Armed Forces Colleges where they undergo medical tests and then start pre-deployment training with local instructors and ACOTA or military advisers from the United States of America (USA) and/or United Kingdom (UK).

Prior to the FIB mission in DRC, the pre-deployment training activities involved "peacekeeping" roles and tasks like small unit operations, civil military relations, driving lessons, international law, human rights and military staff skills among others. But since Malawi became part of the FIB, the training has intensified to reflect the peace enforcement dimension of MONUSCO's mandate. As such British and American military advisers have enjoyed more time and contact (up to five months) with the troops than the ACOTA instructors. Both British and American instructors have also conducted field visits to DRC to evaluate the effectiveness of their training assistance. After pre-deployment training, the troops then return to their respective units to await deployment. A week before deployment, the troops re-assemble at the Malawi Armed Forces College (MAFCO) for final administrative arrangements. Military Observer Courses and other specialist courses are also regularly conducted at MAFCO to maintain a group of officers who can deploy as observers or experts once there is an opening.

To be considered for deployment on peacekeeping missions, soldiers and officers must be physically fit. Individuals with serious medical conditions do not qualify. Those with obvious personal, marital or mental problems are also excluded until such issues are resolved. Recently, a directive was issued that unless one has special technical or language skills, troops must not enjoy repeat deployments in UN missions before others have had the chance. This decision was taken to enhance fairness and curb favoritism and the monopolizing of opportunities among a small group of personnel. Measures have also been taken to increase the number of women deployed and also ensure that there are always women available for any mission. Currently, 5% of the battalion deployed to MONUSCO and 45% of police officers deployed to UNAMID are female.

With regard to the Malawi Police Service, the office of the Deputy Inspector General Operations (DIG Ops) coordinates peacekeeping activities. On receiving a UN request for police personnel, DIG Ops issues a vacancy for eligible officers to apply. Among other requirements, including possession of a driving permit, only those that have served for at least two years can apply. Successful applicants are shortlisted to undergo preliminary interviews by a local Selection Team. A UNSAT then conducts further interviews and examinations and successful candidates undergo the UN Police Officers Course (UNPOC) pre-deployment training. The Service Training Officer oversees the training aspects in consultation with the Inspector General's Office. Candidates train either at Police Training School (PTS) in Blantyre or Central Region Training Centre (CRTC). The examinations are conducted at Police Headquarters in Lilongwe. At least one third of any cohort are women. Norway and Denmark have been the major sponsors of police pre-deployment training so far.

There have been reports of corruption or favoritism in the Malawi Police Service regarding peacekeeping selection.⁵ Nonetheless, successful candidates reiterate that the process is rigorous and that no one can influence results because of the presence of UNSAT. The differences in perception between those that have participated and those who have not could be attributed to lack of knowledge/appreciation of the selection process.

Part 3: Rationales for Contributing

Political rationales: Malawi's image was negatively affected during the one party and dictatorship era of President Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda because of its close ties with the apartheid regime in South Africa. Consequently, it was isolated within the region and beyond. Through peacekeeping, Malawi is trying to break free from the shackles of isolation and obscurity and to achieve international recognition and raise its international standing.

Normative rationales: Participation in UN peacekeeping is seen as an extension and manifestation of the peaceful ideals that characterize Malawi. As "*The Warm Heart of Africa*," Malawi strives to project itself as a peaceful country on a mission to advance peace initiatives globally through UN peacekeeping.⁶ This is also in line with the commitment to help, as a member of the UN, in maintaining international peace and security as enshrined in the [UN Charter](#). Furthermore, Section 13(k)(l) of the [Constitution of the Republic of Malawi](#) also underscores the need for rule of law and good governance and peaceful settlement of disputes to prevail in the international realm. In that vein, the MDF is authorized by the constitution to perform such other duties outside the territory of Malawi as may be required of them by any treaty entered into by Malawi in accordance with the prescriptions of international law. This is mainly actualized through participation in peacekeeping operations. Other bodies to which Malawi is a member such as [SADC](#), the [AU](#), and the [Commonwealth](#) have similar ideals like promoting respect for international law and settlement of international disputes by peaceful means as expressed in their charters. In the case of SADC, Malawi is member of the [SADC Brigade](#), which is a regional component of the African Standby Force aimed at tackling conflicts on the African continent.

Security rationales: Malawi sends troops on UN peace operations to help curb conflicts from undermining peace, security and development. This is true in the case of DRC where several Malawi [government officials](#) have reaffirmed Malawi's belief that the conflict in DRC continues to undermine the SADC sub-region's security, prosperity, and stability. More so, with refugee flows from DRC, Burundi and Rwanda into Malawi, participation in peacekeeping is deemed to be one way to stem the humanitarian crises associated with such

conflicts. Furthermore, to prevent the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire from jeopardizing Africa's security and development agenda, Malawi sent troops there when its President Dr Bingu wa Mutharika was Chairman of African Union.

Economic rationales: Due to limited financial allocation from the Treasury in recent years, the MDF has looked to peacekeeping as a means to generate additional resources and financially empower its soldiers, who mostly rely on their salaries to support their families. For example, with a company deployed within MONUC, Malawi received total discounted benefits that amounted to MK3,264,804,804.29 [US\$7,866,999.53] against total discounted costs of MK1,966,036,201.97 [US\$4,809,725.79]. This represents a benefit-cost ratio (BCR) of 1.66:1.⁷ In the case of an 850-strong battalion, as Malawi deployed to Côte d'Ivoire and DRC, the Government receives roughly US\$1,851,183 (K768, 240,943) on a quarterly basis from self-sustainment and major equipment reimbursements alone. Additional sums for personal clothing and equipment allowances as well as personal weaponry and ammunition reimbursements, pushes the amount to approximately K1 billion/quarterly, translating into K4bn (US\$9.6 million) per year. This is equivalent to a quarter of the 2014/15 revised Malawi National Budget allocation to the MDF. The money from UN peacekeeping has hitherto allowed the MDF to supply its contingents with spares and other supplies so that participation in peacekeeping can continue without major problems. The MDF also uses revenue from the UN to patch up the shortfalls from the ever-dwindling government budgetary allocations to fulfill various planned activities like rehabilitation of structures. At the individual level, the troops get allowances of \$1,028 (K426,620) per month, which is three times or more the net monthly salary of middle to lower ranking troops. This additional income enables the troops to undertake projects that they could not otherwise afford had they not participated in the mission.

Institutional rationales: The dawn of multi-party politics in 1995 influenced the direction of the MPS and MDF through the revision of the constitution and enactment of new Police and Defence Acts that guide the security and defense policy of the new Malawi. In the defense review that took place in the late 1990s, the internal role of the army receded, except for emergency and disaster relief, leaving the army fully integrated into foreign peacekeeping missions as well as regionally within SADC. The MDF and Police now rely on participation in peacekeeping operations for exposure, experience and training. Due to other priorities, politicians focus on balanced budgets for growth and development, leading to cutbacks in defense expenditure which severely affects training and the procurement of military equipment. Instead, capacity-building initiatives and training assistance programs such as the U.S. ACOTA and France's Reinforcement of African Peacekeeping capabilities programme (RECAMP) have enabled the MDF to gain training and assistance. Members of police have also built capacity and honed skills in extensive pre-deployment training initiatives such as UN Police Officer's Course (UNPOC).

Part 4: Barriers to Contributing

Financial costs: It is expensive to send troops on UN missions. The selling of a presidential jet to buy military hardware for Malawi's operations in DRC in 2014 [sparked an outcry](#) that military hardware is not a priority.⁸ It is unlikely that the MDF can participate in more peacekeeping missions at present due to lack of resources. The high standards required by the UN would probably require the government to spend more resources on the procurement of military hardware at the expense of domestic priorities like the shortage of drugs in hospitals, HIV/AIDS, declining social services and hunger. Providing police peacekeepers also involves financial challenges for the MPS to regularly run the initial selection and training programs for police officers before the UNSAT phase.

Difficult domestic politics: Because of a general lack of knowledge about the benefits of peacekeeping to the country, the public is not fully supportive of peacekeeping missions.⁹ Public outrage is even louder when a soldier dies in such missions going by comments monitored on social media once a [death](#) is announced. Of recent memory are the deaths of a soldier during the mission in Côte d'Ivoire in 2011 and three deaths, one military observer and two soldiers serving with the FIB in DRC in 2014.¹⁰ Overall, Malawi has lost 13 peacekeepers on UN missions. As such the authorities are always cautious when deploying personnel. Another challenge is differences in public opinion over the rationale to participate in UN peacekeeping while the country is faced with a border dispute with Tanzania. Malawi disputes Tanzania's claim to half of the lake which is Africa's third biggest.¹¹ Some quarters are supportive of the contributions the country is making to global security through UN peacekeeping, while others bemoan a care-free attitude by authorities to deploy soldiers abroad as the dispute with Tanzania over part of Lake Malawi gathers momentum as evidenced by the alleged intimidation of Malawian fishermen on the lake by Tanzanians.¹²

Resistance in the military: The MDF fully supports outside deployments as a means to keep busy, secure funds, and gain exposure. No commander has ever called for a reduction in UN peacekeeping but has rather maintained the status quo or improved whatever they found upon assuming office.

Legal obstacles: There are no legal obstacles to Malawi's participation in UN peacekeeping.

Part 5: Current Challenges and Issues

Since moving from a dictatorship to democracy, Malawi has been an active participant in UN peacekeeping operations. Though grappling with serious capacity and financial constraints to effectively participate in such missions, Malawi's contributions are steadily making an impression thanks to political and donor support. However, this might be jeopardized if the border dispute with Tanzania is not amicably resolved. While this remains a diplomatic conflict, a change in the political or military situation along the northern border may cause Malawi to rethink its priorities and reduce or halt its peacekeeping contributions.

Secondly, the manner in which recent procurement of additional arms and equipment for the DRC mission was carried out exposed a total lack of consultation. After selling off the presidential jet for \$15 million, the government of former President Dr Joyce Banda [used the money](#) to settle part of the US\$19.2 million debt which it owed a South African arms supplier, Paramount Group. The company had reportedly supplied the MDF with military equipment for its deployment in DRC. Indeed, some new equipment arrived in the mission area once the mission was already underway. It included armored personnel carriers, grenade launchers, ammunition, and mobile field kitchens. However, the [national outrage over the anomalies in the whole transaction](#) tarnished the noble activity of peacekeeping. Sentiments from [parliament](#) that it is not thoroughly briefed on peacekeeping missions have only heightened the belief that peacekeeping decisions are taken by a select few with minimal transparency.

Part 6: Key Champions and Opponents

The public and other domestic organizations seldom discuss peacekeeping issues, which are confined to the MDF and MPS corridors. However, one identifiable [advocate of the MDF's](#)

[development as a regional peacekeeping force](#) is the former MDF Commander, General Marko Chiziko, who was influential in expanding the MDF's peacekeeping role. Having seen the relative benefits that accrued to the MDF and troops through a company that deployed in DRC from 2005 to 2010 as part of MONUC, he vowed to get the troops another mission as it was the only way to improve their welfare.¹³ Malawi's first deployment of a battalion to a UN peacekeeping operation, in Côte d'Ivoire, took place during his time in office. On the other hand, although the [procurement of arms was marred by controversy](#), former president Mrs Joyce Banda deserves some kudos for deciding to buy additional tools so that MDF could effectively participate in the peace enforcement role under FIB.

While most citizens have been indifferent to Malawi's participation in UN peacekeeping, some pockets of resistance can be found or spotted on social media, especially when there is a peacekeeping-related story like a soldier dying in the mission area. Lately, those opposing Malawi's participation in UN peacekeeping cite the failure by authorities to focus on domestic threats like the Lake border dispute with Tanzania. Beyond the borders of Malawi, there have been [opposing views](#) concerning the deployment of the Force Intervention Brigade to DRC, to which Malawi is a member, but these have had little influence on peacekeeping dynamics in Malawi.

Part 7: Capabilities and Caveats

Donor support has played a critical role in facilitating the realization of Malawi's peacekeeping ambitions. Training and some resource needs have been met with assistance from mainly the U.S., Britain, and Canada. The [U.S. Government provided](#) equipment and built a transit camp that can house an entire battalion at the Malawi Armed Forces College (MAFCO) in Salima, where troops camp when undergoing peacekeeping training. The Peace Support Operations Training Centre at the MAFCO has therefore steadily grown in size and relevance as it oversees and coordinates pre-deployment and other peace support training programs for the MDF. It too received financial support from the U.S., Britain, and Canada and now boasts spacious office facilities and the latest ICT infrastructure. Malawi currently contributes an infantry battalion to DRC that is partially mechanized and partly motorized. The robust nature of operations and the rough terrain demand more armored vehicles for transport and combat. To adequately resupply the troops between Malawi and the mission areas there is a need for capabilities such as strategic airlift, which are lacking. This leaves Malawi dependent on the UN to facilitate the movement of its equipment and troops. The only potential caveat that might impact on Malawi's contribution to UN peacekeeping is the emergence of a serious threat to national sovereignty and territorial integrity, such as the dispute with Tanzania over Lake Malawi. If the dispute escalates, the MDF might have to focus energies on that impending conflict and ignore peacekeeping for a while.

Part 8: Further Reading

Benson Linje, *The impact of participating in United Nations Peace Support Operations: the case of Malawi Defence Force* (Nordic Africa Institute, 2014).

Martin Rupiya, "[The odd man out: A history of the Malawi army since July 1964](#)" in M. Rupiya (ed.), *Evolutions and revolutions: A contemporary history of militaries in Southern Africa* (Institute for Security Studies, 2005).

Kings M Phiri, "[A case of revolutionary change in contemporary Malawi: The Malawi army and the disarming of the Malawi Young Pioneers](#)," *Journal of Peace, Conflict and Military Studies*, 1:1 (March 2000).

J.M. Mambo, *Cost-Benefit Analysis of Military Involvement in Peace Support Operations: The case of Malawi Defence Force* (Mzuzu University, 2010).

Notes

¹ Unless otherwise stated, data is drawn from *The Military Balance 2015* (London: IISS/Routledge, 2015).

² Defense Spending/Troop is the total defense budget (in US\$) divided by the total number of active armed forces. Uses latest figures available from IISS, *The Military Balance 2015*.

³ J.M. Mambo, *Cost-Benefit Analysis of Military Involvement in Peace Support Operations: The case of Malawi Defence Force* (Mzuzu University, 2010).

⁴ Festus B Aboagye *et al* (2010) Bottlenecks to deployment! Police capacity building and deployment in Africa. Pretoria, ISS Paper 221: Institute for Security Studies (ISS) p.12

⁵ Author's interviews with police officers, 17-30 October 2013.

⁶ One of the message themes in the Malawi Defence Force Public Affairs Guidance (PAG) for the Deployment in DRC as given by Cabinet ministers, Defence officials and Communication Specialists. 2013

⁷ Mambo, *Cost-Benefit Analysis of Military Involvement in Peace Support Operations: The case of Malawi Defence Force* (Mzuzu University, 2010).

⁸ Malawi Today. "[UN says Malawi was not obliged to buy military equipment](#)," *Malawi Today*, 15 March 2014.

⁹ Benson Linje, *The impact of participating in United Nations Peace Support Operations: the case of Malawi Defence Force* (Nordic Africa Institute, 2014), p.24

¹⁰ All MDF-related stories can be accessed on NYASATIMES ARCHIVES:
<http://www.nyasatimes.com/tag/malawi-defence-force/>

¹¹ "[Malawi refers lake border dispute with Tanzania to AU](#)," *BBC News*, 17 October 2012.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ General Chiziko addressing troops in Moyale Barracks, Mzuzu in 2010.