

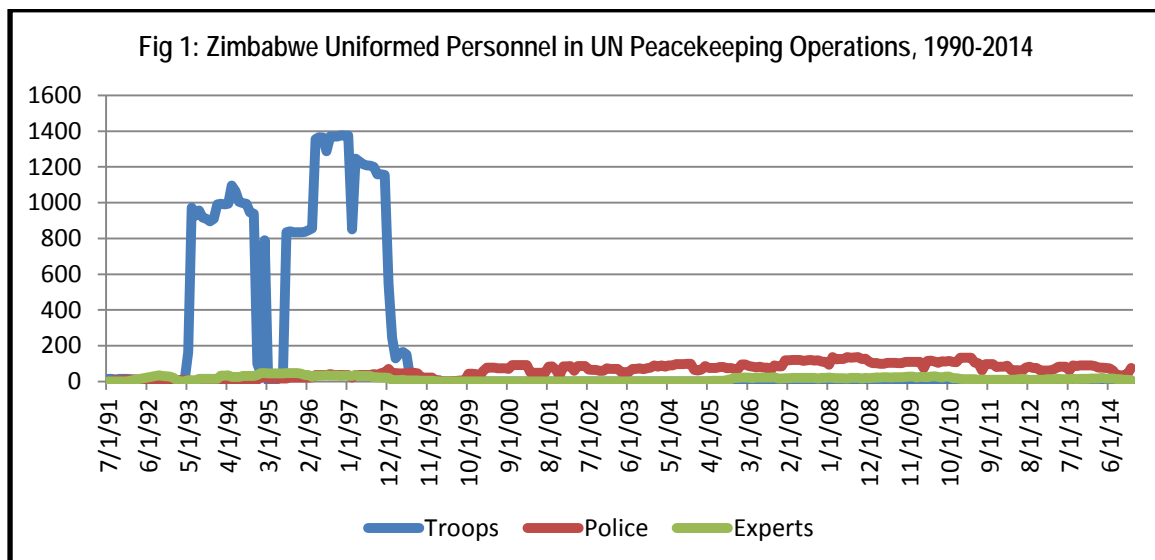
Contributor Profile: Republic of Zimbabwe

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Active armed forces ¹	Helicopters & fixed-wing transport	Defense Budget	UN Peacekeepers	UN Contribution Breakdown	Other Significant Deployments
29,000	18	2014: \$368m (est)	85 (35 women) 31 Dec. 2014	UNAMID 10 (5 police, 4 milex, 1 troops) UNISFA 4 police UNMIL 33 (31 police 2 milex) UNMISS 36 police UNOCI 2 milex	Police: Lesotho (SADC Observer Mission)
Global rank: (size): 78	Attack helicopters: 6	2013: \$356m (3.24% of GDP)	Ranking: 73 rd (30 th largest contributor in African Union)		
Army: 25,000 Air force: 4,000 Plus 21,000 paramilitary	Multirole 10 Transport (medium): 2	2012: \$318m (2.95% of GDP) 2011: \$198m (2.1% of GDP)			
Defense Spending / Troop: ² US\$12,276 (compared to global average of approximately US\$70,000)					

Part 1: Recent Trends

Zimbabwe was born in 1980 with the pivotal assistance of a Commonwealth Monitoring Force under “Operation Agila.” This was during the Cold War and the UN was deliberately excluded as Britain, the decolonizing power, wanted to control and influence a short transitional period between December 1979 and April 1980.³ From being one of Africa’s post-Cold War peacekeeping powerhouses in the 1990s, over the past decade Zimbabwe’s contributions to UN peace operations have been modest. Zimbabwe’s first UN deployment came in 1991 in the UN Verification Mission in Angola (UNAVEM II). The good performance of the Zimbabwean detachment earned the country a credible reputation that led to further UN requests for its personnel. Since then, personnel from the country’s uniformed forces, including the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF), the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) and the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services (ZPS), have participated in UN missions including Angola, Côte d’Ivoire, East Timor, Eritrea, Kosovo, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan and South Sudan.



There was a surge in Zimbabwe's troop contributions for UN-led operations in the 1990s until the country's contentious troop deployment to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) from 1998 to 2002, supposedly as part of a Southern African Development Community (SADC) initiative. The basis for the initiative code-named "Operation Sovereign Legitimacy" was the collective self-defense of President Laurent Kabila's regime. Zimbabwe subsequently downscaled its troop contributions to UN missions against a backdrop of socioeconomic decline. Its contributions have ranged from the provision of troops and police to correctional services and civilian personnel.

Significantly, women's representation in Zimbabwe's peacekeeping forces continues to increase. In 2011, 31% of the Zimbabweans in peacekeeping forces were women, and this increased to 42% in 2012.⁴ The Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) was particularly close to the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) target of 20% female representation; as of 2012, 18% of the peacekeepers from the police were women.⁵ As of December 2014, roughly 41% of Zimbabwean peacekeepers are female.

Zimbabwe has also provided personnel to non-UN missions in Africa. In 2014, Zimbabwe contributed police officers to SADC's observation mission in Lesotho to assist in maintaining peace and security after political tension erupted in that country. In late 2012, elements of the army were deployed to the border of Mozambique in preparation for possible operations against Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) fighters. Zimbabwe had earlier in the 1980s deployed troops to support the Mozambican government against RENAMO and to safeguard the transportation corridor running to Beira port in Mozambique, which is an economic lifeline for the landlocked country. Zimbabwe's single largest international deployment since the Mozambique operation was its dispatch of approximately 10,000 personnel to DRC between 1998 and 2002. This was part of the controversial military intervention launched in partnership with fellow SADC states, Angola and Namibia, into DRC in support of the Kabila regime. Zimbabwe also provided a police commissioner for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

Part 2: Decision-Making Process

Zimbabwe's 2013 [constitution](#) states that two major stakeholders should play important roles in determining Zimbabwe's participation in peace missions – the Executive and the Legislature. This is in sync with the national defense policy.⁶ The key role players from the Executive include the President's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Justice. The decision on whether to provide troops and/or police and corrections officers remains the prerogative of the President, who is the Commander-in-Chief of the ZDF according to Article 213(1) of the constitution.

The Multilateral Affairs (Political) department within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinates Zimbabwe's participation in international peace missions. This includes chairing a political-military committee whose task is to: i) consider the ability to support the proposed commitments; ii) examine the peace missions' mandate; and iii) consider the availability of resources to meet the missions' requirements. According to the constitution, the President is obliged to inform Parliament "promptly and in appropriate detail" of any deployment. The constitution notionally empowers Parliament to review the decision of the President to deploy Zimbabwean forces in peace missions.

Zimbabwe has an opaque procedure for the vetting and selection of peacekeepers for assignment to UN operations. It is alleged that nepotism, corruption and favoritism affect

the selection of personnel to be deployed on UN peace missions. This is due to the handsome recompense offered by involvement in UN peace missions. Furthermore, the selection process is sometimes based more on political loyalty than operational competence.⁷

Part 3: Rationales for Contributing

Political rationales: Zimbabwe's involvement in peace missions is linked to its membership in international and regional organizations such as the UN, the African Union and SADC. Zimbabwe contributes to peace missions in fulfillment of its commitment to international and regional peace, stability and development. Zimbabwe has not expressed a preference to provide peacekeepers to AU operations over other types of peace support operations. Indeed, it has tended to deploy more in UN and SADC missions. Politically, participation in peace missions offers Zimbabwe a mechanism to assert influence in regional affairs and enhance its image and standing in the international system. The role played by Zimbabwe's uniformed forces in peace missions in Africa, both UN and SADC-sponsored, has placed Zimbabwe firmly in the Pan Africanist foreign policy camp. This is particularly significant as Zimbabwe sees its own success as bound with the African continent.

Economic rationales: Economic rationales, both at the national and individual levels have been a major reason behind Zimbabwe's deployments to peace operations. Some analysts believe that Zimbabwe has deployed personnel, including correction officers, as a money-making scheme for the country and its security services in times of economic problems.⁸ Individual personnel have benefitted financially from the generous compensation offered by the UN. However, the Zimbabwe government has a record of taking a slice of the UN monthly allowance entitled to each soldier, in addition to his or her normal pay at home.

Security rationales: Zimbabwe participates in peace missions in line with its [constitution](#). This provides for: i) defending national security or national interests such as those mentioned above in the case of the Mozambique intervention and ii) defending the country's territorial integrity from a foreign country. Zimbabwe's 1998 intervention in the DRC alongside Angola and Namibia was officially portrayed as a principled response – through the SADC Organ, which was then chaired by Zimbabwe's president, Robert Mugabe – to a formal request by a member state to help it preserve its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Institutional rationales: Zimbabwe's government has expediently used participation in peace missions to portray a favorable public image for the country's maligned security services. For example, continued participation in peace missions has become a convenient cover whenever the police forces are criticized for domestic human rights abuses. Authorities identify Zimbabwe's record in peace missions as testimony to the trend towards professionalism and discipline of the security services. Participation in peace missions has also served as an avenue for the country's uniformed forces to acquire valuable external experience and training. Deployment has exposed Zimbabwean peacekeepers to international norms and standards.

Normative rationales: Zimbabwe's commitment to international and regional peace, stability and development has been an underlying rationale for providing peacekeepers. But this has been shaped by an explicitly normative preference to support Pan-Africanism and the related "African solutions to African problems" mantra.

Part 4: Barriers to Contributing

Alternative institutional preferences for crisis management: Zimbabwe has been prepared to deploy through regional organizations (SADC in Lesotho), alliances (SADC's Operation Sovereign-Legitimacy in DRC), or unilaterally (Operation Butterfly in Mozambique). The choice to deploy depends on considerations of defending national security or national interests and assisting troubled countries in the region.

Financial costs: Zimbabwe's economic decline since the late 1990s has meant that the country has found it difficult to bankroll participation in UN operations from limited national resources due to the high startup equipment costs and time lag between deployment and receipt of UN reimbursements.

Difficult domestic politics: The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions and some pro-democracy activists have in the past called on the UN not to request Zimbabwe's military and police personnel arguing that their human rights record at home renders them unfit for international peace missions. The army and the police have been accused of participating in institutionalized political violence and intimidation. These calls do not appear to have deterred Zimbabwe's participation in UN peacekeeping. The controversial military deployment to the DRC from 1998 to 2002 was unpopular among the public in Zimbabwe for the unconfirmed number of casualties and its contribution to socio-economic problems in the country, due to unbudgeted expenditure on security.

Damage to national reputation: Zimbabwe's participation has been seen as an asset by the Zimbabwean government, with officials using it as a tool to enhance the image of the country's security personnel.

Legal obstacles: Zimbabwe's participation in peace missions is supported by Article 213 (3) of the 2013 [Constitution](#) of Zimbabwe (see above) and the country's defense policy that provides for meeting legal international obligations.

Part 5: Current Challenges and Issues

The Zimbabwe government laments that sanctions, particularly an arms embargo, imposed on the country by the European Union, the United States, Australia and New Zealand since 2001 has [forced the ZDF to review](#) its participation in international peacekeeping missions due to its depleted resources and other logistical constraints. The country has only managed to undertake limited procurement of defense equipment mainly from China in recent years.⁹

Part 6: Key Champions and Opponents

The Executive has consistently supported deploying the country's uniformed personnel in international peace missions. The ZDF, ZRP and ZPS have also proved willing to undertake such deployments. Zimbabwe National Army commander General Philip Sibanda, a former UNAVEM III Force Commander and member of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (2000), constantly stresses the importance of maintaining Zimbabwe's deservedly high reputation for competence in international peace missions. Zimbabwe's decision to send its troops to DRC from 1998 to 2002, which resulted in an unconfirmed number of casualties and negatively impacted on the country's economy due to unbudgeted expenditure on security, proved unpopular with the public inside Zimbabwe. However, the operation was lucrative for some Zimbabwean leaders who, according to various UN Panels reports, benefited from plundering DRC's natural resources.¹⁰

Part 7: Capabilities and Caveats

Zimbabwe hosts the SADC Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre (SADC-RPTC) located in Harare, which has played a decisive regional security role. The RPTC provides training to prepare civilian, police and military personnel from SADC states for potential deployment in peace missions. These personnel are expected to form part of SADC's contingent of the African Standby Force. The SADC RPTC has contributed significantly to regional peace mission exercises such as Exercise GOLFINHO in South Africa and Namibia in 2009, *Exercise Blue Crane* in South Africa in 1999 and *Exercise Blue Hungwe* in Zimbabwe in 1997.

Zimbabwe is one of the few countries in the world where the number of female peacekeepers from the police force meets the UN DPKO recommendation of at least 20% female representation. The country's prison and correctional services officers have participated in UN peace missions including in Liberia and South Sudan. Zimbabwe has limited modern military capabilities such as strategic airlift/sealift, vehicles, suitable and serviceable weapons and communication equipment needed to contribute to UN peacekeeping. The country's economic decline has negatively impacted the procurement of military assets. China has been the only source of defense equipment for the limited procurement that the country has been able to undertake.¹¹ Zimbabwe's armed forces have taken part intermittently in multinational training exercises.

Part 8: Further Reading

Knox Chitiyo, [*The Case for Security Sector Reform in Zimbabwe*](#) (London: Royal United Services Institute Occasional Paper, September 2009).

Knox Chitiyo and Martin Rupiya, "Tracking Zimbabwe's political history: The Zimbabwe Defence Force from 1980–2005," in Martin Rupiya (ed.), *Evolutions And Revolutions: A Contemporary History of Militaries in Southern Africa* (Pretoria: ISS, 2005), pp.331-64.

Ulf Engel, "Challenges of foreign policy and international dimensions" in Martin Rupiya (ed.), *Zimbabwe's Military: Examining its Veto Power in the Transition to Democracy, 2008-2013* (Pretoria: The African Public Policy & Research Institute, 2013), pp.80-105.

SADC Gender Protocol 2013 Barometer, "[Zimbabwe](#)," pp.109-113.

Notes

¹ Unless otherwise stated, data is drawn from IISS, *The Military Balance 2014* (London: IISS/Routledge, 2014).

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 2014*.

³ See Susan E. Rice, *The Commonwealth Initiative in Zimbabwe, 1979-1980: Implications for International Peacekeeping*, (D. Phil thesis, New College, Oxford University, 1990), pp.67-68 and Jeremy Ginifer, *Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Rhodesia/Zimbabwe*, (New York: United Nations, 1995), p.2.

⁴ See SADC Gender Protocol 2013 Barometer, "Zimbabwe," p.109 and "[ZRP Continues to Shine in Peacekeeping Missions](#)," *Daily News*, 30 May 2014.

⁵ See SADC Gender Protocol 2013 Barometer, "Zimbabwe," p.109 and "[ZRP Continues to Shine in Peacekeeping Missions](#)," *Daily News*, 30 May 2014.

⁶ See Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe, *National Defence Policy* (Government Printers, Harare, 1997).

⁷ Knox Chitiyo, [*The Case for Security Sector Reform in Zimbabwe*](#), Royal United Services Institute Occasional Paper, September 2009, p.15.

⁸ Email correspondence with Martin Rupiya, Executive Director, The African Public Policy Research Institute,

⁹ IISS, *The Military Balance 2014*, p.468.

¹⁰ See UN Security Council, Final Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, S/2003/1027, 23 October 2003; UN Security Council, Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, S/2001/357, 12 April 2001; UN Security Council, Addendum to the Report of the Panel of Experts, S/2001/1072, 10 November 2001.

¹¹ IISS, *The Military Balance 2014*.