

Contributor Profile: Hungary

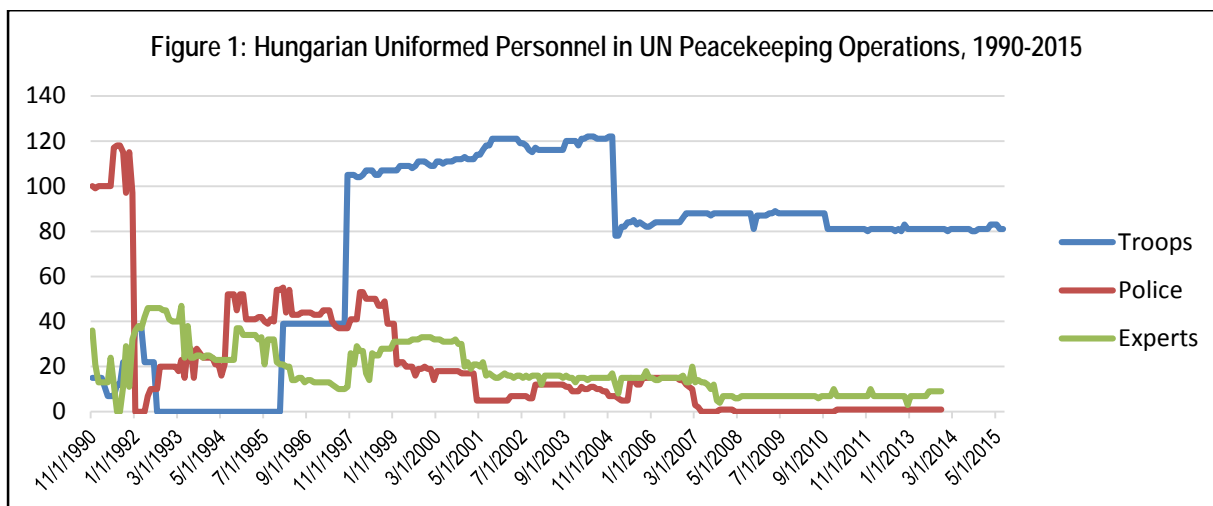
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Active Armed Forces ¹	Helicopters & Fixed-wing Aircraft	Defense Budget	UN Peacekeepers	UN Contribution Breakdown	Other Significant Deployments
26,500 World Ranking (size): 70 Army: 10,300 Air: 5,900 Joint: 10,300	Attack: Mi-24: 11 Transport: Heavy: ² C17: 3 Medium: 13 Mi-8: 8 Light An-26: 4 Multipurpose: Mi-17: 7	2016: \$1.055bn (0.88% of GDP est.) 2015 ³ \$905.6m (0.79% of GDP) 2014: \$1.104bn (0.79% of GDP) 2013: \$1.150bn (0.81% of GDP)	93 (12 female) (31 August 2015) Ranking: 72 nd (13 th EU member; and 12 th NATO member)	MINURSO: 7 UNIFIL: 4 MINUSCA: 4 UNFICYP: 77 UNMIK: 1 (police)	Total of 597 non-UN contributions NATO (74%) KFOR: 361 RSM: 137 ⁴ EU (17%) EUFOR ALTHEA: 49 EUTM Mali: 5 EUTM Somalia: 4 OCSE (4%) Kosovo: 4 Ukraine: 18
Defense Spending /active troop: US\$37,185 (compared to global average of approximately US\$65,905; and a regional European average of US\$7,755)					

Part 1: Recent trends

Contributing to global peace and security is one of Hungary's most important security goals. Hungary first deployed peacekeepers to a UN mission in 1988, just prior to its change of domestic regime and the year when UN peacekeeping forces received the Nobel Peace Prize. Its contributions grew steadily until 1999 when Hungary joined NATO and prioritized NATO operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Macedonia. However, after joining the European Union in May 2004, Hungary broadened its deployment of troops to foreign missions. It has also deployed to OSCE and other multilateral (OIR) missions.

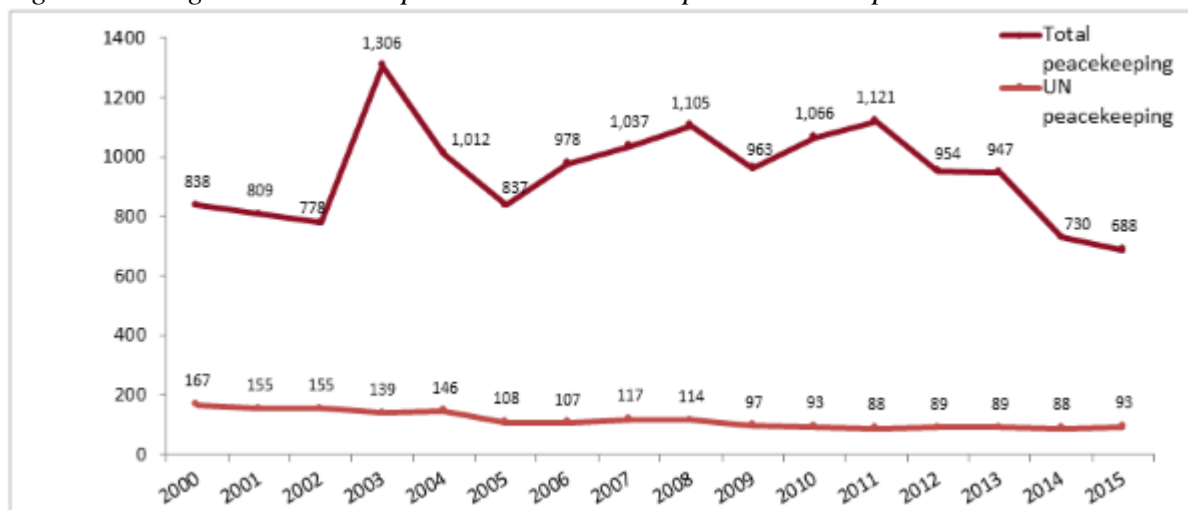


According to the Security and Defence Policy Guidance of the Parliament (1993), Hungary’s initial focus in UN peacekeeping was the Middle East (UNIIMOG, UNOSGI, UNIKOM) and Africa (UNTAG, UNAVEM II, ONUMOZ, UNAVEM III, MONU, UNOMIL, UNOMUR). Its police deployment (129 personnel) in Cambodia in 1992-93 was the exception to its African focus. Hungary’s involvement in UN peacekeeping did not alter its main foreign policy goals (Euro-Atlantic integration) or international relations more generally. Since 2000, Hungary has contributed to eight UN missions in eight countries on three different continents. A total of 1,845 Hungarian peacekeepers (1,465 soldiers and 380 police) have served under the UN flag.

The establishment of the OSCE (in 1994) helped Hungary widen its focus to include the Caucasus and Central Asia. 1995 marked a turning point in Hungarian peacekeeping with the deployment of a troop contingent to Cyprus (UNFICYP military) and a mixed military and police contingent to the Sinai (Multinational Force and Observers, MFO). Police were also deployed for the first time, in Western Sahara (MINURSO). Since then, Hungary tried to meet the requirements of all these international organizations. Hungarian foreign and security policy focused on the Western Balkans, and the majority of operations were undertaken in that region, including UN (UNMIBH, UNMIK), NATO (IFOR, SFOR, KFOR), and EU missions (EUFOR, EULEX). After joining the EU (in 2004) Hungary’s contribution to peace operations included the CSDP⁵ missions. Today, the second geographic focus in peacekeeping is the Mediterranean Sea and the Middle East, where the earlier UN commitments (UNFICYP, MINURSO, UNIFIL) are still maintained.

Hungary’s peacekeeping contributions are based on a ratio used by policymakers and planners in the ministry of defense to balance between different international organizations. It now stands at about 70% going to NATO operations, 20% to the EU, and 10% for the UN.

Figure 2: Hungarian Peacekeepers: UN and other Operations Compared



Part 2: Decision-Making Process

After the fall of Communism, the modified Constitution of 1989 immediately recognized the international need for peacekeeping by “the request of the United Nations.” The subsequent political developments with NATO and EU membership also led to changes in the Constitution. Specifically, in 2003, the Parliament decided to transfer its full decision-making powers to the Government if a North Atlantic Council (NAC) decision on troop deployment and movement was taken. The same jurisdictional change was made in 2006 with respect to the EU. In 2007,

after signing of the Treaty of Lisbon, the EU's common foreign and security policy was integrated into the Constitution in order “to preserve peace, to prevent the development of conflict and to strengthen national security.”

After 2010, the new Government changed the relevant legislation and re-wrote all the strategic documents. The [Fundamental Law of Hungary](#) adopted by the Parliament on 18 April 2011 states: “The core activities of the Hungarian Defence Forces (HDF) shall include ...*peacekeeping tasks arising from international agreements, and humanitarian activities according to the rules of international law.*” (Art 45.) The Law also regulates decision-making about participation in peacekeeping missions sharing the responsibility between the Government and the Parliament. The Fundamental Law distinguishes between “the cross-border maneuvers” and “deployment” which are decided on a case-by-case basis either by the Parliament or the Government. The Government decides on any cross-border maneuver of the HDF and foreign armed forces. The Government also has the authority to resolve any deployment of Hungarian troops and foreign armed forces based on a decision of the EU and NATO. The Parliament decides on any foreign or domestic deployment and foreign stationing of the HDF. If the Government takes a decision on any peacekeeping or humanitarian activity abroad it shall immediately report to Parliament, and notify the President of the Republic.

Due to the new Fundamental Law (which replaced the old Constitution), the whole legal framework of defense related issues had to be reviewed and adjusted accordingly. In this regard, the Parliament approved the [Act CXIII of 2011](#) on National Defense and the Hungarian Defense Forces, and on the Implementation of Special Legal Measures. The National Defense Act also contains relevant provisions on peacekeeping.

The new Hungarian government also set up a new foreign and security policy (“global opening”) and re-evaluated its defense policy (renewal of the armed forces). *However, the overall level of ambition for peacekeeping has not changed, remaining at the level of 1,000 soldiers and 100 police.* The government formulated a new [National Foreign Policy Strategy](#) in 2011, developed a new [National Security Strategy](#) and a new [National Military Strategy](#). These strategic documents state that Hungary supports the UN to preserve its leading role in global governance, crisis management, and peacekeeping. But they also underline that Hungary shall contribute to UN, NATO, EU and OSCE-led international peacekeeping, stabilization or humanitarian operations. The new military strategy is more specific when it emphasizes the leading role of the HDF in peace operations. Indeed, 96% of the 1,845 Hungarian peacekeepers deployed in UN missions since 2000 were military.

Part 3: Rationales for Contributing

Hungary’s contribution to UN crisis management and peacekeeping has changed over the past 25 years. In the 1990s, Budapest had a highly versatile ambition to participate in UN activities reflecting the changing foreign policy of the Republic of Hungary. However, after obtaining NATO and EU membership attention towards UN missions reduced and it became more difficult to contribute to new UN missions. The only exception came in 2014 when the Government decided to join the UN’s MINUSCA operation after termination of EUFOR RCA in the Central African Republic. This was notable, since there were no “extra” UN peacekeeping commitments in 2012-13, even though this coincided with Hungary’s campaign for getting a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

Political Rationales: In 1988, the decision to contribute to UN operations was one of the signals of the changing Foreign Policy in the People’s Republic of Hungary. The new Defense Law of

1993 already included the UN peacekeeping commitment into the tasks of the HDF. Since then the UN Peacekeeping is seen as support of the general Hungarian UN policy, and as a source of international prestige. Although these political values remained important NATO and EU membership have taken priority.

Economic Rationales: Economic rationales are not significant for Hungary. However, participation in peacekeeping has influenced the national defense industrial policy and created new demand for weapons and military equipment. The training and exercises occasionally provide opportunities for Hungarian defense companies to demonstrate their products to an international audience (e.g. the Capable Logistician 2015 multinational exercise). The current mission in Mali, where Hungary is now the leading country for training snipers, created interest in the Hungarian *Gepard (Cheetah) sniper rifle*. The UN reimbursement system also helps make decisions because UN missions are cheaper than NATO or EU ones. However, for the individual personnel, NATO and EU missions might be more appealing, since soldiers and policemen make better money due to the missions' complexity and security risks.

Normative Rationales: Due to its Foreign and Security Strategy, Hungary wants to profile itself as a country that can significantly contribute to international crisis management in its region and the wider Euro-Atlantic area. Although, the HDF are dominating in peace operations, there is rising demand for police and civilians primarily in EU and UN missions. The Peacekeeping Training Centers (particularly the police one) have started to train civilians and create a civilian expert pool in order to deploy them in peace operations. A special focus is on members of the justice system, customs, national security service members, human rights and gender experts and other professionals.

Institutional Rationales: In the 1990s, UN peacekeeping represented significant advantages for Hungarian military and police personnel (international experience, language practice, and professional career). However, these benefits were gradually resolved after 2000. Today, a military / police career depends much more on participation in major NATO and EU operations. UN peacekeeping missions are considered as the third level of international deployment after NATO and EU operations. However, this does not mean that participation in UN missions has less prestige or influence on military / police careers.

Except for general political commitments to international organizations, Hungary does not have other strong rationales for increasing its peacekeeping contribution.

Part 4: Barriers to Contributing

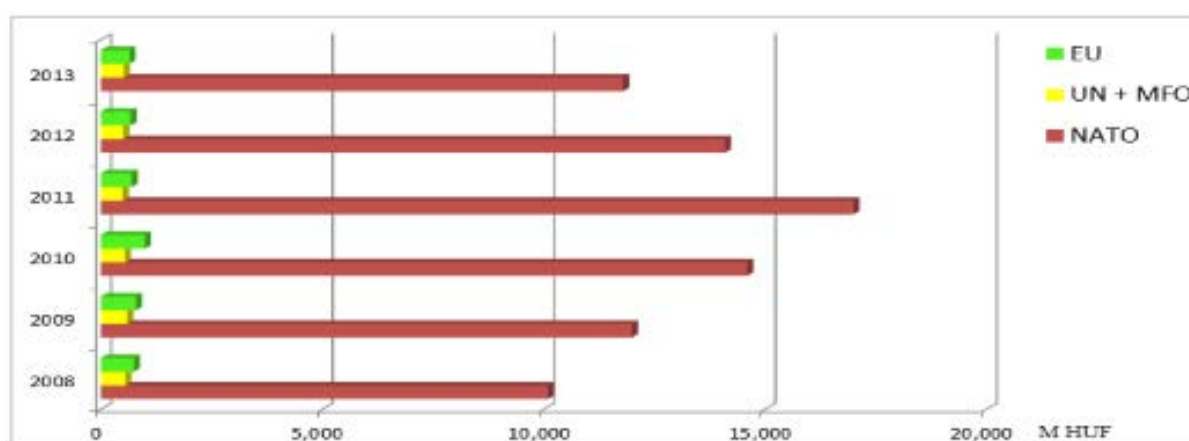
Alternative institutional preferences for crisis management: The UN enjoyed priority status in peacekeeping until 1995 when the IFOR Operation was launched in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Since then the Balkans, and other international organizations (NATO, EU) operating in the region, are Hungary's top political priorities. In addition, Hungary's membership of NATO and EU means there is more pressure to contribute to their operations. This impacts its ability to deploy in UN missions. Furthermore, as a strategic partner of the USA, Hungary has regularly deployed troops at Washington's request. The Gulf War (1991), MFO (1995), Afghanistan (2002), and Iraq (2004) are the good examples. As of August 2015, there were also [116 soldiers to Northern Iraq](#) to contribute to Operation Inherent Resolve against ISIS.

Alternative political or strategic priorities: The changing international security environment and domestic politics also influences peacekeeping. If the crisis concerns Hungary directly, the government gives it priority. Last year collective defense tasks received priority, this year

migration has been defined as the number one threat which changes the military's focus. [From 15 September 2015](#) the HDF will be involved directly in border protection with 3,000 troops.

Financial Costs: The most serious barrier to increasing Hungary's contributions to the UN is the reduction of the defense budget. Hungarian military expenses have steadily declined since 2010, fluctuating between 0.7% and 0.8% of GDP, which is approximately US\$1 billion. The Ministry of Interior has experienced similar problems during this period. The Hungarian contribution to UN missions fell to under 100 people after the 2008 financial crisis. The situation further deteriorated with the increase of troops to NATO's ISAF operation in Afghanistan and more frequent involvement in EU military and civilian missions. As Figure 3 shows, the majority of peacekeeping costs go to NATO operations, with UN missions representing only a low proportion of the total Hungarian peacekeeping costs (US\$0.5-1.5 billion).

Figure 3: The Hungarian Peacekeeping Costs (in million HUF)⁶



Hungary pays its UN peacekeeping dues according to the UN Regulations. In 2010 the country was included in the *F level group*, providing a 60% discount for Budapest. Today, Hungary contributes 0.1064% of the total UN peacekeeping budget. In the last fiscal year, from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014, Hungary's payment for UN peacekeeping was US\$11 million. The peacekeeping fee is included in the budget of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Legal Obstacles: There are no clear legal obstacles to the participation of Hungarian forces in international peacekeeping forces. The current hierarchical structure of the legislation (Constitution, Defense Act, Service Law, government decisions and decrees, ministerial decrees and instructions, policies and doctrines) provides a good legal basis for taking quick and smooth decisions. Table 1 shows the details of the decisions that made possible the Hungarian *military* contribution to the current UN missions. Hungary's military contribution to UN peacekeeping is managed by the Joint Forces HQ, Székesfehérvár, and supervised by the Ministry of Defence (MOD), Budapest. Police and civilian peacekeeping is organized by the Central Police HQ and led by the Ministry of the Interior (MoI), Budapest. As shown by experience, the MOD and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade play an important role in the initiation of Government and Parliament decisions.

Table 1: Characteristics of Peacekeeping Decisions in Hungary

Mission	Decision type	Start	End	Approved number	Currently	Country
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MINURSO	Government decision 2251/1999 (X.7)	1999	indefinite	10 (during rotation 20)	7	Western Sahara
UNMIK	Government decision 2224/2000 (IX. 21)	1999	one year, and then indefinite	10 (after 2008 – 1)	1	Kosovo
UNIFIL	Parliament Resolution 55/207 (VI.13)	2006	until the mission end	10	4	Lebanon
UNFICYP	Government decision 2156/1995 (V.29)	1995	indefinite	150	77	Cyprus
MINUSCA	Government decision 1257/ 2015 (IV.23)	Sept 2014	until the mission end	2 (during rotation 4) 2 military observer	4	CAR

Difficult domestic politics: Hungarian domestic politics has increasingly become less permissive when it comes to deploying peacekeepers to UN missions. Part of the reason is the rise of radical right-wing party, Jobbik, which wants to use the HDF only domestically, to defend the country, or, at most, to deploy it solely in the Balkans. The Jobbik Party usually does not support the involvement of Hungarian forces in NATO or ad-hoc coalition operations. It opposed the current deployment of the Hungarian military contingent to Iraq.

Part 5: Current Challenges and Issues

After the 2014 election, the Government was returned to power and reviewed its peacekeeping strategy. This was necessary because NATO's ISAF mission in Afghanistan was scheduled to end in December. Although Hungary also joined the Resolute Support Mission, its peacekeeping contribution decreased by 300 soldiers. Furthermore, in view of the changing security environment (e.g. crisis in neighboring Ukraine, war with ISIS, a wave of refugees from the Balkans to Hungary etc.) and the new political reality in the Parliament, the Government shifted the focus of peacekeeping activities towards the Western Balkans. As part of this decision, Hungary's military presence in Kosovo was doubled. The Government review brought some positive news for the UN too, because the country joined the MINUSCA operation in Central African Republic. 2015 brought further challenges. After 20 years of contributing to the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) in Sinai, the Hungarian presence was closed on 1 April 2015. The withdrawal of the Hungarian joint (military and police) contingent from the mission was mainly driven by financial concerns. However, due to the need to participate in the coalition's fight against ISIS, the Parliament approved the Government's suggestion to send 150 troops to Erbil, Northern Iraq. Participation in the operation against the Islamic State will cost HUF6.8 billion (US\$24.1 million) this year.

Based on the current security situation and the security policy trends, it is likely, that Hungary will not change its UN peacekeeping policy in the near future. The MOD will probably maintain its contributions to UN-led peacekeeping operations at 10% of Hungary's total contributions to foreign peace operations. In its sub-region, only two other NATO members, Slovakia and Romania, give more peacekeepers to the UN than Hungary. However, if the Government had not limited its ambition to an operational percentage/quota and set a goal to climb the UN peacekeeping rankings it would have been enough to send 100 more soldiers to become one of the UN's top 60 contributors, and just another 200 peacekeepers to enter the top 50.

Part 6: Key Champions and Opponents

Hungary's UN peacekeeping policy is dictated by those political leaders and government officials who hold power and hence are involved in the relevant decision-making process. Unfortunately, those individuals who served in the high UN positions (e.g. Mihály Simai,

Kálmán Mizsei, Tibor Tóth) or represented Hungary in the UN (e.g. André Erdős, Gábor Bródy, Csaba Kőrösi) usually did not get UN-related national positions after their duty, and, consequently, they were usually not able to influence UN-related national decisions. Perhaps, the only exception was Maj. Gen. József Bali, the former UNMOGIP Force Commander (1999-2000), who served in the MOD for almost a decade as an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Defense Policy.

Over the past decade, [Hungarian domestic politics](#) became more complicated when it comes to peacekeeping. In 2010, the radical right-wing party, Jobbik (meaning “Better” in Hungarian) won seats in the Parliament. Today Jobbik is the second strongest party in Hungary. After the 2014 elections, other new political parties (Democratic Coalition /Demokratikus Koalíció/, Together 2014 /Együtt 2014/, Dialogue for Hungary /Párbeszéd Magyarorszáért/, the Hungarian Liberal Party /Magyar Liberális Párt/) achieved seats in the Parliament. Therefore, it became more and more difficult to reach a political consensus and to achieve full political support. As the UN Security Council decisions do not authorize the Government to take “automatic” action, strong political support is always necessary to take brave decisions in the Parliament.

However, public opinion in Hungary is generally very positive towards UN peacekeeping, with thriving organizations such as [the UN Association of Hungary](#), which is part of the World Federation of UN Associations (WFUNA), and the two civilian organizations [The Hungarian Reservists Association](#) and [The Hungarian Peacekeepers’ Association](#). Peacekeeping training is carried out by the [Ministry of Interior International Training Center](#) (ITC, Budapest) and the [HDF Peace Support Training Centre](#) (PSTC, Szolnok). The PSTC (Szolnok) organizes international military observer courses (IMOC) whose accreditation was renewed again this year until 2019 by the [UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations](#). The PSTC provides training for civilians as well and prepare them for state-building tasks.

Part 7: Capabilities and Caveats

NATO, the EU and the regional international commitments involve the combat and service support capabilities of [the HDF](#) and do not allow for deployments of regular troops to UN operations. The lack of sufficient airlift and mobile logistic capability of the armed forces is also preventing deployment of companies or battalions to UN missions in North Africa and the Middle East, despite the potential operational partnership opportunities in UN peacekeeping.. Therefore, sending individuals or groups remains the only option, but sending them to remote operations is possible only if Hungary receives full support from a “framework nation.” Consequently, the HDF is able to send only observers and specialists (doctors, lawyers, cartographers, training experts, etc.) to missions. An additional restriction is linguistic capabilities (for instance, the lack of French). Recently the HDF used reserve officers and NCOs for this purpose. Hungary normally accepts all mission rules of engagement, operational standards and does not have any particular national caveats with regards to treatment of Hungarian peacekeepers. The HDF needs more resources, new equipment and better training to provide better mission capabilities.

Part 8: Further Reading

József BODA, “The Hungarian Experience of Training Civilian Police,” in M. BLAGESCU & A. SCHNABEL (eds.), *Reforming UN Peace Operations: New Challenges for Peacekeeping Training* (UN University Press, 2002), pp.77-80.

- János BESENYŐ, [Experience of the United Union Peacekeeping Operation in Western Sahara](#). PhD Thesis, Budapest: Zrínyi Miklós National University, 2010, pp.1-14.
- János ISASZEGI and István RAVASZ, “The Hungarian Defence Forces from 1989 to present. Hungary’s Contribution to International Operations,” in R. HERMANN (ed.), *Illustrated Military History of Hungary* (Zrínyi Kiadó, 2012).
- Zoltán SZENES, “[Peacekeeping in the Hungarian Defence Forces](#),” AARMS (Academic and Applied Research in Military Science) 6:1 (2007): 121-33.
- Attila ZIMONYI: [Hungary and the United Nations](#). Conference Paper, UN Office in Vienna, 2008.

Notes

¹ Unless otherwise stated, data is drawn from *The Military Balance 2015* (London: IISS/Routledge, 2015), pp.48-49.

² In the framework of a multinational strategic airlift unit deployed in Pápa air base, Hungary. <http://www.31fss.com/papa/> (24 July 2015).

³ US\$/HUF 282,66 (as of 24 July 2015) <http://www.kormany.hu/hu/nemzetgazdasagi-miniszterium/napi-jelentes/napi-jelentes-2015-07-24>

⁴ NATO’s Resolute Mission in Afghanistan (2015-).

⁵ Common Security and Defence Policy in the European Union.

⁶ Parliament Information Service, Budapest, 2015/7.