

Contributor Profile: Moldova

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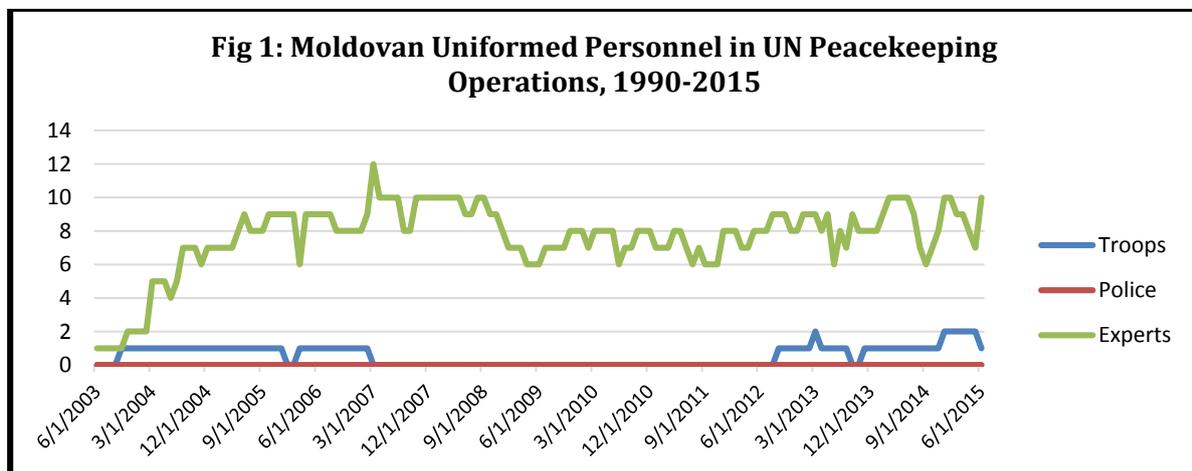
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Active armed forces ¹	Helicopters and fixed-wing transport	Defense Budget	UN Peacekeepers	UN Contribution Breakdown	Other Significant Deployments
5,350 (active) World Rank (size): 139 Army: 3,250 Air 800 Logistic Support: 1,300 Paramilitary: 2,400	Attack helicopters: 0 Multirole: 4 Transport: 2 Medium	2015: (\$23.65m ²) 2014: \$25m (0.33% of GDP) 2013: \$24m (0.30% of GDP)	11 (1 woman) 31 Aug. 2015 Ranking: 101st	UNOCI 3 experts UNMIL 1 expert UNMISS 3 experts UNMIK 1 expert MINUSCA 3 (2 experts, 1 troop)	Total 47 KFOR: 41 troops (33 infantry, 7 engineers, 1 staff officer) OSCE Tajikistan: 1 demining officer OSCE Ukraine Mission Planning: 1 staff officer OSCE Monitoring Mission, Ukraine: 1 staff officer OSCE Mission, Russian-Ukrainian border crossing: 2 military observers EU Military Advisory Mission, CAR: 1 advisor
Defense Spending / Troop: US\$5,000 (compared to global average of approximately US\$65,905, and to a regional average (Russia and Eurasia) of approximately US\$6,800)					

Part 1: Recent Trends

Moldova’s National Army first deployed uniformed personnel as UN peacekeepers in April 2003. To date, it has deployed a total of 77 service members to the UN missions in Côte d’Ivoire (32 officers), Liberia (25), Sudan (13), South Sudan (4), Georgia (2) and Kosovo (1). Moldova’s contribution to UN peacekeeping is modest (usually about 10 persons per year). This is because the country is undergoing a process of modernizing its defense forces, has a limited budget, and faces internal security constraints, including an armed conflict and peacekeeping operation on its own territory.³



More troops have participated in NATO-led operations (with UN authorization), including 11 in SFOR (2002-04), about 40 in Iraq (2003-04), and about 40 in KFOR (starting in March 2014). Moldova has had no co-deployments in the UN missions. Moldovan contingents have not yet been able to deploy in an independent capacity, but were attached to or integrated within other national contingents such as the recent mission to KFOR where a Moldovan contingent was integrated with an Italian contingent, with logistic support provided by Italy and transportation by the US. Moldova also participates in regional security missions, including OSCE missions in Chechnya 1997-99 (2 officers), Kosovo 1998-99 (3 officers), Georgia 2000-04 (13 officers), Macedonia 2000-02 (2 officers) as well as Tajikistan (1) and Ukraine (4).

In the context of its European integration aspirations and negotiations of the Association Agreement (signed in 2014 and ratified one year later) Moldova has concluded an [Agreement with the EU](#) (2012) on establishing a framework for participation in EU crisis management operations, which raises the opportunity to participate in EU-led missions. Moldova has deployed two military observers to the EU Military Advisory Mission in Central African Republic (2015) and Mali (2014) and it is expected that its presence in EU-led missions will increase.

The principles of the Republic of Moldova's participation in international peacekeeping operations stem from the country's neutral status, its fundamental interests, and its international commitments. In providing peacekeepers, Moldova requires that all personnel have had proper training. The first step towards achieving this goal was the establishment of the Peacekeeping Battalion No.22 (infantry and military engineers) on May 11, 1999. This was the first unit of the National Army aligned to NATO standards. In 2012, it obtained NATO's status of "Operational Partner" for participation in the mission in Kosovo and became a partner of the US [Global Peace Operations Initiative](#) (GPOI). Cooperation with NATO has increased in the last decade as the Alliance expanded and provided assistance for the modernization of Moldova's National Army in line with NATO standards. This consists of advisory support (Strategic Defense Analysis), military equipment (43 Humvees), military infrastructure modernization (Bulboaca military base) etc. to enable its participation within international peace operations.

Supporting international peacekeeping efforts is now a priority for Moldova. This is expressed in Moldova's [National Security Concept](#) (Art. 2.1, 3.1, 3.2) and in its current [Military doctrine](#). A [draft of the new Military doctrine](#) proposes participation in international peacekeeping missions (and the development of necessary capacities) as one of the four main strategic military objectives for the country.

However, the modest military financing (around 0.33% of GDP) and the low probability that it will increase (due to the difficult economic situation) makes participation in peacekeeping operations an opportunity for financing the [growing modernization needs](#) of Moldova's army. A Strategic Analysis of Defense of Moldova was undertaken in 2012 and a new Military Strategy was prepared in 2013 ([draft](#)), which defined one of the main objectives as professionalizing the military by increasing the attractiveness of military service.

Part 2: Decision-Making Process

Law nr. 1156 – *Law on the participation of the Republic of Moldova in international*

peacekeeping operations – from 26 June 2000 established the legal framework for Moldova's contribution to international peace operations. The decision about the participation of larger Moldovan contingents in peace operations is taken by the Parliament at the request of the President, who is the Superior Commander of the Military Forces. However, the decision regarding individual attachments of military specialists and police to peacekeeping operations is the responsibility of the line ministries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Ministry of Defense and Information and Security Service). So far, participation within international peace operations has been limited to selected military officers, troops and police forces due to their equipment and logistics.

Moldova is currently revising its [law on participation within international peacekeeping operations](#) because it does not cover aspects such as humanitarian aid, post-war assistance, ceasefire monitoring etc. and does not allow for the participation of civilian specialists alongside military troops/officers and police. [A new draft law](#) is proposed for approval by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (for Government Decision, Presidency and Parliament), which will cover a broader range of operations and ensure wider participation within peace operations with UN and OSCE authorization, since it introduces a single normative framework and refers only to military and police troops, which limits the possibility of involving experts and specialists from other state institutions.

Part 3: Rationales for Contributing

Political Rationales: Participation in peacekeeping is seen as a valuable source of diplomatic capital capable of consolidating Moldova's position and image internationally as a reliable partner. Moldova has the opportunity to be seen as a security provider and partner in maintaining and strengthening international peace and security. This can give more advantages indirectly by creating a support base, which the country can benefit from at international forums and in international projects.

Economic Rationales: After overcoming the preparatory phase, providing peacekeepers gives the Moldovan National Army and an important source of income, proportionally to the level of participation (Article 8 p.2 of Law nr.1156, 26 June 2000). Payment for participation within international peacekeeping operations is transferred directly to the Ministry of Defense. Another important factor is the remuneration received by individual peacekeepers participating in multilateral missions, which is higher than the average pay soldiers receive per year. It is envisaged that a contingent of 150 will participate in peacekeeping missions (including 120 soldiers and sergeants by contract) a number which is planned to be increased at 450. These positions will receive above the average wage of other members of the Army. Indirectly, these 150 jobs are a permanent source of funds from international sources. In addition, individual purchasing power and therefore the amount of expenditures made in Moldova will increase according to the level of compensation and costs savings that each participant will have in the mission. Given that budget forecasts made based on the Medium Term Budgetary Framework do not involve significant increases in budgetary resources for the defense sector, providing peacekeepers represents the only option for the National Army that involves minimal budget increases and is adding to the funds spent on defense sector.

Security Rationales: Moldova's participation in international peacekeeping operations opens a new stage for its contribution to international security. Previous cooperation with EU-countries that are not members of NATO points to the potential, which neutral countries could have for international development and global security. Learning from the

model and experience of other neutral countries, Moldova can participate in UN, EU, OSCE and, when there is an UN mandate, NATO missions. It can become not only a consumer but also a contributor to international stability.

Institutional Rationales: The Participation of the National Army in peacekeeping missions leads to a higher degree of professionalism and operational experience and maintains and enhances professional skills, including interoperability. This helps increase the Army's capacity to carry out its tasks and also gives personnel moral and professional satisfaction. It can also improve the Army's organizational culture and enhance military education. Therefore the quality and image of the National Army will improve, which increases the attractiveness of military service to potential recruits.

Normative Rationales: Providing peacekeepers is a recent and, as yet, not widely discussed topic in Moldovan society. But it can help Moldova to develop its neutrality credentials and show support that it supports the UN and its overall principles of cooperation and international law.

Part 4: Barriers to Contributing

Alternative institutional preferences for crisis management: Moldova has several preconditions for its contributions to international peacekeeping, such as requiring that missions be carried out with a UN or OSCE mandate. Furthermore, Moldova prefers to participate in any mission where the mandate is not seen as imposing peace. The laws that govern peacekeeping contributions allow for participation in other peacekeeping missions besides UN/OSCE-led missions (such as EU and NATO missions) as long as there is a UN mandate and depending on the situation and resources Moldova has at its disposal (e.g. funds, prepared military forces, technical capabilities). Thus far, Moldova has not formed stable preferences for particular alternative organizations, although it continues to deploy most personnel in NATO's KFOR mission in Kosovo.

Alternative political or strategic priorities: Among the European countries, Moldova is the only neutral state that currently has a peacekeeping operation ([the Joint Peacekeeping Forces](#)) on its territory. This requires the National Army to balance the resources used carrying out the peacekeeping operation on its own territory and those it uses on international missions. Although this domestic priority poses some constraints on the possible size of contributions elsewhere, overall, there is a willingness and potential to increase its presence in international peacekeeping missions to 450 persons (3 units each with 150 persons), as envisaged by a [public policy proposal](#) presented by the Ministry of Defense, which aims to increase the attractiveness of military service through contract.⁴

Financial costs: Reimbursement by international organizations for international transport and support in the operational theater is usually done after a contingent returns home, which requires an initial outlay of resources from Moldova's state budget. This is an initial constraint taking into consideration that the National Army lacks adequate financing. Additional funds are difficult to identify (e.g. from the state's reserve fund) and decisions for deployment are hard to approve in the Parliament given Moldova's other development necessities. Moreover, there are also other costs which are not related to deployment such as training, ensuring adequate infrastructure for exercises, providing equipment etc. These costs must be carried by Moldova or paid via technical assistance from bilateral and multilateral donors.

Discomfort with the expanding UN peacekeeping agenda: Moldova does not have a long experience of participation in international peacekeeping missions and the public is generally unaware of such practices.

Exceptionalism: Moldova is a small, neutral state with limited capacities and does not have such tendencies in its foreign policy.

Absence of pressure to contribute: Moldova is willing to contribute within the frames and constraints explained above.

Difficult domestic politics: Since its independence, Moldova has experienced tumultuous politics affected by the dilemma of choosing between the East and West, EU or Russia, pro-NATO or anti-NATO etc. This political divide influences political decisions, including participation in international peacekeeping, especially NATO-led operations. Moldova's participation in international peacekeeping causes discontent to some segments of the population who remain attached to values and visions that prohibit Moldova's involvement in military activities under the mandate of international organizations such as NATO. Such sentiments are used by some domestic groups to put pressure on the coalition government. However, as Moldova's experience of deployment in Iraq has shown, it is not a principle followed in foreign policy decision-making by the former opposition. There is a risk of death and physical and psychological trauma among peacekeepers and Moldova (during the days of the USSR) has a negative memory of military participation in Afghanistan.⁵ Thus, any movement of troops abroad can be likened in the collective memory to the war in Afghanistan. However, given that Moldova's post-independence participation has been limited and without serious losses, public opinion so far is not affected by these considerations.

Damage to national reputation: Moldova does not have a long experience of participation in peacekeeping and the public is generally unaware of such practices.

Resistance in the military: There are no records of such experiences.

Lack of fit with legislative, procurement and operational timelines: This is not a significant factor for decisions about deployment.

Part 5: Current Challenges and Issues

Moldova has limited capacities and lacks adequate financing for its army and police forces, which severely restricts its contribution capacities. Currently, its participation is restricted to individual nominations in UN and EU missions or small groups (Battalion 22 infantry) in NATO missions. Although Moldova's legal framework allows the participation of police as well as soldiers, so far the country has not developed capacities to participate in post-war/civilian missions. There is lack of language skills and qualified human resources due to financial constraints that cause a high fluidity of staff, which necessitates increased resources for specialized training.

Despite these constraints, Moldova plans to increase its participation in international peacekeeping as it opens up the possibility for the Army to earn additional funds to sustain its modernization and increase the level of professionalization and morale. A training center within the Military Academy "[Alexandru cel Bun](#)" was opened in 2010 with foreign assistance. Given the higher remuneration that peacekeepers will receive compared with the

level of salaries in the National Army this initiative can help motivate and professionalize personnel. Currently, a new draft law concerning participation in international peacekeeping is being prepared, which will increase the type of peacekeeping missions Moldova can deploy into. Media reports suggest a possible peacekeeping partnership between Moldova and Romania, which will further increase their capabilities, mobility and engagement in missions.

Part 6: Key Champions and Opponents

Participation in international peacekeeping is based on adherence to the principles of the UN Charter and international law and the process of European integration and cooperation with NATO. Specifically, Moldova has undertaken certain commitments by signing an *Association Agreement* with EU and a special agreement about *participation of RM at EU crises management operations*, as well as an Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) with NATO. Thus, participation is seen positively with the only exception of NATO-led missions, because of the animosities it generates over the neutrality principle of Moldova's foreign policy, integration with the West (EU) or the East (Eurasian Economic Union), and memories from the past (e.g. the Soviet war in Afghanistan). In 2014, the European Integration coalition (of liberal parties) supported the deployment of Moldovan troops in the NATO-led mission in Kosovo while the opposition (socialists and communists) boycotted it. However, when communists formed the majority in the Parliament, the Moldovan military participated in operations led by NATO in Iraq, which was authorized by UN. Institutionally, the Ministry of Defense is the main advocate for Moldova's participation in international peacekeeping while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (MFAEI) has a more cautious stance. Since, to date, police have not been involved in international operations it has not assumed any visible role. The subject of international peacekeeping has not been discussed or analyzed by civil society (think tanks) with the exception of those missions carried out on Moldova's territory.

Part 7: Capabilities and Caveats

Moldova has limited capabilities to participate in peace operations. It has one specialized infantry battalion (n.22 that includes one demining unit) that has participated in NATO missions and has deployed individual military officers and observers in UN and EU missions. Moldova has some old transporters, which it has used between 1998 and 2005 (two helicopters and a cargo plane) in peacekeeping missions. Four Mi-8 helicopters also served in the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). In addition to this, Moldova has 43 Humvees. Nonetheless, as the deployments in Kosovo and Iraq demonstrate Moldova is dependent on cooperation with other contingents to deploy. Although the 2000 *Law on Moldova's participation in international peacekeeping operations* allows the use of border police and carabinieri forces – gendarmerie-type forces controlled by the Ministry of Interior – in international missions, so far they have not been used and do not have specific preparation for external deployment. Currently, Moldova can contribute only to traditional peacekeeping missions as it lacks capabilities to participate in more demanding missions.

Part 8: Further Reading

[Law nr. 1156 regarding participation of Republic of Moldova at the international peacekeeping operations from 26.06.2000 \(Official Gazette\)](#)

[Military Doctrine of Republic of Moldova \(1998\)](#)

[Military Doctrine \(draft\) of Republic of Moldova \(2013\)](#)

[Military Reform Conception of Republic of Moldova \(2002\)](#)

[National Security Conception of Republic of Moldova \(2008\)](#)

[National Security Strategy of Republic of Moldova \(2011\)](#)

Notes:

¹ Unless otherwise stated, data is drawn from IISS, *The Military Balance 2015* (London: IISS/ Taylor & Francis, 2015) and the [Providing for Peacekeeping database](#).

² 451875100 (<http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=358190>) 451 mil MDL at the exchange rate of National Bank of Moldova <http://www.bnm.md/> 28.08.2015 of 19.1 MDL to US\$1 will be around US\$23.64m which is close to the level of previous years allocations. The Moldovan Leu has significantly depreciated from 17.71 MDL to US\$1 in April 2015 when the budget was approved by the Parliament. Given that this year the forecasts about the national economy growth are meagre (recession or zero growth) the military expenditures percentage from GDP seems to keep the same trend of around 0.3% from GDP.

³ After the 1992 armed conflict (Transnistria), Moldova deploys peacekeeping troops alongside those of the Russian Federation and the administration from Tiraspol in the security zone.

⁴ Three contingents by 50 persons who participate by rotation in different missions.

⁵ The Afghanistan war waged by the Soviet Union between 1979-89 saw the participation of over 12,500 Moldovans, of whom 305 were killed and about 500 injured.