

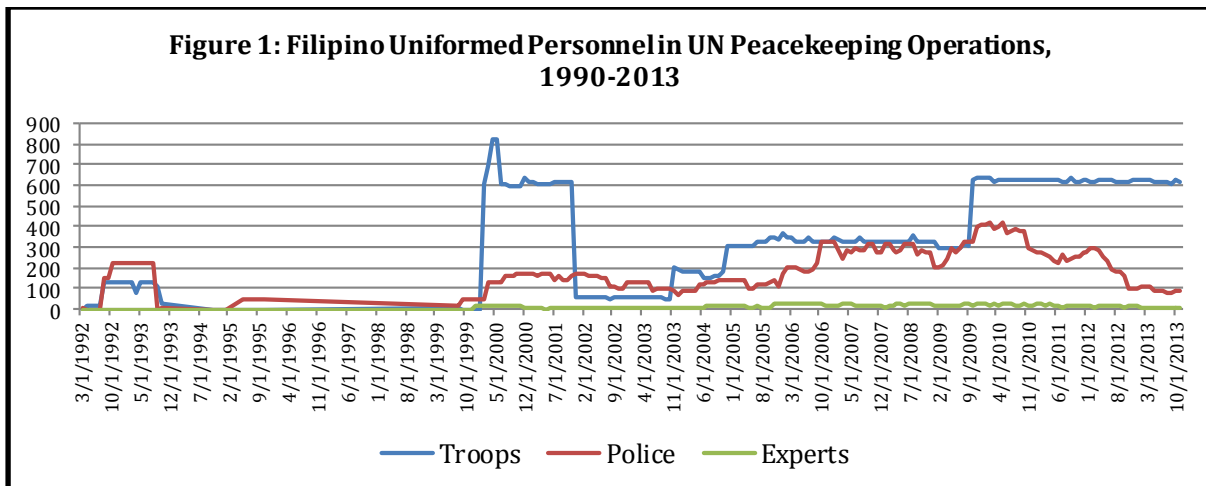
Contributor Profile: The Philippines

Dr. Noel Morada
University of Queensland

| Active armed forces ¹ | Helicopters | Defense budget | Uniformed UN peacekeepers | UN contribution breakdown |
|---|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| 125,000 | 63 | 2012: US\$2.61bn (1.08% of GDP) | 706 (52 female) 30 Nov. 2013 | MINUSTAH 175 (16 police, 159 troops) UNAMA 2 police UNDOF 351 troops UNISFA 1 troop UNIMIL 134 (34 police, 100 troops) UNIMISS 34 police UNMOGIP 4 experts UNOCI 5 (3 experts, 2 troops) |
| World Ranking (size): 59 | MRH 23: 4 W-3 Sokol; 3 AUH-76; | 2011: US\$2.70bn (1.2% of GDP) | Ranking: 33 rd | |
| Army: 86,000 | 3 Bell 412EP Twin Huey; | 2010: US\$2.43bn (1.22% of GDP) | 3 rd among ASEAN states | |
| Navy: 24,000 | 2 Bell 412HP Twin Huey; | | | |
| Air: 15,000 | 11 MD-520MG TPT 40 | | | |
| Paramilitary: 40,500 | Medium 1: 1 S-70A Black Hawk (S-70A-5) Light 39 Bell 205 (UH-1H Iroquois) | | | |
| National Police force: 40,500 | | | | |
| Defense Spending/troop: ² US\$20,872 (compared to global average of approx. US\$67,959) | | | | |

Part 1: Recent Trends

The Philippines was a founding member of the United Nations and began its participation in UN peacekeeping in 1963 in the Congo (ONUC), deploying 63 air force personnel. In the 1990s, it participated in UN peacekeeping operations in Southeast Asia (Cambodia and East Timor), sub-Saharan Africa, Iraq-Kuwait, and Kosovo involving military and police troops (see Figure 1).



A significant increase in Philippine contributions to UN peacekeeping took place in 1999-2002 in East Timor with over 600 troops and over 100 police personnel. It currently deploys approximately 700 peacekeepers and ranks 33rd overall in uniformed contributions and among the top 10 countries for deploying police officers and experts. The Philippines is the third largest UN peacekeeping contributor among ASEAN members after Indonesia and

Malaysia. A further surge in the number of Philippine peacekeepers deployed abroad (over 1,000) occurred between October 2009 and October 2010 when the country began participating in the UNDOF, with over 300 troops. Since 2009, the Philippines participated in about eight UN peacekeeping operations abroad. Between 6-8% of Filipino peacekeepers are women (military and police), most of whom were deployed as part of MINUSTAH and UNDOF. Currently, there are two policewomen deployed under UNAMA in Afghanistan. Apart from participating in UN-led peace missions, the Philippines also sent a humanitarian contingent to Iraq in 2003 following the US invasion of that country, as part of its contribution to the “coalition of the willing” and commitment as a non-NATO major ally of the United States.

Part 2: Decision-Making Process

Decisions on whether to deploy Filipino peacekeepers in UN missions are taken by the executive branch of government. It usually takes some 3-6 months for the government to respond to requests from the UN for peacekeepers. Currently, it is the National Council for UN Peace Operations (NCUNPO), which took over from the Inter-Agency Council-UN Peacekeeping Operations (IAC-UNPKO) in 2010, which is tasked to provide policy direction and oversee the Philippines’ participation in UN peace operations. The NCUNPO is composed of three cabinet ministers from the foreign affairs, defense, and interior and local government departments, with the Secretary of Foreign Affairs as chair. An executive committee assists the council, which is composed of senior officials from these departments, the armed forces, and the national police. A secretariat, under the supervision of the executive committee, serves as the main focal point for Philippine participation in UN peace operations, and oversees all operational activities of the Philippine uniformed personnel under the UN. Non-contingent deployment of uniformed personnel is coordinated with the UN by the Department of Foreign Affairs, as chair of NCUNPO, through the Philippine Mission in the UN in New York. For contingent-sized personnel, the NCUNPO will require the approval of the President of the Philippines. Participation in UN peacekeeping operations abroad does not require approval from the national legislature.

The creation of the NCUNPO was the culmination of various attempts by the government since 2002 to streamline decision-making on Philippine participation in UN peace operations and improve the country’s capacity to respond to requests from the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). Some of the issues that prompted these efforts were: 1) changing realities on deployment of Filipino peacekeepers such as the risks faced by personnel; and 2) capability and training of qualified personnel, particularly in the areas of protection of civilians, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former combatants, human rights protection, and restoration of rule of law. In 2008, the policy framework was updated to incorporate lessons learned from the deployment of Filipino peacekeepers, as well as the relevance of new concepts such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and civilians in UN peace missions. In 2010, the policy framework was again updated following the request of the Senate foreign relations committee head to strengthen the government’s inter-agency mechanism on the deployment of Philippine peacekeeping troops under the UN. The policy framework and guidelines of the Department of Foreign Affairs affirms the normative basis for sustaining Philippine participation in international peacekeeping, and identifies the scope and limitations of such participation. In particular, it asserts that the Philippines will give priority to supporting UN peace operations in Southeast Asia and the Asia Pacific, and that its participation is subject to the following conditions: 1) “authority from the UN Security Council”; 2) “a clear and achievable mandate”; 3) “determinable, if not

definite, timeframe and exit strategy”; and 4) “consent of the receiving state to UN operation.”³

Part 3: Rationales for Contributing

Security Rationales: Security rationales have played a part in some decisions to contribute Filipino personnel to UN peacekeeping operations. In Southeast Asia, the Philippines participated in UN peacekeeping missions in Cambodia (UNTAC) and East Timor (UNAMET/UNTAET) in the 1990s as part of its contribution to ASEAN’s efforts in maintaining regional peace and stability following decades of civil war and separatist conflict respectively in these countries. As a member of ASEAN, the Philippines recognizes the importance of helping other members resolve internal conflicts peacefully and assist in their post-war rebuilding efforts. The Philippines history of internal armed conflicts has led it to share the views of other ASEAN members that a comprehensive approach to security is required to manage the stability of states and regional peace. Under the current policy framework, the government considers deployment of peacekeepers in Southeast Asia and the Asia Pacific to be a priority.

Political Rationales: Support for UN peace missions is viewed as enhancing the international prestige and influence of the Philippines. The government takes pride in the recognition accorded by the UN to the important contribution of the Philippines, especially in the area of post-war rebuilding and law enforcement in various peacekeeping missions. For example, the important roles played by the Philippine peacekeepers in ensuring peaceful elections in Liberia under UNMIL and Haiti under MINUSTAH, along with awarding of service medals by UN representatives to Filipino peacekeepers, were widely reported in the local media.⁴ In annual celebrations of international peacekeeping, the foreign affairs, defense, and interior and local government departments of the national government consistently underscore the important contributions that the Philippines has made to UN peace missions abroad. In 2012, the Department of Foreign Affairs honored two government officials—former Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo and former Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Hilario Davide Jr.—for playing an important role in increasing the participation of the Philippines to UN peacekeeping operations.⁵ Despite some concerns about the safety of Filipino peacekeepers deployed in UNDOF, the steadfastness of the Philippine government’s commitment to UN peace mission in the Golan Heights earned praise from the UN Secretary General in September 2013, which was widely reported in the local media.⁶

Institutional Rationales: The Philippine military and national police benefit directly from contributing to UN peacekeeping operations. Specifically, they believe that participating in such operations enables them to build their professional capabilities in civil-military relations, policing, post-war peacebuilding, and civilian protection, among others.

Normative Rationales: As a member of the UN, the Philippines considers participation in peace operations as a demonstration of its commitment to international peace and security under the UN Charter. In the context of ASEAN, it is a strong advocate of peaceful settlement of disputes and internal conflicts, which to some extent may also limit its engagement in forceful peace operations under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter. Together with other ASEAN members, the Philippines gives importance to consent of states before it could participate in UN peacekeeping missions abroad.

Economic rationales: Although individual officers can benefit significantly through receipt of UN allowances, economic rationales are not a significant influence on the government’s

policy. On the one hand, the Defense Department relies on reimbursements to fund training and procurement, meaning that what it receives it uses to cover its costs. On the other hand, the number of Philippine personnel contributed to UN peacekeeping is insufficiently large to earn significant economic benefits. Peacekeeping compensation is small as a proportion of the overall defense budget and miniscule compared with remittances earned by overseas workers. There are over 10 million overseas Filipino workers globally, earning remittances estimated at over \$20 billion annually.

Overall, contributing troops to UN peace operations abroad is already a routine part of the country's foreign and defense policies. This effectively became a habit following the participation of the Philippines in UN peacekeeping operations in East Timor in 1999.

Part 4: Barriers to contributing

Internal/External Security Priorities: The Philippine military and police are still primarily focused on internal security given the continuing communist insurgency and armed Muslim rebellion, particularly in Mindanao. External security is also emerging as an important priority as maritime territorial disputes with neighboring countries, particularly in the South China Sea, exert pressure on the country's defense capabilities. These twin security concerns effectively limit the capacity of the Philippines to increase further its contribution to international peacekeeping operations. The Philippine National Police (PNP) is also involved in counter-insurgency efforts and is thus constrained by internal security priorities. With regard to the number of police forces that can be deployed for UN peacekeeping operations, it is the standing policy of the PNP to send "no more than 0.5% of the actual strength of the uniformed police force as of the end of the calendar year prior to deployment."⁷ Unlike the AFP, which has set up its peacekeeping operations center since 2002 and therefore could readily deploy contingent-sized standby units, the PNP has limited capacity for formed police units (FPU) available for peacekeeping and can only deploy individual police peacekeepers. This explains the decline in the number of Philippine police peacekeepers in recent years.

Financial constraints: Budgetary constraints are also a barrier to increased participation in UN peacekeeping operations. The Department of National Defense does not have a separate line item in its annual budget to support its role in UN peace missions abroad. Thus, it relies mainly on UN reimbursements and salaries and other external sources of support to fund training and capability building for this purpose. In some instances, the military is forced to deduct a significant portion (40%) from the monthly UN salaries of its troops deployed in UN missions to cover for losses.⁸ This practice became a major scandal in the Philippines in 2006 and affected the morale of Filipino troops. In 2011, it was suggested in the Senate that the Philippines should increase its contribution to UN peacekeeping operations and capture a bigger slice of the revenues from international peace missions as a possible source of funds for the military's modernization program. One senator even pointed out that the Philippine military should learn from Bangladesh, which earns about US\$200-300 million per year from UN peacekeeping.⁹

Safety concerns: As a matter of policy, the government considers of utmost importance the safety and security of Filipinos participating in UN peace operations.¹⁰ So far, 22 Filipino personnel have died on UN peacekeeping operations. Political sensitivity at home about the protection of Filipino nationals abroad, including military and police peacekeepers, is a major constraint to increasing the contribution of the Philippines to UN peace missions, especially in risky or dangerous places. Media networks in the Philippines constantly report on the plight of migrant Filipinos abroad, including attacks on peacekeepers deployed in conflict

areas. In 2008, for example, major dailies reported on the mob attack against an UNMIK police escort that wounded two Filipino policemen. In mid-2013, the Department of Foreign Affairs initially recommended the withdrawal of Philippine peacekeepers in the Golan Heights following two separate kidnapping incidents against Filipino peacekeepers by Syrian rebels. The government, however, decided to keep its troops after the UN agreed in principle to Manila's request to minimize the security risks to peacekeepers in the area. Among the conditions made by the Philippines for continued deployment of Filipino troops under UNDOF were: 1) increase in UNDOF mandated strength to 1,250 (from 908 in May 2013) and procurement of self-defense equipment for Filipino troops and other UNDOF forces by October 2013; and 2) allowing the Philippines to deploy Filipino forces in six-month rotation rather than twelve.¹¹ To some extent, the withdrawal of the Austrian contingent from UNDOF only strengthened further the position of the Philippines in pressing the UN to meet these conditions.

Part 5: Current Challenges and Issues

Notwithstanding concerns about the safety of Filipino peacekeepers abroad, there is still a strong commitment on the part of the Philippine government to sustain its contribution to UN peace operations. As discussed above, the factors that influence decision-making in the Philippines on peacekeeping are internal and external security issues that limit the ability of the country to contribute troops, budgetary constraints, as well risk aversion with regard to the safety of Filipino peacekeepers. These factors are likely to constrain the government's policy on deployment of Filipino peacekeepers in the near future.

Part 6: Key Champions and Opponents

Institutional champions of UN peacekeeping operations are the foreign affairs, defense, and interior and local government departments.¹² These institutions directly benefit from supporting UN peace operations, such as enhancing the international image of the Philippines (foreign affairs), improving the capability for managing civil-military relations (defense), and in enhancing capabilities to manage internal peace and order (interior and local government). Military and police personnel that have served on UN missions are also strong advocates of sustaining Philippine participation in peacekeeping operations, especially those who benefited professionally from the experience. Some members of the Philippine peacekeeping contingent have created informal associations through social media (blogs and Facebook) and served as resource persons in peacekeeping training lectures.¹³ The AFP's Peacekeeping Operations Center has its own [Facebook page](#) and [Twitter account](#), which are useful in advocating sustained public support in the Philippines for UN peace mission abroad. To date, there is no significant opposition within the Philippines for continuing participation in UN peace operations abroad.

Part 7: Capabilities and Caveats

Within the current policy framework, the Philippines' participation in UN peace operations abroad gives importance to "peace-building activities in rebuilding states, communities, and societies."¹⁴ The Philippine government is prepared to deploy professional civilian and military personnel that have expertise in engineering, health, education, social development, governance, transportation, and telecommunications, as well as in other areas that would contribute to the development of the mission area. The Philippine government has also recognized the importance of continuing partnership with the UN in building capacities of the military and police units in these areas.

Currently, there are 42 female Filipino peacekeepers deployed in five UN peace missions (UNMIL, MINUSTAH, UNMISS, UNDOF and UNOCI), which is approximately 6% of the total Filipino peacekeeping contingent. The Philippines deployed its first batch of police correction officers last year in South Sudan (UNMISS). There were also requests from the UN DPKO for Philippine experts in sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Some Filipino academics and civil society groups engaged in peace advocacy and SGBV prevention have been conducting lectures and training for military and police on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and 1820, which are part of the government's national action plan under the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP).¹⁵ In July 2013, with the support of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Manila, the Women Engaged in Action on 1325 (WE Act 1325) Network conducted a training for peacekeepers at the AFP's Peacekeeping Operations Center on UN SC Resolutions 1325 and 1820, along with conflict resolution and mediation.¹⁶

Annual national appropriations to defense and interior and local government departments remain limited, which effectively constrains the deployment of fully equipped personnel in UN peace operations abroad. For instance, the military's budget for helicopters, night vision goggles, and other safety protection items is primarily allocated for combat operations against internal insurgency. For now, the Philippine peacekeeping units could only deploy trucks and escort vehicles in UN peace missions abroad.

Part 8: Further readings

Col. Noel A. Coballes, [“The Philippine Armed Forces Capacity for United Nations Peacekeeping Operations”](#) (US Army War College Strategy Research Project, 30 March 2007).

Notes

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, data is drawn from IISS, *The Military Balance 2013* (London: IISS/Routledge, 2013).

² Armed Forces Spending is a country's annual total defense budget (in US dollars) divided by the total number of active armed forces. Figures from IISS, *The Military Balance 2013*.

³ Section III, 3.4, “Department of Foreign Affairs Policy Framework and Guidelines for Philippine Participation in United Nations Peace Operations (Updated November 2010),” *National Administrative Register*, January-March 2011, p. 253.

⁴ Tina G. Santos, [“UN cites Filipino peacekeepers in Haiti,”](#) *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 11 March 2012; [“RP Peacekeepers in Haiti Receive UN Peacekeeping Medals,”](#) *Philippine Daily Mirror*, 5 January 2010; [“UN awards Pinoy peacekeepers in Liberia,”](#) *ABS-CBN News*, 25 June 2009; [“Philippines to deploy peacekeepers in Liberia and Haiti,”](#) *Xinhua News*, 14 March 2011.

⁵ Abigail Kwok, [“22 Filipino peacekeepers gave their lives to world peace,”](#) *Interaksyon.com*, 31 May 2012; [“Intl Day of UN Peacekeepers celebrated by PHL armed services top brass,”](#) United Nations Information Centre Manila, 29 May 2013.

⁶ [“DFA: Pinoy UN peacekeepers earn Ban Ki-moon's praise,”](#) *GMA Online News*, 28 September 2013.

⁷ Memorandum Circular 2010-007, Section 12 (h), “Rules and Procedures Governing the Selection and Deployment of PNP Personnel for Secondment or Detail to International Organizations and Peacekeeping Missions, Amending PNP Memo Circular NR. 2009-006, 2007-12, and For Other Purposes,” National Police Commission, Department of Interior and Local Government, 8 June 2010.

⁸ Veronica Uy, “Filipino peacekeepers' pay cut affecting RP image—envoy”, INQ7.net, 17 May 2006.

⁹ David Dizon, “Escudero wants bigger slice of UN peacekeeping pie,” *ABS-CBNNews.com*, 15 February 2011.

¹⁰ Section III, 3.4, “Department of Foreign Affairs Policy Framework and Guidelines for Philippine Participation in United Nations Peace Operations (Updated November 2010),” *National Administrative Register*, January-March 2011, p. 253.

¹¹ “UN agrees to PH bid to boost Syrian security,” 15 July 2013, Manila Standard Online.

¹² See for example: “[PHL finding ways to boost United Nations peacekeeping operations](#),” *GMA News Online*, 18 January 2013; Statement by H. E. Libran Cabactulan, Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the UN, “Open Debate on UN Peacekeeping Operations,” 26 August 2011, UN Security Council; “[Gazmin: Pinoy troops need new skills for UN peacekeeping missions](#),” *GMA News Online*, 29 May 2013; “[Secretary Del Rosario Hails Filipino Peacekeepers During Commemoration of International Day of UN Peacekeepers](#),” 30 May 2012.

¹³ See for example [Filipino Peacebuilders](#).

¹⁴ Section IV, 3.5, “Department of Foreign Affairs Policy Framework and Guidelines for Philippine Participation in United Nations Peace Operations (Updated November 2010),” *National Administrative Register*, January-March 2011, p. 253.

¹⁵ See for example “[The Philippine National Action Plan on Women, Peace & Security, 2011-2016](#)”.

¹⁶ “[Training Peacekeepers in the Philippines](#),” Current Affairs, Royal Norwegian Embassy-Manila, 6 November 2013.