

Mini Simulation

Peacekeeping

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Overview

The world lacks a global police force capable of stopping violence in its tracks. However, it does have UN peacekeepers, who can help wind down conflicts and prevent them from recurring. Peacekeeping missions face limitations depending on a conflict's scale and scope. In this hypothetical scenario, the United States needs to determine whether it should support a peacekeeping mission in a country riddled with ethnic conflict.

The Situation

First, cover the fundamentals of this foreign policy tool with the CFR Education resource, [What Is Peacekeeping?](#) Then, put these principles into practice with this simulation's hypothetical decision point below.

Decision Point

The neighboring countries of Rovinia and Tomania have been fighting a long-running war over their shared border. The two countries have recently reached a UN-brokered ceasefire. Both countries are distrustful of each other, and so observers worry that the conflict could easily flare up again due to a misunderstanding. Furthermore, the war has created thousands of [refugees](#). In particular, Tomania has been slow to offer protection or aid to refugees and displaced persons within its borders, and isolated attacks against ethnic Rovinians who ended up on the Tomanian side of the ceasefire line have been reported. The UN Security Council is discussing sending a peacekeeping mission to Rovinia and Tomania. Both countries would need to consent to the mission, and they are open to the idea, albeit cautiously. The question of the mission's mandate—what it is assigned to accomplish and what powers and resources it is given—is still up in the air. The president has asked the National Security Council (NSC) to convene to discuss whether the United States should support a peacekeeping mission and, if so, how expansive a mandate to advocate for.

NSC members should consider one of the following policy options:

- *Support a UN-led peacekeeping mission with an expansive mandate.* This would include monitoring and reporting as well as protection for refugees and aid deliveries using armed troops and armored vehicles. Such a mission could both lower the risks of the conflict breaking out again and alleviate suffering among civilians. It could also defend itself and civilians if conflict were to break out. However, consent from the host countries for such a large military presence could prove difficult to gain. Furthermore, it is not at all clear it would succeed.
- *Support a limited UN-led peacekeeping mission* focused on monitoring and reporting along the border, consisting of only a handful of lightly armed troops and a few [surveillance drones](#). Such a mission could build trust and decrease the chances of war breaking out again, but could not help civilians suffering from the conflict's effects or step in if the ceasefire were violated.
- *Oppose a peacekeeping mission.* With the threat of renewed conflict so great, and considering the threat of attacks on civilians in Tomania, delaying a peacekeeping mission could be preferable until the situation is more stable.

Photo: United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) peacekeepers on patrol near Bentiu, South Sudan on February 11, 2017.

Source: Siegfried Modola/Reuters

[The Role of Peacekeeping in Africa](#) Council on Foreign Relations

[The Crisis of Peacekeeping: Why the UN Can't End Wars](#) Foreign Affairs

[U.N. Peacekeeping Really Can Be Effective. Here's How We Tabulated This.](#) Washington Post