

International Day of UN Peacekeepers 2025

Report of the Round Table hosted by the Royal United Services Institute 22 May 2025

For 2025, the traditional conference was replaced by a Round Table attended by an invited audience of practitioners, diplomats, civil society, academics and military personnel. This focused on how the UN can make better use of the full spectrum of its peace activities within multidimensional missions. Chaired by RUSI Visiting Fellow Commander Edward Black, the panel of experts included Al Brown, Dr Babu Rahman, Professor Sarah von Billerbeck and Dr Georgina Holmes.



In the opening session, attendees heard a report from the recent UN Peacekeeping Ministerial in Berlin, where states reaffirmed their commitment to making UN Peace Operations more effective through pledges that go beyond their assessed contributions to the budget. Luke Pollard, UK Minister for the Armed Forces, representing his government signalled its continued support for UN Peacekeeping, announcing investment exceeding one million pounds. This covers specialist training for peacekeeping partners, and support for the Elsie Initiative Fund which aims to enable more women to meaningfully participate in peace operations. Though it has been difficult to track trends in state pledges across ministerial meetings, participants noted increases in recent years in pledges to tackle mis- and disinformation. This recognises the significant threat this poses to host state political will and local support for mandates. The session concluded with discussion of the technological challenges and opportunities facing Peace Operations.

The second session focused on the spectrum of the UN's peace activities, with discussion of key issues relating to optimising operations, including advancing the participation of women, lessons learned best practice, partnership with host nations and the need for local ownership of peacekeeping. In discussion, participants emphasised the importance of considering the full diversity of the UN's peacekeeping activities when mandating peacekeeping operations and Special Political Missions as well as considering potential political and capacity constraints on achieving a solution.

Facing slimmed down budgets, the UN must seek efficiencies; the DPO's 'Future of Peacebuilding' report, released ahead of the Ministerial in Berlin, outlined a more modular approach to Peace Operations. However, amidst these reforms, it is important that the UN retains its range of capabilities and expertise. UN Peacekeeping remains a unique tool; if it loses its expertise, it risks being under-prepared to respond to increasingly complex and diverse security challenges.