



Mr. Jake Sullivan
Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Sullivan,

The Partnership for Effective Peacekeeping¹ represents a diverse set of humanitarian, human rights, academic, policy, and advocacy organizations committed to strengthening UN peacekeeping operations. We are writing to urge the U.S. government to demonstrate U.S. leadership at the upcoming Ministerial-level meeting on UN peacekeeping in Seoul, South Korea.

Past U.S. leadership within the United Nations has helped modernize UN peacekeeping operations. For example, in 2014, when then-Vice President Biden hosted a UN peacekeeping summit, it eventually generated an unprecedented number of UN Member State contributions to peacekeeping and political commitments to reform.

For the upcoming Ministerial, we specifically ask the United States government to:

- **Designate Secretary of State Antony Blinken and/or Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III to lead the U.S. delegation.** High-level U.S. leadership will encourage other Member States to send similar-level delegations and to make robust pledges. It will also increase the likelihood that participant pledges are ultimately implemented.
- **Make the following pledges:**
 - **Increase U.S. troop and police contributions to UN peacekeeping operations.** The Biden administration should make concrete pledges to double the number of U.S. military and police advisers serving in UN peacekeeping missions. It should also commit to enhanced training of U.S. military and police officers who serve in peacekeeping.
 - **Strengthen U.S. capacity building for UN troop and police contributors.** The Biden administration should pledge to increase capacity building initiatives, including partnerships to train, equip, and mentor UN troop and police contributing countries before, during, and after deployment to UN

¹ The Partnership for Effective Peacekeeping (PEP) is a Washington, D.C.-based, nonpartisan working group led by the Better World Campaign, Center for Civilians in Conflict, Stimson Center, and Refugees International. PEP brings together the research, policy, advocacy, and humanitarian communities to identify challenges, promote the best ways to strengthen international peacekeeping capacity, and maintain U.S. support for peacekeeping.

- peacekeeping missions (similar to the U.S. partnership with El Salvador that enabled them to deploy attack helicopters to the mission in Mali).
 - **Increase women’s leadership and participation in UN peacekeeping.** The U.S. should support troop and police contributing countries to identify and address barriers to uniformed women’s participation in peacekeeping through the Elsie Initiative. The U.S. should commit to doubling the percentage of women military and police peacekeepers that the U.S. trains bilaterally through the Department of State and Department of Defense. The U.S. should support initiatives to increase the number of women civilian staff serving in senior peacekeeping positions.
 - **Bolster peacekeeping performance** through political commitments designed to ensure: 1) adequate resourcing for UN peacekeeping mandates and addressing outstanding arrears; 2) full implementation of the UN Secretary-General’s management reform agenda that seeks to decentralize decision-making authority; 3) accountability and transparency for UN civilian and uniformed personnel, including those serving in the field to those at the highest levels of the Secretariat; 4) responsible planning for peacekeeping mission transitions that are based on realistic conflict analysis; and 5) prioritization of civilian protection in peacekeeping mandates and resourcing.
- **Undertake robust diplomatic outreach** to urge the UN Secretary-General and Member States to make concrete pledges of capabilities and political commitments in support of peacekeeping reforms.
 - **Acknowledge and address U.S. peacekeeping arrears**—which amount to over one billion dollars—to ensure troop contributing countries can follow through on these pledges and be fully reimbursed for their contributions of uniformed personnel and equipment.
 - **Report publicly on progress made** on the implementation of U.S. pledges made at previous Ministerial-level meetings and the Leaders’ Summit on UN peacekeeping and also commit to publicly report on new pledges made in Seoul. By publicly reporting on progress on the implementation of pledges and political commitments, the U.S. encourages other government to do the same, which would increase the likelihood that governments meet words with actions.

Decades of academic research has confirmed that UN peacekeeping operations can reduce the duration of conflict and the number of civilian deaths, contain the geographic spread of war, increase the likelihood of sustainable peace, and decrease sexual and gender-based violence. The international community continues to deploy UN peacekeeping operations to address some of the world's most complex conflicts. These crisis contexts often serve as breeding grounds for atrocities, pandemics, international criminal networks, and violent extremism. The evidence shows that UN peacekeeping is one of the most effective tools to contain and address these challenges, when adequately resourced and equipped.

However, UN peacekeeping has suffered historically from a strategic gap between mission mandates and capabilities. As then-Vice President Biden stated in 2014, “When we ask them to do more than ever, that is the peacekeepers, in even more difficult and more dangerous environments, we owe them more.”² To help address this challenge, Vice President Biden convened the 2014 UN Summit on Peacekeeping Operations, which spurred global regional conferences, which then led to the 2015 Leaders’ Summit on UN Peacekeeping, hosted by former President Obama. In turn, this U.S. leadership fostered UN Member States to pledge new personnel, enablers, and training, including costly capabilities needed for modern conflict. It also encouraged Member States and the UN Secretary-General to make high-level political commitments to reform peacekeeping. This was done through a range of statements, declarations, communique, and initiatives.³

When the United States does not lead, other UN Member States will step into the vacuum. China is now the second largest funder of peacekeeping and the only current member of the UN Security Council to be a top ten troop-contributing country. China has volunteered to pay more and increased its influence within the United Nations and coalesced support around reforms to strengthen the safety and security of peacekeepers. But it also seeks to change the narrative on human rights and protection of civilians and reduce funding for human rights monitoring and civilian protection posts in missions - *using U.S. budget cuts as a pretext*. If civilian protection and human rights are to remain at the heart of UN peacekeeping, the United States must strengthen its engagement and bolster funding. The upcoming ministerial in South Korea offers a critical opportunity to showcase U.S. leadership on both fronts.

There is no doubt that previous summits have helped make UN peacekeeping more fit for purpose. However, more work remains to be done to keep pace with the spread and complexity

² “Opening Remarks by the Vice President at the UN Summit on Peacekeeping Operations,” 2014, available at: <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/26/opening-remarks-vice-president-un-summit-peacekeeping-operations>

³ Co-hosts used the high-level meetings and preparatory conferences to launch the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians, the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers through Peacekeeping, and the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations. These were voluntary initiatives that Member States could endorse and implement as individual governments and in partnership with each other.

of conflict in today's world. Time and again, the U.S. government has demonstrated that its leadership can significantly sway whether and how other Member States invest in UN peacekeeping. We hope that you will consider our request to once again provide the leadership that is needed to ensure UN peacekeeping operations can remain effective interventions to promote and protect peace, democracy, and human rights.

Sincerely,



Peter M. Yeo
President, the Better World Campaign



Federico Borello
Executive Director, Center for Civilians in Conflict



Eric Schwartz
President, Refugees International