



Emergence of Private Military and Security Companies in Contemporary Peace Operation - Prospects and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

The gradual expansion of private actors in International Security has reshaped the landscape of peace operations, prompting renewed debate on the future of United Nations (UN) peacekeeping. Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs) has emerged in the realm of peace operation in response to escalating mission complexity, shrinking defence budgets, peace operation and the demand for rapid, technologically advanced developments. There is visible shift from traditional UN-led interventions toward privatised peacekeeping, driven by the UN systemic funding crisis and the demand for "rapid- hard power" responses. This emergence of Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs) in contemporary peacekeeping signifies a major shift in how security is managed in conflict- prone areas, moving from purely state-centric operations toward a privatised "hybrid" model. The rise of state-backed proxies and regional hybrids further complicates the traditional peace operation. Within this context, the study assesses the prospects of PMSCs in contemporary peacekeeping as well as underscores how the future of peacekeeping by PMSCs would provide opportunities and prospects along with associated challenges.

Introduction

Peacekeeping operations have been a traditional tool of the United Nations (UN) for addressing conflict and restoring post-conflict societies. From their formal establishment in 1948, United Nations peacekeeping operations have responded to changing requirements for global security, gradually moving from classic observer missions toward multifaceted deployments that include military, police and civilian components with prevention of conflict, protection of civilians and post conflict stabilization activities¹. Over the past few decades, growth of conflict intensity and magnitude has been pushing state military units to their limits, as well depleting the state's resources and military budgets that there is development towards the participation of non-state actors, particularly Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs) in peace operations.

PMSCs are private companies that offer a broad range of military functions including logistics, training, physical security, intelligence and combat support functions and have found their way into the international security networks because they are seen as efficient and flexible². The UN is not a standing army, but it has employed private contractors for different

¹UN Peacekeeping, The Future of Peacekeeping, New Models, and Related Capabilities, 2024.

²Prem, B., & Krahnmann, E. (2024, August 21). Private Military and Security Companies. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies. Retrieved 12 Dec. 2025
<https://oxfordre.com/internationalstudies/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.001.0001/acrefore-9780190846626-e-279>

support functions of the mission; this has blurred the lines between what was typically identified as peacekeepers and non-UN 'security providers'. This so-called process of outsourcing in peacekeeping compels one to ask tough questions about legal responsibility, effectiveness, and the sanctity of traditional peacekeeping core principles such as neutrality or state-sovereignty.

This section establishes the context for a more detailed exploration of the implications and trends associated with privatised peacekeeping, including an examination of its costs, benefits and as well as the prospect of peace keeping operation with associated challenges.

Concept and Emergence of PMSCs in peacekeeping Operation

The privatisation of peacekeeping, that is to say the role and participation of Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs) in functions previously assigned to state military forces or United Nations (UN) peacekeepers. PMSCs are profit making organizations that offer security related solutions including armed and unarmed protection, logistics, training, intelligence gathering and technical support in conflict or post-conflict areas³. Their increasing participation in UN peace operations mirrors broader changes in the governance of global security, particularly since the end of the Cold War.

Definition and Role of PMSCs

In the 1990s, states downsized military forces and extended operations to satisfy security needs in crisis-ridden areas, leading to the rise of the PMSCs industry. These businesses provide various services, including convoy escort, base defence, demining operations, intelligence assistance, and training for national forces⁴. PMSCs can quickly deploy and specialise, addressing operational gaps in UN peace missions caused by sluggish deployments, insufficient manning, or a state's unwillingness to provide troops.

Historical Emergence

The growth in PMSCs is very much associated with post-Cold War realities. The wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Africa provided evidence of the dependence states and multilateral institutions had developed on private contractors to carry out responsibilities that stretched national forces felt incapable of fulfilling⁵. Although the UN itself doesn't contract out entire peacekeeping missions, it has been turning to more contractors to provide its logistical assistance, transportation, and engineering support as well as IT services, aviation and camp security. The legal and regulatory environment of PMSCs is fragmented. The ICRC Montreux Document emphasizes state obligations with respect to PMSCs, but is not legally binding⁶. Similarly, the UN does not have a specific provision regarding the use of private security contractors apart from general administration and procurement regulations. Academics have observed that this opacity creates issues of accountability, scrutiny and whether or no longer international humanitarian law is followed⁷.

³Nebolsina, M. A. (2020). Private Military and Security Companies in UN Peacekeeping Operations: Problems and Perspectives. *Journal of International Analytics*, 11(3), 61-77.

⁴Jumaa, F. A., & Asfour, B. (2024). The Effective and Influential Role of Military Companies' Private Security and Its Role in International Relations. *Journal of Ecohumanism*, 3(8), 9695-9711.

⁵Bijos, L., & De Souza, R. (2020). Private Military Companies and the Outsourcing of War: A Spark of Destabilisation to the Global Security. In *Annales de la Faculté de Droit d'Istanbul* (No. 69, pp. 87-118). Istanbul University.

⁶International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), The Montreux Document on Private Military and Security Companies, 2020. <https://www.icrc.org/en/publication/0996-montreux-document-private-military-and-security-companies>.

⁷Linti, T. (2016). UN's Use of Private Military and Security Companies in Peacekeeping Operations: Is There a Legal Basis?. *Politikon: The IAPSS Journal of Political Science*, 29, 140-152.

Drivers behind Privatisation: Several factors explain why privatised peacekeeping has gained traction:

Operational complexity: Contemporary missions involve civilian protection, counterinsurgency-like tasks, and stabilization in active conflict zones activities requiring specialized skills that PMSCs can deliver⁸.

Financial and political constraints on states: Many countries face defence budget pressures or public reluctance to deploy troops, making contracted services a politically acceptable alternative⁹.

Speed and flexibility: PMSCs in modern warfare highlights the extensive growth, diverse capabilities, and strategic importance driven by economic factors and political risk reduction which can mobilize faster than state forces and may offer high-tech capabilities, and operate under flexible procurement arrangements, making them attractive for urgent or specialized tasks¹⁰.

Conceptual Clarification

“Privatised peacekeeping” does not imply that PMSCs replace UN peacekeepers. Instead, they *supplement* missions by providing support functions, technical expertise, and occasionally armed protection. However, their expanded role raises concerns about the commercialization of peace, potential human rights violations, and weakened state control over the use of force. These debates shape current discussions about the future of peacekeeping and its alignment with UN principles.

Current Trends and Prospect

Peace operations are in a period of great change, with shifts in geopolitical dynamics, changes to the nature of missions themselves, technological innovation and the emergence of new actors with increased role and capacities. Within this, privatised peacekeeping through private military and security companies (PMSCs) engaged to reinforce or displace established UN peace operations, draws contemporary attention to wider shifts in global security governance with implications for effectiveness, accountability and locational futures.

Growing Reliance on Private Security Support

Although the UN has not outsourced peacekeeping activities as far as some would have wish, the organization increasingly relies on privatised companies for support in areas including logistics and infrastructure provision, base protection (security) and transportation services. National military forces cannot efficiently do the heavy lifting and logistics, or sustain and support personnel (e.g., troops on peacekeeping duty) but are more likely to rely on private industry for such activities¹¹. This “force-multiplier” effect increases the effectiveness of traditional peacekeeping by lowering personnel demands and extending operational distance. Recent dialogues also indicate that private security companies are pursuing greater

⁸UN Peacekeeping, The Future of Peacekeeping, New Models, and Related Capabilities, 2024.

⁹Nebolsina, M. A. (2020). Private Military and Security Companies in UN Peacekeeping Operations: Problems and Perspectives. *Journal of International Analytics*, 11(3), 61-77.

¹⁰Bijos, L., & De Souza, R. (2020). Private Military Companies and the Outsourcing of War: A Spark of Destabilisation to the Global Security. In *Annales de la Faculté de Droit d'Istanbul* (No. 69, pp. 87-118). Istanbul University.

¹¹Brooks, D., & Laroia, G. (2005). Privatised peacekeeping. *The National Interest*, (80), 121-125.

integration into peacekeeping in Africa, claiming to bridge the logistics and technical assistance skills gaps where UN missions have faced shortfalls¹².

Market Growth and Commercial Trends

The International Private Military and Security Services (PMSS) market is in a state of growth that mirrors the global trend for outsourced security and military capabilities, ranging from conflict zones to critical infrastructure environments, to crisis response. According to market analysts the size of the PMSS market will reach around USD 200 billion by 2024 and is likely to raise between USD 350–500 billion by 2033 as a result of proliferation concerns and greater outsourcing of military support tasks¹³. This expansion underscores the sense that commercial entities are increasingly part of conflict operations, not just in war fighting operations but also for peace operations, reconstruction and stabilization efforts. More contracts are moving to technology-enabled services, such as AI-facilitated surveillance, real-time threat assessments and drone systems that suggest a convergence of private security capabilities with some of the most innovative military support technology¹⁴.

Technological Integration

The operational capabilities of private security firms are changing to technological developments. The use of unmanned aerial systems (UAS), coupled with artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing the assets available to private security companies. Such technologies improve surveillance, reconnaissance and operational planning, thus allowing contractor to deliver high-precision support while minimizing the human risk^{15,16}. Cyber security services are also now being incorporated into the private security service portfolios, as peace operations are confronted by threats in the digital sphere that go far beyond kinetic threats¹⁷.

This infusion of technology may impact how peacekeeping looks in the future including where private providers could provide expertise that is not just stuffing, moving or providing armed security – but technical expertise cutting across information management and analysis, predictive analysis or cyber defence all areas traditionally located outside the wheelhouse of uniformed peacekeepers.

Shifting Operational Roles and Regional Patterns

The involvement of private security varies by location. For example, in some sub-Saharan Africa countries the host states have hired private military companies to help provide for state security alongside UN missions, such as the cases of the Central African Republic and Mali

¹²The New Humanitarian, “Private security firms seek greater peacekeeping role,” Jun. 2007.

<https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/report/74957/africa-private-security-firms-seek-greater-peacekeeping-role>

¹³Consumer Research Analytics Agency, “Private Military Security Services Market Size, Trends, Key Highlights & Market Movements 2033,” LinkedIn Pulse, Jul. 12, 2025. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/private-military-security-services-bstlf/>

¹⁴Consumer Research Analytics Agency, “Private Military Security Services Market Size, Trends, Key Highlights & Market Movements 2033,” LinkedIn Pulse, Jul. 12, 2025. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/private-military-security-services-bstlf/>

¹⁵Ahmad, T., Morel, A., Cheng, N., Palaniappan, K., Calyam, P., Sun, K., & Pan, J. (2025). Future UAV/Drone Systems for Intelligent Active Surveillance and Monitoring. *ACM Computing Surveys*, 58(2), 1-37.

¹⁶Caballero-Martin, D., Lopez-Guede, J. M., Estevez, J., & Graña, M. (2024). Artificial intelligence applied to drone control: A state of the art. *Drones*, 8(7), 296.

¹⁷Kostyuk, N., & Gartzke, E. (2024). Fighting in cyberspace: Internet access and the substitutability of cyber and military operations. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 68(1), 80-107.

with shared personnel between mission mandates and forces locally¹⁸. Although these arrangements fall outside the structure of UN peacekeeping, they illustrate how private actors are being woven into peace and stabilization systems, often mirroring host-country preferences and global strategic rivalries. But dependence on private actors and forces can also produce unintended consequences such as reinforcing “hard” security approaches, reconfiguring local security ecologies, or creating economic dependencies that impact longer-term stability¹⁹.

Accountability and Legal Debates

Higher use of private security companies for peace tasks raises the issue of accountability and legal personality. Private military and security companies (PMSCs) work in a regulatory terrain which overlaps international humanitarian law, human rights law, and private contractual norms. There are nonbinding principles that dictate PMSCs behavior in a conflict context, such as the Montreux Document; however, there is still yet to be an internationally unified body of law which regulates their activities in peacekeeping missions^{20,21}. Legal certainty and accountability are therefore 'of central interest' to policymakers contemplating the further use of private actors in regulated peace operations.

Prospects for the Future

Looking to the future, prospects for privatised peacekeeping present both opportunities and risks. First, privates may still provide niche technical and logistical expertise, strengthen mission flexibility, and improve the sense of arrival where state forces are scarce. Conversely, to the extent that questions about legal responsibility, mission ethics and protection of civilians remain unresolved, the debates around whether and how such arrangements should grow within peacekeeping will be influenced by concerns already articulated within it.

The future is most likely hybrid, with the UN working in collaboration with (private) service providers and member states under clearly laid down legal and ethical frameworks that combine operational efficiency with accountability and respect for principles of peacekeeping.

Potential Cost and Benefit Analysis

The controversy around privatised peacekeeping needs a systematic comparison of traditional United Nations (UN) peace operations and increasing practice of Private Military And Security Companies (PMSCs). An examination into the financial burden, effectiveness of operations, and risks associated with outsourced peacekeeping gives insight as to whether outsourced or private peacekeeping significantly contributes value or creates new liabilities.

¹⁸Forest, J. J. (2022). *Digital influence mercenaries: Profits and power through information warfare*. Naval Institute Press.

¹⁹Hunt, C. T. (2018). The unintended consequences of the use of force by UN peacekeepers. In *The use of force in UN peacekeeping* (pp. 145-168). Routledge.

²⁰European Parliament, Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE), “The Montreux Document,” Hearing document, European Parliament, Brussels, Mar. 15, 2011.

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/sede/dv/sede150311audmontreuxdocument_/sede150311audmontreuxdocument_en.pdf

²¹Crowe, J., & John, A. (2017). The status of private military security companies in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations under the international law of armed conflict. *Melbourne journal of international law*, 18(1), 16-44.

Financial Comparison: Conventional vs. Privatised Peacekeeping

UN Peacekeeping continues to be one of the most cost-effective tools for global security. For 2024–5, the UN approved an annual peacekeeping budget of USD 5.6 billion, for which there are currently eleven active missions globally²². This sum is relatively small from the perspective of worldwide military budgets and illustrates economies of scale between sharing burdens across countries. Privatised peacekeeping may seem less costly, since PMSCs are able to provide services such as aviation support, logistics and camp building, perimeter security etc without the bureaucratic burdens associated with UN operations. Security outsourcing studies indicate that private firms are able to provide certain general services efficiently at lower cost primarily due to economies of scale and streamlined procurement as well as through performance based contracting²³. Privatised models, however, are not an alternative to the universal scope of UN peacekeeping. Although PMC functions may be less expensive in individual missions, it is rare for PMSCs to perform political mediation, civilian protection or institution-building - key elements of traditional peace operations. Hence, the cost comparison should not leave aside for consideration the smaller coverage of private deployments.

Cost Efficiency, Deployment Speed, and Operational Flexibility

Cost efficiency

PMSCs typically offer competitively-priced services, especially when missions call for rapid establishment of facilities in-theater, moving personnel by air or high-tech surveillance. Being commercially-based, they can be contracted variably and deployed in scale. However, profit margins and risk premiums could lead to a significant increase in costs of PMCS services, as they generally charge higher prices for additional liabilities that may arise from their business risks²⁴. Without strong oversight and accountability, so long as contracts are executed without challenge and financial management is less scrutinized it may also lead to wastage in terms of resources and cost implications²⁵. Although PMSCs offer a ready ability to provide cost-effective and adaptable security, the risk of commercial imperatives leading to costly inefficiencies questions their wider utility in peacekeeping. This calls for a deliberate consideration of their added value over traditional public sector modes to ensure public financial accountability and service effectiveness.

Deployment speed

UN forces usually take months to mobilize after an authorization by the Security Council, as contributions of troops have to be made, they need training and equipment for them to perform their duties effectively. In contrast, PMSC's can be deployed within days or weeks of notice for logistical and armed escort tasks. In several crisis situations, the private sector responded quicker than state armies; hence, it is suitable for emergency stabilization roles although with long-term security concerns²⁶.

²²United Nations, "How We Are Funded – Peacekeeping Budget 2024–25," UN Peacekeeping, 2024. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/how-we-are-funded>

²³Nebolsina, M. A. (2020). Private Military and Security Companies in UN Peacekeeping Operations: Problems and Perspectives. *Journal of International Analytics*, 11(3), 61-77.

²⁴Jomo, K. S., & Chowdhury, A. (2018). PPPs: Public costs and risks for private profits. *Development*, 61(1), 89-93.

²⁵Tkach, B., & Phillips, J. (2020). UN organizational and financial incentives to employ private military and security companies in peacekeeping operations. *International peacekeeping*, 27(1), 102-123.

²⁶Faulkner, C. M. (2019). Buying peace? Civil war peace duration and private military & security companies. *Civil Wars*, 21(1), 83-103.

Operational flexibility

Private security firms can adjust more quickly than state militias because they do not work within the confines of a rigid government military structure. PMSCs also provide niche capabilities drone surveillance, cyber monitoring, armored transport many troop-contributing countries do not possess. This adaptability is an important factor for mission robustness and success in harsh operating environments²⁷.

Risks: Profit Motive, Accountability Gaps, and Oversight Challenges

Despite being operationally beneficial, PMSCs are associated with significant risks of profit motives, lack of accountability and transparency. As shown in Table 1, privatised peacekeeping brings faster deployment and task specific cost-saving possibilities even though it may also have segmented legal regulation, profit maximization tendencies (as business makes sense), and less transparency when contrasted with the UN's mission. The lack of international binding regulation and being embedded in UN command structures exacerbates the risk of abuse and coordination failures. These difficulties show the necessity of a more robust regulation and control when it comes to private actors operating in the context of peace. PMSCs, while much more capable, are not without their perils:

Profit-driven incentives: Contractors may prioritize contract continuation over long-term peace outcomes. This incentive structure may conflict with humanitarian principles and can encourage prolonged engagements rather than sustainable peace²⁸.

Weak accountability: PMSCs operate across multiple legal jurisdictions, and international regulation remains fragmented. The Montreux Document outlines voluntary guidelines for states employing PMSCs, but no binding global framework ensures compliance with humanitarian or human rights law²⁹. Misconduct is often difficult to prosecute due to contractual ambiguity and jurisdictional gaps.

Transparency concerns: Unlike UN peacekeeping, which is subject to internal oversight, public reporting, and independent audits, PMSCs contracts often lack transparency. This increases the risk of corruption, overbilling, or failure to meet performance standards³⁰.

Strategic misalignment: PMSCs are not integrated into UN command structures, which can lead to coordination problems, mission fragmentation, or conflicting security priorities.

²⁷Krieg, A. (2018). Defining remote warfare: The rise of the private military and security industry.

²⁸Prasad, P. P. Mercenaries of Peace: The Role of Private Military Contractors in Conflict.

²⁹International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), The Montreux Document on Private Military and Security Companies, 2020. <https://www.icrc.org/en/publication/0996-montreux-document-private-military-and-security-companies>.

³⁰Tkach, B., & Phillips, J. (2020). UN organizational and financial incentives to employ private military and security companies in peacekeeping operations. *International peacekeeping*, 27(1), 102-123.

Table 1. Cost–Benefit Comparison: UN vs. Outsourced Peacekeeping^{31,32,33,34,35,36,37}

Dimension	UN Peacekeeping	Privatised Peacekeeping (PMSCs)
Overall Cost	Higher due to mandate breadth	Lower for specific tasks; higher profit margins
Deployment Speed	Slow (months)	Fast (days/weeks)
Operational Scope	Comprehensive (security + political + humanitarian)	Narrow, task-specific
Accountability	Stronger mechanisms and legal oversight	Weak, fragmented regulation
Profit Motive	None	High
Transparency	High (audits, reporting)	Variable and often limited

Private Military and Security Company's in Contemporary Peacekeeping: Prospects and Challenges.

Shifting norms of outsourced peacekeeping leading towards Hybrid Peacekeeping model designed to combine the global legitimacy and financial backing of the UN with the regional expertise and rapid-response capabilities of local actors. Apart from the ethical debate which lacks international legal framework for legal prosecution, budget necessity and specialized expertized the global landscape is shifting towards reliance on PMSCs to a more structured integration creating window of opportunities for future peacekeeping.

Prospects: According to a senior UN official the United Nation will be forced to reduce its peacekeeping forces worldwide by around 25 percent due to lack of funds largely linked to US aid cuts³⁸. The budget has direct impact on the overall peace operation and it is rightly said "We know that there will be consequences in terms of monitoring ceasefire, protection of civilians, working with the humanitarians, or other peacekeeping activities"³⁹. The potential UN budget deficit (estimated at over \$ 2 billion for the lose 2026 period⁴⁰) in future might increase the emerging trend of outsourcing in UN peacekeeping operation and the future trajectory along with potential prospects may look like the following:

Outsourcing Logistics: Over 90% of private involvement is actually non-combat. "Companies are increasingly hired for "heavy lifting"-logistics, demining, drone surveillance and medical support-where they are often more cost-effective than national militaries"⁴¹.

³¹International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), The Montreux Document on Private Military and Security Companies, 2020. <https://www.icrc.org/en/publication/0996-montreux-document-private-military-and-security-companies>.

³²Jomo, K. S., & Chowdhury, A. (2018). PPPs: Public costs and risks for private profits. *Development*, 61(1), 89-93.

³³Tkach, B., & Phillips, J. (2020). UN organizational and financial incentives to employ private military and security companies in peacekeeping operations. *International peacekeeping*, 27(1), 102-123.

³⁴Faulkner, C. M. (2019). Buying peace? Civil war peace duration and private military & security companies. *Civil Wars*, 21(1), 83-103.

³⁵Krieg, A. (2018). Defining remote warfare: The rise of the private military and security industry.

³⁶Prasad, P. P. *Mercenaries of Peace: The Role of Private Military Contractors in Conflict*.

³⁷Tkach, B., & Phillips, J. (2020). UN organizational and financial incentives to employ private military and security companies in peacekeeping operations. *International peacekeeping*, 27(1), 102-123.

³⁸Agency France Press Published on 09 Oct 2025, 21:54.

³⁹ *ibid*.

⁴⁰Education Through Simulation: C34 2026 update Brief: Pre-deployment Training for Peacekeepers.

⁴¹ "What future for provatised peacekeeping prospect and realities in the UN Debates" by Cecilla Hall.

Rapid Deployment: Private firms having the capability of often deploying specialized teams (like rapid-response medical or technical units) within weeks, on the contrary, the UN navigates months of political negotiation before assembling a force.

Regional-Private Partnerships: A trend of moving towards regional blocs like the African union is seen utilizing private contractors to augment their own rapid-deployment force, aiming for "local ownership" over security⁴².

The "Extractive" Model: Companies (like the remnants of the Wagner Group or similar entities) provide security in exchange for resource concessions (i.e.; mining rights). This model often blurs the line between protection and exploitation⁴³.

Training local forces: PMSCs are increasingly utilized to train local military and security forces, enhancing the long-terms effectiveness of security sector reform (SSR).

Operational Efficiency and Speed: PMSCs over the period of time achieved the capability of mobilizing quickly, filling logistical gaps and providing niche skills (aviation, demining, intelligence) that traditional peacekeeping may lack.

Potential for Rapid Reaction: Proponents suggest using PMSCs to form a Rapid-Reaction Forces (RRF) to combat immediate threats and protect civilian, reducing the time for conventional force mobilization.

Capabilities in Operating High-Risk Environment: Unlike national armies restrained by political sensitivities PMSCs are willing to operate in high-risk in the protection of personnel and critical infrastructure.

Challenges: The use of PMSCs to perform peacekeeping operation is becoming a new reality. However, the matter still remains as a polarized topic. Some of the emerging challenges of privatised peacekeeping are appended below:

Jurisdictional Ambiguity and legal Gaps: Although the traditional peacekeepers have legal obligations for their action however, outsourced contractors often exist in a legal vacuum. "If a contractor commits a crime in a " failed state" it is often unclear whether they should be tried by the host state, their home country, or the UN"⁴⁴. There is an ongoing push in 2026 for a "UN draft Instrument" to create mandatory record-keeping for PMSCs to prevent weapon diversion⁴⁵.

Immunity Issues: Culture of impunity has been observed historically as many PMSCs contracts have included immunity clauses that protect personnel from local prosecution. "Companies and their staff have been granted immunity from prosecution before the Courts of the countries where they work, or courts may not be operating because of the conflict"⁴⁶.

⁴²Conflict and aftermath power and secrecy by Rebecca Rotenberg Feb2, 2026.

⁴³ ibid.

⁴⁴Private Military companies-The practical guide to humanitarian-law. org

⁴⁵ "A Critical Analysis of the fifth draft of the UN instrument on PMSCS" by NIKOLOZ MOSIDZE.

⁴⁶ Private Military Companies word of caution by Claude Voillat, ICRC.

Shift in Norms: Outsourced or privatized force are often hired to win a conflict rather than manage a peace process, which risk sidelining human rights in favour of short terms Military result.

"Under the new regime, the basic values that motivated UN peacekeeping mission-consent, impartiality and highly limited use of force-risk being sidelined⁴⁷ .

The "Mercenary" Label: The use of armed private contractors for direct combat is discouraged officially by UN, fearing it blurs the line between legitimate peacekeeping and mercenary activity.

Erosion of State Monopolies: Their reliance on profit motives rather than public mandates challenges the Westphalian principle of the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of force.

Lack of Transparency: Many PMSC contracts are opaque, leading to issues with corruption, favoritism in procurement and difficulty assessing their effectiveness.

Impartiality Concerns: The commercial nature of PMSCs may conflict with the UN's principles of neutrality, potentially aligning with commercial or political interests rather than lasting peace.

Legal Inadequacy: Existing legal frameworks, such as the Montreux Document and the International Code of Conduct (ICoCA), are considered insufficient to regulate the geopolitical influence of modern PMSCs.

Conclusion

This paper emphasizes the transformation of peace operations towards a more prominent involvement by Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs). Privatised peacekeeping has its benefits, speed and economy but also presents problems of line assignments and oversight as well as legal gaps and jurisdictional ambiguity along with immunity issues. To address the issue there is a growing need of developing a binding UN convention on PMSCs to enhance regulation and accountability. To date, the UN and other international organizations have hired contractors to undertake a wide range of (often behind the scenes) activities would simply not be able to function⁴⁸. The future of privatised peacekeeping is likely to be a "hybrid" model that combines state forces with speed and flexibility of PMSCs. Although reliance on them should be limited to logistical rather than combat roles. The rise of state-backed proxies and regional hybrids model is also a new reality in peace operation. However, it remains unclear whether the UN has found the correct balance between the public and private peacekeeping⁴⁹ .

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⁴⁷ Conflict and aftermath power and secrecy by Rebecca Rotenberg Feb2, 2026.

⁴⁸ Understanding peacekeeping Alex J. Bellamy and Poul D. Williams.

⁴⁹ ibid

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