

INDIA, U.S. KEEN ON TRAINING PEACE MISSIONS

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: UNO and its various Agencies

Global presence: Indian peacekeepers in DR Congo. AFP

With China significantly scaling up its troop contribution for United Nations Peace Keeping (UNPK) missions, India and the U.S. are looking to undertake training of military personnel for the missions from Southeast Asian countries on the lines of the ongoing initiative for African countries.

“The U.S. is keen on undertaking joint training of Southeast Asian countries in the UN peacekeeping and discussions are under way,” an official source said on Friday. India has consistently been among the top troop contributing nations to the UN and is the fifth largest with 5,424 personnel in eight countries. The U.S. on the other hand has never contributed ground troops but contributes 27% of the U.N. peacekeeping budget.

In 2016, India and the U.S. began a joint annual initiative “UN Peacekeeping Course for African Partners” to build and enhance the capacity of African troop and police-contributing countries to participate in the U.N. and regional peacekeeping operations. While this is going on, the U.S. is keen on a similar initiative for South East Asian nations like Vietnam and others, the source said.

China is significantly expanding its troop contribution to the UN in addition to the funding, said a second source. “It currently has over 2,500 troops in various UN missions and has committed another 8,000 troops as standby,” the source said. Once implemented, it will make China the largest provider of troops to the UNPK.

China contributes 12% of the UN regular general budget and 15% of the peacekeeping budget. India’s contribution to the regular budget is 0.83% and 0.16% of the peacekeeping budget.

51 missions in all

India has so far participated in 51 of the 71 missions and contributed over 2 lakh personnel. It has troop deployment in Lebanon, Golan Heights, Congo and South Sudan in addition to staff officers in other missions. India has also set up two field hospitals in South Sudan and one in Congo. Since 2018, India has co-opted a contingent from Kazakhstan at the mission in Lebanon.

Bhutan too has expressed interest in joining a UN mission within the Indian contingent.

“We have around 5,500 troops in eight countries of Africa and West Asia. Their contribution has been applauded by all and Indian troops are the most sought after,” said a Major General M.K. Katiyar, Additional Director General Staff Duties, after addressing an Indian battalion set to leave for South Sudan end of this month. The first batch of 200 personnel from the contingent to South Sudan is scheduled to leave on November 27.

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