

Forging stronger ties with the United Nations

Since the establishment of the International Deployment Group in 2004, the AFP has earned a significant reputation within United Nations policing. Although not a major contributor of police to UN missions, the AFP's deployment of quality, experienced and well-trained police has left an indelible mark on UN policing and will continue to do so into the future.

Policing has become an indispensable tool in the building or rebuilding of policing institutions in troubled countries and is crucial to shaping contemporary peacekeeping operations. Only through the UN can Australia play the multi-layered role that allows intervention in a country or region to provide an impartial and credible response to breaches of peace and acts of aggression.

It is as a member-State to the UN that Australia contributes best to international stability and re-establishing the rule of law. Within this partnership, the AFP can respond in a way that would not be politically acceptable in any other guise.

The AFP is increasingly acknowledged as one of the best police organisations in the world in preparing its personnel for deployments. In November 2007 the International Deployment Group (IDG) Pre-deployment Course became the first policing course of its kind to be recognised by the UN. The AFP's capacity building initiatives in developing countries also represents the sort of cutting-edge, full-spectrum international policing required to cover pre- and post-conflict environments, and the varied situations that can arise within those environments.



Strategic relationship

The AFP's strategic relationship with the UN is both long-term and positive, and is set to become increasingly stronger. This close cooperation is crucial to securing the right quality and quantity of officers needed for international policing in the 21st century. Pooling resources with the UN is also financially sensible, making Australia's contribution to any given operation that much more effective and cost-efficient.

Australia's Police Adviser to the UN

The current Police Adviser to the UN in New York (PAUNNY), Commander Justine Saunders, represents the interests of Australia and the AFP in relation to regional and international stability and security issues at the UN. The role aims to shape policing and law enforcement policy; promote IDG capabilities; provide support and guidance to IDG personnel deployed to UN missions; and to advise the IDG Executive on the development of policies and strategies relevant to both the IDG and the UN.

By taking on a leadership role in policing issues within the Special Committee on Peacekeeping (C34)—in the international Military and Police Adviser Community (MPAC) and, more recently, as Chair of the United Nations African Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) police working group—the AFP has developed an especially influential role through the PAUNNY placement.

Through the IDG the AFP has earned an international reputation for professional policing that provides a foundation for the Police Adviser to exert leverage and leadership at the UN. This influence also extends from membership of the International Police Advisory Council to the UN (IPAC III).

Co-hosted by the UN and the AFP, the Council meets on an ad hoc basis to discuss ways of improving global policing.

Above: AFP members in Sudan (from left): Mark Silvertand, Brad McMeeking, Steve Bonnici, Graeme Macauley, Anne Dellaca (Contingent Commander), Dee Quigley, Mark Goode, Wendy-Anne McHale, Joshua Walsh and Alun Mills.



Above: Commander Justine Saunders with Superintendent Bosilong, Botswana Police - Police Adviser UNAMID, in Sudan earlier this year.

Membership of this Council, comprised of policing and human security experts and high-level academics, is by invitation only. It last convened in Canberra in 2007.

UN Police Adviser role

The importance of Australia's longstanding involvement with the UN is also reflected in the appointment of Andrew Hughes to the UN Police Adviser role, the most senior police position in the UN and a role that allows strategic guidance and direction to all UN missions with a policing component.

The appointment is especially significant at a time when policing is becoming an important component of UN peacekeeping operations. It not only allows Australia to have a position of influence in peacekeeping terms, it enhances our reputation as a leading contributor to international policing in general and UN policing in particular.

The AFP's capacity to exert the most long-lasting influence within the UN relies on building successful working relationships: in this case with all the 193 member-States, of whom 98 are currently contributing police to missions, and the 120-plus countries represented on the Special Committee on Peacekeeping.

Filling the gap between military intervention and policing

Every day worldwide, more than 11,000 UN police officers are deployed as part of the expanded role the UN now plays in re-establishing the rule of law for millions of people affected by conflict. Growing at approximately 30 per cent per year since 2006, this surge in international peacekeeping operations places a greater emphasis on the long-term challenge of building or rebuilding law and security in post-conflict countries.

In response to the increasing emphasis on rule of law and the development of effective policing institutions, the roles and functions of UN policing have changed. Focus has shifted from traditional monitoring to more complex tasks of interim law enforcement activities and the reform, restructuring and rebuilding of the Indigenous police authorities supporting Indigenous police. These training, mentoring and advising roles are often undertaken by individual officers while they are also performing a policing role in that country.

Like the UN, the AFP has recognised the vacuum between military intervention and policing, but unlike the UN—which has recruited paramilitary-style, self-sustainable police units to perform the primary role of security, crowd control and disorder maintenance—the IDG has developed a more comprehensive and flexible capability in the form of the Operational Response Group (ORG).

The need for a dedicated, deployable, tactical policing capability which could effectively police unstable environments was identified in 2006. The ORG was formed as a high-readiness crisis response to international peacekeeping missions and debuted soon after as part of the Australian Government's response to the assassination attempts on Timor-Leste's President and Prime Minister in February 2008. *Operation Comity* saw a contingent of 70 AFP personnel rapidly deployed to Timor-Leste, comprising 65 ORG members and five forensic specialists.

The unique skills and flexibility of the ORG, plus the strategic placement of tactical

resources in Canberra and Brisbane, allows the AFP to tailor a response to suit each mission. In the event of a major incident, whether locally-based or within the wider Asia-Pacific region, the ORG can deploy up to 200 highly trained members in a matter of hours.

Pre-deployment training

Since January 2007 officers from Australia deploying overseas have had to undertake a 35-day training course to prepare them for the mission ahead, rather than the 12-day course previously required. The training has also been extended to all Pacific Island country (PIC) police officers deploying to RAMSI.

The longer course embraces coaching principles, capacity and confidence development training, cultural awareness, communication skills, humanitarian assistance, civil and military relationships, safety, security and human rights, and UN Standard Generic Training Modules.

Significant challenges facing the UN and the AFP

Meeting the challenges of increased demand and the more complex responsibilities (or mandates) means the UN needs access to quality 'police-keepers' (or police) in significant numbers, now and into the future. Training and deploying these peacekeepers in the required numbers is a major challenge facing the UN member-States and, by extension, the AFP. Currently only about 10 per cent of UN police receive any pre-deployment training before being sent to a UN mission.

Developing police capacity for Sudan's UNAMID mission alone will be a massive task, needing the full cooperation of all member-States to be successful. It will be the largest single UN Police contingent ever, using about 6400 police officers out of a total of more than 30,000 personnel.

Unlike the AFP, which has a dedicated IDG to draw upon, providing quality officers in larger numbers will be a significant challenge for those contributors who need to take resources away from their already committed national responsibilities to perform their UN roles.