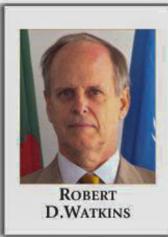


# The evolution of UN peacekeeping

## Investing in peace



**ROBERT D. WATKINS**  
United Nations Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh

**T**HE United Nations Charter was a visionary document, calling on all nations "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". Though we speak often of this enduring commitment to building peaceful and stable societies, it is the world's peacekeepers who understand this dedication best. It is by their perseverance, their commitment, and at times, their sacrifice, that we can help turn chaos into stability, and stability into prosperity. This year, as we celebrate International Peacekeepers Day, let us take a moment to remember the invaluable contribution peacekeepers have made to peace around the globe, and the many lives that have been made better by their service. This is an opportunity to reflect on peacekeepers' successes, their strengths, but also to consider the ways in which peacekeeping can improve and evolve. The nature of war is always changing, and so our approach to peace and to peacekeeping must change along with it.

Bangladesh has long been a lead contributor to peacekeeping. Today, more than 96,000 uniformed personnel from 124 countries serve under the blue flag, alongside more than 15,000 international and national civilian staff and nearly 1,600 United Nations Volunteers. Among them are 6,918 men and women from Bangladesh, which currently contributes the fourth most peacekeepers of any country in the world. The United Nations is grateful

to the people of Bangladesh for such an impressive contribution. Bangladeshis are now serving in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lebanon, South Sudan, Darfur, Western Sahara, Mali, the Central African Republic (CAR), Haiti, Somalia, Cyprus and Liberia. It is in countries like these that peacekeepers continue to have a transformative impact well beyond their numbers.

We only need look to the past to see what this transformation looks like. Sierra Leone is a country where the legacy of a successful peacekeeping mission can still be felt and experienced. Bangladesh contributed the largest number of peacekeepers to the Sierra Leone mission, whose members served with competence and dignity. UN peacekeepers were responsible for supervising the disarmament of more than 75,000 combatants in Sierra Leone, of which at least 7,000 were child soldiers. Sierra Leone's decision to declare Bangla an honorary second language was an unprecedented act of gratitude which cemented a unique bond between peoples. Wherever they went, Bangladeshi peacekeepers brought with them a sense of stability and normalcy, and when they left, Bangladeshi peacekeepers were sorely missed. They left the communities they entered better off than when they found them, and even left little tokens of Bangladesh behind, as demonstrated by Sierra Leone's enduring fondness for Bangladeshi mishti.

But let us think, for a moment, of the mindset of the average peacekeeper, and of the courage they possess in choosing to serve. It is the courage to leave the safety of their families or their communities, often for the first time, and be ready to risk their lives to promote a more

peaceful world. It is the courage to venture to an unknown and potentially dangerous region, where they may not speak the language or share a common culture, to help protect people they may never meet. Whether they hail from Rajshahi or Sylhet, Chittagong or Barisal, the choice to don the blue helmet is never easy.

António Guterres, acknowledges that there is a growing, urgent need to increase funding for peacekeeping internationally, to ensure peacekeepers have the resources they need to be effective and safe. But the commitment must go beyond the financial. In meeting the UN Secretary General's call to invest in peacekeeping, we must also consider

Bangladesh can contribute more female peacekeepers to this effort, as women in peacekeeping roles bring necessary skills and an important perspective to missions. But while many of these improvements are applicable in the field, others start at home. Improvements to military mental health services, for instance, greatly

the rule of law at home that they are expected to promote abroad.

In closing, over one million men and women have served under the UN flag with pride, distinction and courage since the first United Nations deployment in 1948. We pay tribute to over 3,500 peacekeepers who have lost their lives in the service of peace over the past 69 years, to the 211 Bangladeshis who were injured in the line of duty, and to the 132 Bangladeshis who made the ultimate sacrifice. This past year, Bangladesh lost a further two dedicated peacekeepers, and eight more were injured in the service of a more peaceful future. These fallen peacekeepers are:

Snk. Md Abul Bashar, EME, who died in a vehicular accident while serving in Mali.

Snk. Md Abdur Rahim, BIR, who was killed by unidentified assailants while serving in the Central African Republic.

The United Nations thanks these peacekeepers for their sacrifice, and sends its deepest condolences to their families.

The memories of these fallen peacekeepers are best preserved by redoubling our efforts to ensure peacekeeping meets the highest ethical and professional standards. We have done this before in countries like Sierra Leone – we shall do so again. This is done by recognising that high standards are not to be adhered to temporarily, or selectively, but internalised. It is through an active commitment to protecting human rights and ending all forms of persecution, both at home and abroad, that we step closer to the ideal set by the United Nations Charter 72 years ago.

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SOURCE: CODEBLUECAMPAIGN

Research has shown that countries in conflict that come to host a UN peacekeeping mission reduce their chances of relapsing into conflict by over 50 percent. And yet, despite this notable rate of success, today's global peacekeeping budget is still less than one half of one percent of the world's total military spending. The United Nations Secretary-General,

a wider approach, one which aims not only to resolve conflicts when they start, but to strengthen political institutions and prevent new conflicts from emerging. Human rights and community-focused initiatives build peace at the grassroots level, making the most of the over 15,000 civilian peacekeepers who serve without a uniform.

improve conditions for Bangladeshi peacekeepers. Training programmes to improve the skills and capacity of Bangladeshi peacekeepers could increase their effectiveness once abroad. Finally, we must remember that peacekeepers are most effective when their government and military command uphold the same respect for transparency, human rights and

## Faruq Choudhury – A mentor for life

SALEHUDDIN AHMED

**F**ARUQ Ahmed Choudhury was very close to my heart. Though he was a 'big' man in terms of his stature, he communicated with us like a friend and an elder brother. I admired him, loved him and respected him. I had the opportunity to work with him for about 10 years during his tenure as an advisor of BRAC's Chairperson, Sir F.H. Abed. He joined BRAC on March 1, 1992 and left on December 12, 2006. However, he was not only an adviser to the chairperson but also to all of us in BRAC. Whenever someone wanted advice, they would talk to him and he would embrace everyone with grace.

We had the privilege to call him 'Faruq Bhai'. After his long work in the government as a successful bureaucrat and diplomat, he initially did not like everyone addressing him as *bhai* at BRAC. He once asked me, "What kind of an organisational culture is this; everyone, starting from the service staff, executives, directors, address me or Mr. Abed as *bhai*?" As time passed, he got used to it and eventually accepted and enjoyed the endearment.

Faruq Bhai and Abed Bhai had lunch together almost every day in the office of the chairperson. These *daal-bhaat* lunches were very informal. I would look at them and wonder how they both cherished that simple lunch! However, important organisational decisions were also taken in these meetings. Sometimes, I had the honour to participate in these lunches. From these informal meetings, I learned many things. For example, how these two top leaders of BRAC discussed issues, national, international and BRAC related, occasionally seeking my opinion, and then decide on certain important issues on organisational matters. I remember once when I raised the issue of



all levels of personnel, including directors, falling in line while getting into the elevator in the morning. The reason for discussing this issue was because I was and still am against the VIP-syndrome in our culture, and believe that values are created and examples set by the top leaders in an organisation. Faruq Bhai supported me and we agreed on the principle and Abed Bhai instructed me to implement the measure. I did and some top executives first resisted the initiative, but ultimately it became an acceptable norm.

Faruq Bhai was fairly informal when communicating with his juniors. I am sure this was not the case when he was a Foreign Secretary or an Ambassador! He used to pop into our rooms, have a cup of tea and an informal chat. Everyone in the office knew that he was Abed Bhai's right hand, but he had befriended us in such a manner that it was easy

to have constructive discussions with him. We also used to have many such interesting and relevant sessions in Faruq Bhai's room.

I used to sit on the 19th floor of BRAC Centre, one room away from Faruq Bhai's. Whenever I had any problem, I would discuss it with him and he would always provide purposeful guidance. I also learned how to write good English from him. His choice of words and expressions was exceptional and he was a master at writing official correspondences. He also had an extraordinary grasp over the Bangla language. I always enjoyed reading his writings penned in precise and meticulous Bangla. In some of his books like *Desh Deshantor* and *Farzanar Chithi*, he wrote about his travel experience, the political history of Bangladesh and his experience with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. His books provided us with a deep insight into

*What I most liked about Faruq Bhai was his very secular mindset and remarkable sense of humour. He would always tell us, "Be kind to people. Treat everyone equally as human beings, regardless of their economic background or religion. Remember, you can be tough without being harsh".*

Bangladesh's politics and history. I enjoyed reading them and learned many things about the intricacies of politics, history, democracy and diplomacy.

Faruq Bhai loved good food. Whenever there was a party at BRAC, he would offer his suggestions to the menu and his choice of dishes was impeccable. We had also attended dinners at his home. He would instruct his chef on what to cook and the food on the table was usually something unique, from a global cuisine, and it always satisfied our taste buds.

I remember once, BRAC was running a

disaster relief programme in Kutubdia, most possibly in the late 1990s. Faruq Bhai and Abed Bhai had visited the programme, supervising the implementation of the programme in Kutubdia. At one point, Faruq Bhai suggested, "Have you tried porota with sweet milk tea in Kutubdia? Don't miss it!" During my next visit, I did have the meal he recommended, and it was simply incredible. Thank you Faruq Bhai, I will never forget that taste!

Faruq Bhai had a tremendous grasp of languages. His knowledge and ability to communicate in Bengali, English and French was flawless. He also spoke Chinese and had encouraged me to learn the language, which I did, and we would exchange pleasantries in Chinese.

What I most liked about Faruq Bhai was his very secular mindset and remarkable sense of humour. He would always tell us, "Be kind to people. Treat everyone equally as human beings, regardless of their economic background or religion. Remember, you can be tough without being harsh". Great lessons of life.

I can never forget Faruq Bhai. He was one of my wisest and most down-to-earth mentors. I will always cherish this one advice he gave me: He told me, "Salehuddin, don't let everything affect you to the core of your heart. If you do, you will suffer. Take things calmly and serenely, and remember, time is the best healer". Faruq Bhai, we will always miss you.

The writer is former Pro-Vice Chancellor of BRAC University and Executive Deputy Director of BRAC.

**QUOTABLE Quote**

**ZADIE SMITH**  
English novelist, essayist and short story writer.

*Tell the truth through whichever veil comes to hand - but tell it. Resign yourself to the lifelong sadness that comes from never being satisfied.*

**CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH**

**ACROSS**

- 1 Reach across
- 5 They may be read
- 10 Solo
- 11 Continuing story
- 12 Guinness of film
- 13 Psychedelic
- 14 Double loops
- 16 Blonds
- 20 Tartan patterns
- 23 Flying mammal
- 24 Roof feature
- 25 Michelangelo work
- 27 In the past
- 28 Green need
- 29 Hardly blue-blooded
- 32 Urban residence

**DOWN**

- 1 Thick cut
- 2 Came with mallets
- 3 Fresh
- 4 Cravat
- 5 Aussie city
- 6 Spring up
- 7 Jar part
- 8 Travel aid
- 9 Crafty
- 11 Puts away
- 15 Auction bids
- 17 Aid in crime
- 18 Calendar reading
- 19 Walk of fame sight
- 20 Ring out
- 21 Lake, in Italy
- 22 State frankly
- 25 Button instruction
- 26 Reply to a knocker
- 28 Second rank occupants
- 30 Wave top
- 31 Oral traditions
- 33 -- Major
- 34 Bath need
- 35 Aussie birds
- 36 Director Burton
- 37 Is for you
- 38 Through

**BEETLE BAILEY**

**WHAT IS THAT? A "SELFIE STICK!"**

**YESTERDAY'S ANSWER**

C	R	O	C	B	A	S	H
R	E	N	E	P	E	N	T
A	D	I	O	S	O	R	D
F	R	O	T	A	N	G	R
T	A	N	K	A	R	D	E
W	Y	A	T	T	W	A	Y
L	E	I	G	H			
A	C	E	S	E	A	T	S
S	P	A	T	A	N	T	R
T	A	N	G	E	N	T	I
A	C	T	O	R	L	A	C
S	H	E	E	N	E	X	I
H	E	R	S		E	A	T

**BABY BLUES**

**GIVE ME THAT! KEEP COMING! I'M GETTING SOME GREAT SHOTS!**

**THANKS, BUT I LOST AGAIN. MAYBE I'M NOT CUT OUT FOR CONTACT SPORTS.**

**PICKLEBALL IS A CONTACT SPORT? CONTACT WITH THE COURT.**