

# Bangladesh & UN Peacekeeping



a Muslim battalion in a Muslim country. Our actual mission was cancelled. As the Serb forces were approaching us we were told to move out of our base to be replaced by a battalion from another country. I replied them to take permission from my government through the UN Headquarter. "Unless I get order from my government to leave the city, I'm not moving on, I'm staying here" was my answer. I followed the advice of a French commander that you work first for your country's interest, United Nations comes later. We survived in the snow of Bosnia.

**BRIG GEN KHONDOKAR KAMALUZZAMAN (RETD.), FORMER CONTINGENT COMMANDER IN CAMBODIA**

UN operations in Cambodia from 1992-93 was at that time the most ambitious and expensive undertaking. Bangladesh's contribution to that mission included an infantry contingent. I served as the commanding officer of that contingent. Our main task was to demobilize all the belligerent groups and provide security support to unarmed UNTAC and UN components. Bangladesh also contributed a company to the reconstructing effort of damaged infrastructure of Cambodia. We prepared a comprehensive civic action programme where we taught people about basic health services such preparation of oral saline.

During that tenure of our operation we had to encounter major attacks from Khmer Rouge (KR) fighters. In one instance, our camp was attacked by 300 KR troops. The locals warned the camp commander about the impending attack and we took adequate preparation. The battle continued for four hours and we successfully resisted them. Our efforts were greatly praised by international media.

**MAJOR GENERAL REZANUR RAHMAN KHAN (RETD.), FORMER COMMANDANT OF BIPSOT**

Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT) is a globally recognized peacekeeping training institution. It conducts deployment and other thematic training such as disarmament, protection of civilians, prevention of conflict induced sexual harassment and so on. It has partnership with national and international bodies. It is well equipped in terms of both infrastructure and technical expertise. BIPSOT courses have been recognized by the US Department of State.

**SHAMSHER M CHOWDHURY BB, FORMER FOREIGN SECRETARY**

As an UN international civil servant I visited Liberia to see the condition of the peacekeepers. There I went to a small area called Fish Town. I met a team from Bangladesh battalion. They informed me that they grow vegetables and help locals in doing that. It earned them popularity among the locals. Later the Pakistani battalion deployed in the same area was withdrawn and the additional responsibility was given to BanBat. This is a reflection of the credibility and success that Bangladesh achieved in foreign lands.

**LT GEN ABDUL HAFIZ (RETD.), FORMER FORCE COMMANDER IN IVORY COAST**

I was fortunate to be in the group of pioneers of UNIKOM that arrived in the mission area in April 1991. It was a challenging task because at that time we did not have adequate infrastructure and amenities. But it was a great experience. We had to quickly adapt ourselves in a multinational environment. It was the first time that all the permanent members of the Security Council contributed to a peacekeeping mission. We were excited to prove that we know how to do patrols, how to prepare reports, how to brief and arrange briefings and above all we know how to deal with emergencies. We had to live in the tents under scorching heat. As Bangladeshis we proved that we can survive in the desert without any sort of modern amenities. It was a successful mission. Soon after completion of the UNIKOM the UN requested Bangladesh for an infantry security battalion to protect and provide security to the 300 observers.

I want to share some experiences of Ivory Coast. The mission was named UNOCI. It was essentially a political mission. Our challenge was to maintain contact with the belligerent groups and establish liaison with the military forces. We were trying to build confidence and trust among various groups.

Unfortunately there was very little progress in the implementation of peace process because of trust deficit. We saw sporadic violence throughout the country. It has to be underlined that, peacekeeping is extensively a political affair. Everything the peacekeepers do is designed to push forward a political process. Since the process was stalled, as

liaison officers our task was to simply maintain contact with various groups on the ground to show presence of the UN flag. But the situation started worsening and it was felt necessary to deploy a full-fledged peacekeeping mission. Finally it was done in April 2004.

I learnt great lessons from my mission experience. First there has to be credible progress on the political road map that has been agreed upon by the parties to continue peacekeeping operations. Peacekeepers must foresee the consequence of fast evolving situation on the ground and be prepared to

country told us not to give the message because the request was made by CIA. So we did not send the report.

As far as the matter of debriefing goes it is done three level nowadays. The contingent commander with his officers, brief the Army Headquarter Then they brief the ministry of foreign affairs. After that they go to the BIPSOT and they are debriefed for two days. So these three tier debriefing is done at that all level.

**AMBASSADOR RASHED AHMED, FORMER REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR IN KOSOVO**

headquarter. There was firing from all sides. I ran to my car through the hell of bullets and drove to UN headquarter. If I stayed in the office I would have been dead. I will never forget the tremendous amount of risk the army and police have to carry while serving in the mission.

**NILOY RANJAN BISWAS, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA**

I urge the government and the forces to do

for these services. Our civil service, professional and private sector can also join in the effort. We should include these aspects in our national peacekeeping strategy.

**REAR ADMIRAL SHAH IQBAL MUJTABA, FORMER CNS, BANGLADESH NAVY**

When Shamsher Mubin Chowdhury was foreign secretary we contacted him for finding scopes of sending our troops including ships to the UN mission. Our joint effort proved successful. We got an offer from the UN and successfully send our naval force there. In 2010 we sent ship to the mission. We are equally contributing as our colleagues from Army and Air Force.

**ADMIRAL M. FARID HABIB (RTD.), FORMER CNS, BANGLADESH NAVY**

It was in 1991, when I was a staff officer at Naval Headquarter in Operations Directorate. A letter came from AFD asking how many offices we could spare for the UN mission. And the reply from the Navy was -- none. Our mindset was that we were facing difficulty in maintaining our ships, how we could spare personnel for the UN mission. Now we have 509 navy personnel deployed in UN mission.

The breakthrough came in 2010 when we first deployed two ships in the UN full-fledged naval mission in Lebanon. Till now we have been maintaining our support with two ships while big countries like Germany, Indonesia and Turkey have contributed only one ship there. This kind of deployment provides us tremendous benefit in terms of training of our personnel. They participate in border patrolling and joint exercises. Besides that, Bangladesh government is also earning huge foreign currency through this deployment. Bangladesh get Tk110 crore for these two ships. And for other 14 high speed boats deployed in south Sudan, Bangladesh government is getting Tk 60 crore per year. Bangladesh Navy is now prepared to provide more ships. We should continue our effort.

**REAR ADMIRAL ASMA AWAL (RETD.), FORMER AMBASSADOR AND ASSISTANT CHIEF OF NAVAL STAFF, BANGLADESH NAVY**

We need to share the stories of peacekeepers to inform our people about Bangladesh's contribution to the maintenance of world peace. The contributions and sacrifices made by our forces should not be forgotten. Finally, Bangladesh deserves better position in the UN for its contribution to the peacekeeping mission. We should strengthen our diplomacy regarding peacekeeping.

**LT GEN M HARUN-AR-RASHID BP (RETD.), FORMER CAS, BANGLADESH ARMY**

I want to share the experience of UNOMIG. It was an exceptional case. Generally all missions come from Security Council whereas UNOMIG came from Moscow Agreement. Initially it was not authorized by the Security Council. Later on the Security Council came to rescue the Moscow agreement of 1994. Again the treaty was signed between Georgia and Abkhazia. The former was an internationally recognized country and the later was not a signatory to the United Nations nor was it recognized. In this complex situation, UNOMIG had to operate. There we had to deal with three governments: the government of Georgia, the government of Abkhazia and the exiled government of Abkhazia which was secretly supported by Georgia. None of these governments had total control over the fighters, even the Georgian army was not under the control of the Georgian authority. During my stay full scale war broke up three times and three times we had to negotiate the ceasefire and ceasefire line. I served there for 19 months. It was an unforgettable experience of my life.

**LT GEN M NOORUDDIN KHAN, FORMER CAS BANGLADESH ARMY**

I want to share the story of sending our troops to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War. At that time Bangladesh was in very friendly terms with Saddam Hussein of Iraq. So it was a critical decision to send troops against Saddam's interest. After a week-long deliberation we decided to send our troops. It was named Operation Moruprantor. It brought laudable success for us.

I would like to thank all those present here for their service to world as part of the Blue Helmets. They have brought laurels for Bangladesh

**MAHFUZ ANAM**

As I was sitting here and trying to feel with what intensity, with what devotion, with what humanity, with what empathy you have served people of other countries. As a soldier you are trained to serve your country. When you go to other countries to serve them it literally shows your humanity. Thank you all.

## PARTICIPANTS



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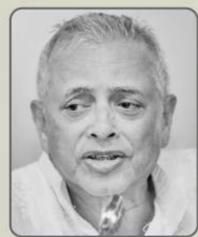
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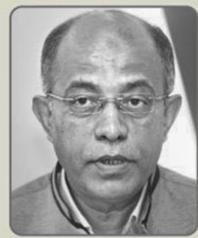
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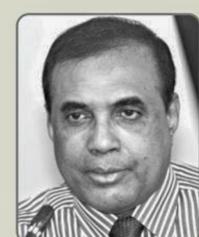
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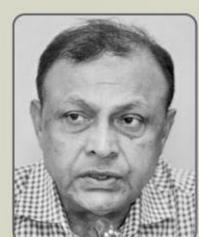
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M HARUN-AR-RASHID



M NOORUDDIN KHAN

**LT GEN MD MAINUL ISLAM (RETD.) FORMER CGS AND UNMO**

I was a part of the first observer contingent from Bangladesh to UNIMOG deployed in Iraq. We were inducted in the mission area with very little preparation but it was our military training that helped us to adjust to the new environment.

In Iraq we had to regularly report to UN about the situation of the border area upto 10 km. One day we received a message to give information about deployment of missiles upto 25 km of the border. We were ready to do the patrolling and send the report. But one of our observers from a Scandinavian

face it. I served in Kosovo for five years. It was a magnificent experience for me and my colleagues. I believe that our peacekeepers are the strongest arm of our diplomacy and we should recognize their outstanding contribution.

**ABM BAZLUR RAHMAN, FORMER ADDITIONAL IG, BANGLADESH POLICE**

I worked in Bosnia with the local police. I also served in East Timur during 2001-02. Bangladesh police personnel carried out all the regular activities of law enforcement in that country. I was there as a technical adviser. One day the army attacked the police

infographic research about the peacekeeping missions and collect the stories of the first generation peacekeepers. Today we have heard fascinating tales of dedication and professionalism. These need to be recorded systematically.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is preparing a national peacekeeping strategy in collaboration with forces and police. This needs to be taken seriously. We should recognize the changing nature of peacekeeping operations and offer our packages accordingly. Besides peacekeeping there are important task of peace building which starts after enforcement of peacekeeping. We should prepare our troops