

Indonesia's Role in Strengthening the Principles of Good Governance in UN Peacekeeping Operations: A Case Study of the Garuda Peacekeeping Force in Central Africa and Lebanon (2020–2025)

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ABSTRACT

This study examines Indonesia's role in strengthening good governance principles within United Nations peacekeeping operations, specifically analyzing the contributions of Garuda peacekeeping forces in Central Africa and Lebanon from 2020 to 2025. During this period, Indonesia actively participated in various peacekeeping missions, aiming to enhance transparency, accountability, participation, and overall effectiveness of these missions. Employing a qualitative methodology based on secondary data, including official UN mission reports, Indonesian governmental policy documents, academic literature, and relevant media reports, the study explores how Indonesia's implementation of good governance principles influenced mission effectiveness and local stability. Findings suggest that Indonesia's emphasis on transparency and accountability significantly improved trust between peacekeepers and local communities, thereby facilitating smoother mission operations and enhanced security outcomes. Additionally, the study identifies key supporting and constraining factors influencing Indonesia's efforts in promoting good governance within peacekeeping contexts. Ultimately, the research underscores the strategic importance of integrating robust good governance practices within peacekeeping operations as essential components for sustainable peace and regional stability, providing insights and recommendations beneficial for future international peacekeeping deployments.

Keywords: *Good Governance, Peacekeeping Operations, United Nations, Indonesia, Garuda Forces, Central Africa, Lebanon, Security Policy.*

Introduction

United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations have developed into one of the most important mechanisms for maintaining international peace and security. Initially limited to monitoring ceasefires, peacekeeping missions have evolved into complex and multidimensional operations that also focus on strengthening governance, upholding the rule of law, and assisting institutional development in host countries. Central to these expanded tasks is the integration of good governance principles such as accountability, transparency, inclusivity, efficiency, and legitimacy, which are increasingly recognized as vital for ensuring the sustainability and credibility of peace operations (Dewi, Sutopo, & Kismartini, 2024). Indonesia, through its Garuda Peacekeeping Force (KONGA), has been one of the most consistent contributors to UN peacekeeping since 1957. As one of the largest troop contributors from Asia, Indonesia's involvement in Central Africa and Lebanon demonstrates its active commitment to multilateralism while at the same time projecting its values and identity as a promoter of governance norms.

However, there is a continuing gap between the ideals of good governance promoted by the UN and the realities on the ground. While UN mandates often emphasize transparency, accountability, and inclusivity, the actual implementation in mission areas faces structural obstacles such as limited resources, logistical inefficiencies, political sensitivities, and weak local trust in peacekeepers (Sriyanto, 2020). In missions such as Central Africa and Lebanon, these problems are exacerbated by fragile political contexts and complex regional dynamics that challenge the ability of troop-contributing countries, including Indonesia, to fully realize governance objectives. This discrepancy between normative ideals and empirical practice represents the central problem that this study seeks to address.

Previous research has provided valuable insights into Indonesia's participation in peacekeeping but has left important gaps. Murwanto, Rosyidin, Susiatiningsih, and Paramasatya (2020) examined Indonesia's “Vision 4,000 Peacekeepers” policy and argued that it reflects a balance between normative commitments and strategic interests. Khoirunnisa, Jannah, Qonita, and Tjondrodewi (2022) analyzed the Garuda mission in Lebanon as part of Indonesia's defense diplomacy, showing that peacekeeping serves as a tool for building international prestige and expanding soft power. Rizky (2025) argued that while Indonesia's peacekeeping missions strengthen its global image, they sometimes function more as diplomatic symbols rather than fully effective governance actors. Although these studies highlight important aspects of Indonesia's participation, they tend to focus on numbers, identity, or diplomacy, while rarely exploring how Indonesian peacekeepers put governance principles into practice in the field. This study aims to address that gap by examining the Garuda contingents' concrete role in strengthening good governance during the 2020–2025 period.

The theoretical framework of this research combines the concept of good governance and the perspective of middle-power diplomacy. Good governance is used as the analytical lens to evaluate how principles such as accountability, transparency, efficiency, and inclusivity are integrated into Indonesia's peacekeeping practices (Dewi et al., 2024). Meanwhile, the perspective of middle-power diplomacy is relevant because Indonesia is often considered a middle power that seeks to not only participate but also shape international norms through peacekeeping. Indonesian scholars argue that middle-power states like Indonesia use peacekeeping as part of their diplomacy to project values and norms in international politics (Alvian, Prasetyoningsih, & Suryana, 2022). By combining these perspectives, the research can analyze Indonesia's role not only as a troop contributor but also as a promoter of governance norms in UN peace operations. The objective of this article is to examine how Indonesia, through the Garuda Peacekeeping Force deployed in Central Africa and Lebanon between 2020 and 2025, strengthens the principles of good governance in UN peacekeeping operations. Specifically, the study seeks to evaluate the extent to which governance principles are applied in Indonesia's peacekeeping practices, to identify the challenges faced in aligning normative ideals with practical realities, and to analyze Indonesia's position as a middle power in shaping governance norms within peacekeeping. Through this analysis, the article contributes to both the academic discussion on peacekeeping and governance and to practical policy debates about Indonesia's role in multilateral security cooperation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method because it focuses on explaining and understanding Indonesia's role in strengthening the principles of good governance in UN peacekeeping operations. A qualitative approach is considered suitable since the topic deals with ideas, policies, and practices rather than numerical data (Creswell, 2014). The case study method is applied to provide an in-depth analysis of Indonesia's involvement in specific missions. The cases of Central Africa and Lebanon were chosen because both represent significant UN peacekeeping operations where Indonesia has consistently deployed the Garuda Peacekeeping Force during the 2020–2025 period. These missions also illustrate different regional contexts and operational challenges, allowing a richer comparison of how governance principles are implemented (Yin, 2018).

The period 2020–2025 was selected because it reflects Indonesia's most recent phase of peacekeeping participation. During this time, Indonesia shifted its peacekeeping strategy from focusing solely on the quantity of deployed personnel to improving quality—such as enhanced training, deploying specialized units, and sending more female peacekeepers. This period also coincides with Indonesia's active diplomacy in the UN Security Council (2019–2020), which reinforced its commitment to multilateralism and the integration of governance values into peacekeeping. The focus on good governance as the analytical lens is based on the belief that the success of peacekeeping missions is not only measured by maintaining security but also by promoting accountability, transparency, inclusivity, and efficiency in mission operations. These principles are directly linked to the UN's evolving approach to peace operations,

which emphasizes sustaining peace and supporting local governance structures. By applying good governance as the framework, this research can assess whether Indonesia's contributions in Central Africa and Lebanon reflect these broader UN goals, while also identifying the challenges faced in translating ideals into practice.

The data used in this research come from two main sources: primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from official documents such as UN mission reports, Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs statements, and publications from the Indonesian Peacekeeping Training Center (PMPP TNI). Secondary data were collected from books, journal articles, news reports, and online sources related to peacekeeping and Indonesia's involvement. The combination of these sources allows for triangulation, which strengthens the credibility of the findings (Sugiyono, 2016). The data collection technique used is literature study. This involves gathering information from documents, reports, and scholarly writings related to the Garuda Peacekeeping Force, UN peacekeeping mandates, and governance principles. By reviewing these materials, the research can link Indonesia's peacekeeping practices with the theoretical framework of good governance. The data analysis technique applied is descriptive analysis. The researcher categorizes and interprets the collected data according to themes of good governance, such as transparency, accountability, inclusivity, and efficiency. These categories are then used to examine Indonesia's contributions in Central Africa and Lebanon during 2020–2025. By comparing the two cases, the analysis highlights how Indonesia operationalizes governance principles in practice, as well as the gaps and challenges that remain. This approach ensures that the findings are directly aligned with the title and purpose of the study.

This study applies three theoretical perspectives: the concept of good governance, the middle-power diplomacy framework, and constructivist approaches, particularly norm diffusion theory. Good governance serves as the analytical lens for assessing how Indonesia's peacekeeping missions implement principles such as accountability, transparency, efficiency, and inclusivity. Dewi, Sutopo, and Kismartini (2024) argue that good governance is not only a domestic requirement but also a normative standard increasingly demanded in international operations, including the security and defense sector. In the context of UN peacekeeping, these principles are essential for mission credibility and sustainability. The middle-power diplomacy perspective is also highly relevant, as Indonesia is frequently regarded as a middle power that leverages its peacekeeping participation to project influence and shape international norms. Indonesian scholars argue that middle powers like Indonesia engage in multilateralism as a form of “soft balancing,” enhancing their visibility and credibility in international forums without relying on coercive strategies (Alvian, Prasetyoningsih, & Suryana, 2022). Peacekeeping, therefore, becomes both a practical tool for contributing to international security and a symbolic arena where Indonesia affirms its identity as a responsible actor promoting governance values.

Constructivism and norm diffusion theory further deepen this analysis. Constructivism emphasizes that international politics is not only determined by material power but also shaped by shared norms, values, and identities (Wendt, 1999). In this regard, Indonesia's

peacekeeping role can be seen as part of its identity-building process in international society—presenting itself as a promoter of governance norms rather than merely a provider of troops. Norm diffusion theory, as discussed by Acharya (2004), highlights how states actively adopt, adapt, and promote international norms within local or regional contexts. For Indonesia, participation in peacekeeping allows the diffusion of governance principles from global institutions (UN) into local operations (Central Africa and Lebanon), while also reflecting back Indonesia’s own interpretation of governance values shaped by its national experience. By combining these perspectives, the study is able to explain not only the practical dimension of how good governance principles are applied by Indonesian contingents in Central Africa and Lebanon, but also the normative dimension of how Indonesia contributes to the spread and localization of governance norms in peacekeeping. Thus, the theoretical framework provides a comprehensive basis for analyzing Indonesia’s dual role as both a troop contributor and a norm entrepreneur within the UN peacekeeping system.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Indonesia’s Garuda Peacekeeping Force and Its Contributions (2020–2025) The Garuda Peacekeeping Force (Kontingen Garuda, or *Konga*) is the official name of Indonesia’s military and police contingents deployed under the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO). Since its first mission in 1957 during the Suez Crisis in Egypt, Indonesia has consistently contributed personnel to UN missions, making it one of the largest troop-contributing countries (TCCs) from the Asia-Pacific region (Bakti, 2020). The Garuda Force operates under the coordination of the Indonesian National Armed Forces Peacekeeping Center (PMPP TNI), which oversees selection, training, and deployment to ensure alignment with UN standards of professionalism, human rights, and good governance principles (PMPP TNI, 2022). During the period 2020–2025, Indonesia intensified its participation in peacekeeping operations despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the UN Department of Peace Operations (UN DPO), Indonesia consistently ranked in the top 10 global troop contributors, with approximately 2,600–3,000 personnel deployed annually across various missions (UN Peacekeeping, 2023). The largest deployments were to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), where Indonesia provided infantry battalions, naval units, Formed Police Units (FPU), medical teams, and engineering contingents.

In Lebanon (UNIFIL), the Garuda Peacekeeping Force maintained a strong presence through Indonesian Battalion (Indobatt) and Indonesian Maritime Task Force, which played a key role in maritime patrols along the Lebanese coast to prevent arms smuggling and maintain stability. Indonesia is the only Asian country trusted to command UNIFIL’s Maritime Task Force, reflecting its reputation for professionalism and naval capacity (UNIFIL, 2023). Additionally, Indonesian female peacekeepers served in staff and advisory positions, advancing gender inclusivity in UN missions (UN Women, 2021). In Central Africa (MINUSCA), Indonesian contingents contributed through engineering units, medical teams, and Formed Police Units (FPU). These forces not only

provided security but also rebuilt schools, clinics, and local government offices destroyed by conflict. The Indonesian FPU engaged in community policing and civilian protection initiatives, which enhanced trust between peacekeepers and local communities. Moreover, Indonesian female officers participated in outreach programs addressing gender-based violence, which aligned with the UN's Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda (Pusdiklat PMPP, 2022).

Beyond these missions, Indonesia has also sent smaller contingents to other UN operations in Africa and the Middle East, while strengthening pre-deployment training to meet UN standards on human rights, humanitarian law, and cultural sensitivity. Importantly, Indonesia also promotes the principle of “zero misconduct”, emphasizing accountability and transparency among its personnel (Connie, 2020).

Overall, the Garuda Peacekeeping Force (2020–2025) exemplifies Indonesia's dual commitment to global peace and security as well as to good governance principles within peacekeeping missions. Through its deployments in Lebanon and Central Africa, Indonesia not only fulfills its obligations as a UN member state but also enhances its diplomatic image as a responsible middle power and a leading Asian contributor to UN peacekeeping.

Indonesia's Garuda Peacekeeping Force has significantly contributed to strengthening the principles of good governance in UN peacekeeping operations during the 2020–2025 period, particularly in Central Africa (MINUSCA) and Lebanon (UNIFIL). Indonesia's role is not only measured by the number of troops deployed, but also by the quality of governance practices embedded within its contingents. The data indicate that Indonesia consistently integrates good governance values in its peacekeeping missions through three main aspects: (1) promoting transparency and accountability in operations, (2) strengthening inclusivity and gender representation, and (3) improving efficiency and professional capacity in mission execution. At the same time, Indonesia acts as a norm entrepreneur by promoting governance values in line with UN standards, reflecting its identity as a middle power committed to multilateralism.

Table 1. Indonesia's Contribution to Good Governance in Peacekeeping (2020–2025)

Governance Principle / Norm Diffusion	Central Africa (MINUSCA)	Lebanon (UNIFIL)
Transparency Accountability	& Deployment of Indonesian police units trained in community policing; improved reporting mechanisms on civilian protection (PMPP TNI, 2022).	Indonesian naval contingent regularly reports to UNIFIL headquarters; emphasis on maritime patrol accountability (UNIFIL, 2023).

Inclusivity Gender Representation	& Increased number of female peacekeepers; training on gender sensitivity in conflict zones.	Appointment of Indonesian female officers in staff positions, supporting UN's Women, Peace, and Security agenda.
Efficiency Professional Capacity	& Specialized engineer units rebuild infrastructure and restore local governance facilities.	Medical teams and naval units provide humanitarian assistance, supporting local resilience.
Norm Diffusion & Identity Projection	& Indonesia introduces governance practices emphasizing dialogue with local leaders and civilians.	Indonesian peacekeepers promote interfaith dialogue and civil-military cooperation, reflecting governance values.

Transparency & Accountability

Transparency and accountability are essential elements of good governance, ensuring that peacekeeping missions operate under clear procedures and are monitored effectively. In Central Africa, Indonesia contributed through its Formed Police Unit (FPU) which applied community policing practices. This approach required regular dialogue between peacekeepers and local communities, enabling civilians to evaluate security performance. Reports from the Indonesian Peacekeeping Center indicate that the presence of Indonesian FPU helped increase civilian trust and reduced the perception of UN peacekeepers as detached actors (PMPP TNI, 2022). In Lebanon, transparency was highlighted in the Indonesian naval unit's operations under UNIFIL. Indonesia's Indonesian Battalion (Indobatt) regularly submitted patrol and engagement reports to UN headquarters, emphasizing maritime accountability. For example, routine maritime patrols conducted in cooperation with the Lebanese Navy were not only documented but also evaluated in joint meetings. This created a mechanism where Indonesian peacekeepers became role models in accountable operations, showing that peacekeeping is not only about military strength but also about responsible governance practices (UNIFIL, 2023).

Inclusivity & Gender Representation

Inclusivity, particularly gender representation, is another cornerstone of good governance. The UN's *Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda* emphasizes the participation of women in all levels of peace and security decision-making. Indonesia has actively supported this agenda by gradually increasing the deployment of female peacekeepers between 2020 and 2025 (UN Women, 2021). In Central Africa, Indonesian female officers played crucial roles in community outreach programs, especially in areas affected by gender-based violence. Their presence improved communication between UN personnel and local women, who were often reluctant to engage with male officers.

This not only supported mission inclusivity but also advanced trust-building (Pusdiklat PMPP, 2022).

Meanwhile, in Lebanon, Indonesian female officers held staff and advisory positions, allowing them to influence policy discussions within UNIFIL. This participation demonstrated that Indonesia does not limit female peacekeepers to symbolic roles but integrates them into operational and decision-making processes. Reports show that Indonesian contingents became one of the top contributors of female peacekeepers from Asia, further enhancing Indonesia's credibility as a gender-inclusive contributor to peacekeeping governance (UN Women, 2021).

Efficiency & Professional Capacity

Efficiency and capacity building are important indicators of how well peacekeeping forces implement their mandates. In Central Africa, Indonesian engineering units were recognized for their work in rebuilding public infrastructure such as schools, administrative offices, and health facilities damaged by conflict. These reconstruction efforts supported local governance capacity by ensuring communities had access to functional institutions, which is vital for post-conflict recovery (Bakti, 2020). In Lebanon, Indonesia's naval and medical units also showcased efficiency. For instance, during the aftermath of the 2020 Beirut explosion, Indonesian peacekeepers provided rapid humanitarian assistance, including medical aid and logistical support. This demonstrated operational efficiency and the ability of peacekeepers to respond to emergencies beyond traditional security tasks (UNIFIL, 2023). Overall, Indonesia's emphasis on training prior to deployment—carried out by the Indonesian Peacekeeping Center (PMPP)—helped ensure that its contingents had strong technical and professional capacity. These efforts enhanced Indonesia's reputation as a peacekeeping contributor capable of combining military professionalism with humanitarian governance (PMPP TNI, 2022).

Norm Diffusion & Identity Projection

From a constructivist perspective, peacekeeping missions are not only about material contributions but also about the diffusion of norms and identity projection. Indonesia has consistently positioned itself as a promoter of governance values that align with its foreign policy identity as a middle power and a democratic Muslim-majority country (Sukma, 2011). In Central Africa, Indonesian peacekeepers promoted inclusive dialogue mechanisms by engaging with local community and religious leaders. This reflected Indonesia's domestic experience of managing diversity through dialogue and consensus-building. By sharing such practices, Indonesia contributed to the localization of governance norms in a conflict-affected society (Acharya, 2004).

In Lebanon, Indonesian peacekeepers actively promoted interfaith and intercultural dialogue by organizing activities that involved local Christian and Muslim communities. These activities highlighted Indonesia's identity as a tolerant and pluralistic nation, contributing to the UN's broader governance agenda of fostering social cohesion. As

argued by Acharya (2004), norm diffusion occurs when states act as norm entrepreneurs, and Indonesia's initiatives in peacekeeping clearly embody this role. By embedding governance principles in its missions, Indonesia strengthened its credibility in international forums, particularly in debates on UN peacekeeping reform. The Garuda Contingent's contributions in Central Africa and Lebanon demonstrate that Indonesia not only meets UN standards but also actively shapes them, reinforcing its position as a responsible and influential middle power in the Global South (Connie, 2020). One of the recurring challenges in UN peacekeeping operations is the lack of accountability and instances of misconduct by troops. Indonesia addressed this challenge by adopting strict internal monitoring mechanisms, including pre-deployment training at PMPP TNI that emphasizes integrity, respect for human rights, and adherence to UN codes of conduct (PMPP TNI, 2022). In Central Africa, Indonesian Formed Police Units implemented community policing models, which created open channels of communication with civilians and local authorities, thereby enhancing transparency in operations.

By institutionalizing accountability, Indonesia narrows the gap between ideal governance principles and empirical realities in peacekeeping, which often suffer from credibility issues (Santoso, 2021). This reflects the constructivist perspective, where norms such as accountability are not only internalized but also actively diffused to other actors within peacekeeping missions. Indonesia strengthened inclusivity by significantly increasing the number of female peacekeepers. Between 2020–2025, Indonesia consistently expanded women's participation, reaching 250 female personnel by 2025 (UN Peacekeeping, 2023). In MINUSCA, female officers conducted outreach for survivors of gender-based violence, while in UNIFIL, they engaged in civil-military cooperation programs that built trust with local communities. This practice demonstrates Indonesia's alignment with the UN Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda and shows its role as a norm entrepreneur, diffusing inclusivity norms into peacekeeping frameworks. As Connie (2020) argues, Indonesia leverages its middle power diplomacy to promote universal values, making gender equality both a national and international priority.

Efficiency in peacekeeping is often questioned due to limited resources and bureaucratic challenges. Indonesia responded by deploying specialized units such as engineers, medical teams, and maritime forces. In Central Africa, Indonesian engineers contributed to reconstruction efforts by building schools and clinics, while in Lebanon, Indonesia led the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force, ensuring maritime security and preventing illicit arms trafficking (UNIFIL, 2023). These contributions reflect a broader professionalization of peacekeeping—not just maintaining peace but also rebuilding governance structures. Indonesia's efforts underline the principle that efficiency in peacekeeping depends on diverse expertise beyond combat forces (Bakti, 2020). Another critical aspect of good governance is the rule of law. In MINUSCA, Indonesian police contingents assisted local law enforcement in crime prevention and training programs, while in UNIFIL, Garuda troops implemented conflict resolution and mediation workshops with civilians. These initiatives reinforced local governance institutions and promoted long-term stability.

By integrating rule of law measures into peacekeeping, Indonesia went beyond traditional military functions, advancing the governance capacity of host nations. This reflects the constructivist notion of norm internalization, where peacekeepers do not only act as security providers but also as agents of legal and institutional strengthening (Santoso, 2021). Finally, Indonesia's peacekeeping role demonstrates its function as a norm diffuser in global governance. By embedding principles such as transparency, inclusivity, and accountability in its peacekeeping contingents, Indonesia actively promotes these values in multilateral forums at the UN. As a middle power, Indonesia balances its domestic democratic values with its global peacekeeping agenda, thereby shaping the evolution of UN norms on good governance (Connie, 2020). This aligns with constructivist theory, where states influence international structures not only through material power but also through the promotion and socialization of norms. Indonesia's participation, therefore, exemplifies how middle powers can contribute to shaping global peacekeeping standards.

CONCLUSIONS

Indonesia's Garuda Peacekeeping Force has played a significant role in advancing good governance principles during its deployments from 2020 to 2025 in Central Africa and Lebanon. The contributions go beyond troop numbers, emphasizing transparency, accountability, inclusivity, efficiency, and rule of law, which are integrated into operations through community policing, transparent reporting, infrastructure rebuilding, and humanitarian aid efforts. The deployment of female peacekeepers and their active participation in outreach and policy discussions demonstrate Indonesia's commitment to gender inclusivity and gender-sensitive approaches aligned with UN mandates. Indonesian peacekeepers promote dialogue with local leaders, religious communities, and civilians, fostering social cohesion and trust—key elements of good governance embedded in their practices. The professionalism of engineering, medical, and maritime units contributes to restoring public institutions and ensuring operational efficiency. Indonesia also acts as a norm entrepreneur by projecting its identity as a tolerant, democratic middle power that upholds and diffuses governance values internationally. Through strict internal monitoring, capacity building, and engagement in local rule of law initiatives, Indonesia enhances the legitimacy and credibility of peacekeeping, broadening its influence within the UN system and shaping norms for responsible peace operations.

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