



Spotlight on Freight Forwarding for the United Nations

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The United Procurement Division has overall responsibility for sourcing expert procurement services for various departments within the United Nations (UN). These include the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the Office Away from Headquarters (OAH) and the Office of Information and Communications Technology (OICT.)

Perhaps the most interesting area of their activities, from a freight forwarding angle, are the logistics contracts awarded to contractors from around the world, to move goods (equipment/ammunition etc.) to the UN's current 12 peacekeeping operations. Many of those peacekeeping missions are in areas of the world which offer particular local challenges.

They include:

- MINURSO, where the UN has been operating a UN mission for a referendum in Laayoue, Western Sahara, to enable the people of Western Sahara to be given the right to choose between independence and integration with Morocco. In June 2022 there were a small military and police mission, composed of individuals/troops/military and police contributors from around the world.
- MINUSCA, where the UN has deployed a multidimensional UN peacekeeping force, mandated to protect civilians in the Central African Republic of BINUCA. Some 17,420 uniformed personnel (military and police) were based there in June 2022 together with a further 16,237 personnel which included troops.
- MINUSMA, Mali, where the UN has set up a stabilization mission to support political processes in that country. Some 17,557 personnel (including troops) and some 15,209 uniformed personnel (military and police) were stationed there in June 2022, with some 15 countries involved.
- MONUSCO - DR of the Congo, designed to protect civilians and consolidate peace. A vast number of different countries have been involved in sending military/police and troops into the mission.
- UNIFIL (Lebanon) where a large mission has been dispatched to monitor the cessation of hostilities and help to ensure humanitarian access to the civilian population, in support of the Lebanese armed forces. This followed an extension of an earlier mission to assist the Lebanese Government to restore its

effective authority.

- UNMISS –South Sudan to monitor human rights and support cessation of hostilities Agreement. There are 19,101 uniformed personnel(military/police) as well as 17,954 troops and other personnel working on that mission in June 2022, again from a large number of countries.
- There are smaller missions in Golan (UNDOF), Cyprus (UNFICYP), Kosovo (UNMIK), India and Pakistan(UNMOGIP) and the Middle East (UNTSO), Abyei (UNISFA.)

The freight forwarding services required to keep these missions operational are provided by private companies across the world. Contracts (known as purchase orders) are awarded to freight forwarders on terms.

- Contracts are awarded on a sealed bid process, with the successful bidder with the total price paid for the forwarding services then being publicised on the UN website.
- Purchase orders are issued to the forwarder requiring them to complete the contract within a specified time.
- Reporting and updates are required to be given to the UN as the contract is executed.
- There are strict payment terms based upon stages reached in the purchase order terms.
- Any issues/disputes are required to be negotiated and then referred to arbitration under the UNICTRAL Rules. This is often the stage where [LA Marine](#) is required to work with the UN procurement team, on behalf of forwarders, to ensure that disputes get resolved.

These contracts or purchase orders are often difficult to execute logistically, but the freight forwarding community offers invaluable expertise to enable the UN missions to operate effectively.

If you have any questions on freight forwarding contracts or disputes, please contact our specialist [Shipping & Logistics lawyers](#) at 023 8082 7416 or by emailing online.enquiries@la-law.com