

YEARBOOK OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW — VOLUME 15, 2012  
CORRESPONDENTS' REPORTS

IRELAND<sup>1</sup>

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*Government Policy — Ireland and Peace Operations*

Participation by Defence Forces and Gardaí (Irish police) in a range of United Nations-sponsored activities continues to be a significant element of Irish foreign policy and a major role for the Defence Forces. In accordance with the UN Stand-by Arrangements System, Ireland has offered to provide up to 850 military personnel for overseas service at any one time. This was deemed to be the maximum sustainable commitment that Ireland could make to overseas peacekeeping operations. On 31 December 2012, Ireland was contributing 438 Defence Forces personnel to 11 different missions throughout the world.<sup>2</sup> Ireland also contributed a small number of officers to UN and Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) observer missions.

In 1993, Ireland revised and updated the municipal legal basis for troop participation in UN operations to allow it to contribute soldiers to UNOSOM II in Somalia. This brought about a fundamental change in policy so that participation in peacekeeping forces which was not specifically of a 'police nature' would be permitted.<sup>3</sup> At the time, this generated some debate as to whether Ireland should contribute forces to new kinds of military action by the UN. Since then, the debate about future Irish participation in peace operations has become more controversial owing to the foreign policy and security implications of more recent EU treaties. The economic crisis has also meant that financial considerations are also a major factor to be taken into account.

Ireland's main deployment is to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), to which Ireland contributes 361 personnel. Ireland currently makes smaller contributions in Kosovo (12), Bosnia and Herzegovina (7), Afghanistan (7) and the EU training mission (EUTM) in Somalia (10).

Ireland has also participated in the Austro-German-led Battlegroup, which was on stand-by until 31 December 2012.

In 2010, the government approved Ireland's participation in the Austro-German-led battle group. Other members of the Austro-German battle group were Austria, Germany, the Czech Republic, Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

A battle group is a standard technical military term and consists of about 1,500 personnel. The purpose of a battle group is to undertake operations commonly referred to as the Petersberg Tasks which are set out in the *Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts*.<sup>4</sup> The tasks include rescue tasks, peacemaking, peacekeeping and humanitarian tasks.

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<sup>1</sup> Information provided by Professor Ray Murphy, Irish Centre for Human Rights, National University of Ireland Galway, Ireland.

<sup>2</sup> Full details of all personnel currently serving overseas are listed in the Table 1, 'Members of the Permanent Defence Force Serving Overseas as at 1 December 2012'.

<sup>3</sup> *Defence (Amendment) Act 1993* (Ireland). This was subsequently amended by the *Defence (Amendment) Act 2006* (Ireland).

<sup>4</sup> Opened for signature 2 October 1997 (entered into force 1 March 1999).

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Ireland participates in order to enhance its military capability and inter-operability with other member States' Defence Forces.

Ireland's contribution comprises a reconnaissance company. If the battle group had been deployed, the contribution would have amounted to approximately 175 personnel. During the stand-by period, one officer was deployed to the battle group headquarters in Ulm, Germany for training and planning activities. The costs of equipment and additional training for participation in the battle group were marginal. The capabilities and equipment in respect of Ireland's contributions already resided within the Defence Forces. Training of Irish troops for the Austro-German battle group took place in Ireland and no joint field exercises or manoeuvre training took place.

Table 1: Members of the Permanent Defence Force Serving Overseas as at 1 December 2012<sup>5</sup>

<u>UN missions</u>	<u>Number of Personnel</u>
<b>UNIFIL</b> (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon) HQ	16
<b>UNIFIL</b> 107 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion	337
<b>UNIFIL</b> Sector West HQ	8
<b>UNTSO</b> (United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation) — Israel, Syria and Lebanon	11
<b>MINURSO</b> (United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara)	3
<b>MONUSCO</b> (United Nations Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo)	3
<b>UNOCI</b> (United Nations Mission in Ivory Coast)	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>380</b>
<b><u>UN-mandated missions</u></b>	
<b>EUFOR</b> (EU-led Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina)	7
<b>EUTM Somalia</b> (EU-led Training Mission in Uganda)	10
<b>KFOR</b> (International Security Presence in Kosovo) — HQ	12
<b>ISAF</b> (International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan)	7
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF</b>	<b>416</b>

<sup>5</sup> Table prepared by the author.

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<b>PERSONNEL SERVING WITH UN MISSIONS</b>	
<b><u>Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)</u></b>	
OSCE Mission to Bosnia & Herzegovina	2
OSCE Mission in Belgrade, Serbia	1
Head of High Level Planning Group, Vienna	1
Staff Officer, High Level Planning Group, Vienna	1
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF PERSONNEL SERVING WITH OSCE</b>	<b>5</b>
<b><u>EU Military Staff</u></b>	
Brussels	4
<b><u>Austro-German Battlegroup</u></b>	
Ulm, Germany	1
<b><u>Military Representatives/Advisers/Staff</u></b>	
Military Adviser, Permanent Mission to UN, New York	1
Military Adviser, Irish Delegation to OSCE, Vienna	1
Staff Appointments, Irish Delegation to OSCE, Vienna	2
Military Representative to EU (Brussels)	5
Liaison Office of Ireland, NATO/PfP (Brussels)	2
EU OHQ Operation Althea, Mons, Belgium	1
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF DEFENCE FORCES PERSONNEL SERVING OVERSEAS</b>	<b>438</b>

RAY MURPHY