

UN Peace Operations and Human Rights

Professor Charles T. Hunt

Wednesday 4 September 2024: 5.30pm for 6-7pm AEST - Level 13, 356 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

Today's conflicts are often prolonged by recurring instances of exclusion, discrimination, and the infringement of human rights, and exacerbated by elevated levels of corruption and a widespread decline in the enforcement of the rule of law and accountability.

The UN system has acknowledged that effectively addressing underlying grievances, rights violations, and different forms of exclusion are fundamental to ending cycles of violence and transitioning to sustained peace.



Over the past 30 years, UN peace operations have increasingly included strong human rights mandates. This reflects growing awareness of the links between human rights and conflict management, including to the protection of civilians (POC) and deeply entrenched governance shortfalls in many fragile, conflict-affected settings. However there has been rising pushback on human rights language in peace operations mandates (especially related to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and child protection). It is a continuing challenge for the UN system to navigate the complex political terrain of conflict settings and leverage the combined efforts of human rights and other aspects of peace operations.

Prof. Charles Hunt is lead author of [*UN Peace Operations and Human Rights*](#), a thematic study by the Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network (EPON) drawing on a year of empirical research and case study findings from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yemen, South Sudan, Mali, Afghanistan, the Great Lakes, Horn of Africa and elsewhere.

How does the UN's human rights engagement contribute to the overall impact of UN peace operations, including the protection of civilians? How do UN peace operations themselves contribute to human rights outcomes? What lessons can be drawn by comparing different UN peace operations in terms of building better synergies between human rights-focused activities and the other work of missions?



Dr Charles T. Hunt is Professor of International Relations in the School of Global, Urban & Social Studies at RMIT University. He is a Senior Fellow (non-resident) at the [United Nations University Centre for Policy Research](#) in New York, USA. Charles' background is in political science with a specialisation in international relations and critical security studies. He has a PhD International Relations from the University of Queensland, Australia, as well as MA International Studies and a BSc (Joint Honours) Economics and Political Science – both from the University of Birmingham, UK.

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