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## 4. The Japanese Peace Cooperation Policy in the Horn of Africa

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### **Abstract**

This paper examines the Japanese Peace Cooperation Policy in the Horn of Africa. Since the 1990s, many UN peacekeeping operations (PKO) have been deployed in Africa. However, there has been a decline in the last decade, and no new ones have been established since MINUSMA (Mali) in 2013. One reason for this is the mismatch between the principles/ assets of UN peacekeeping operations and the realities of conflicts in this continent. Much of UN peacekeeping operations are mandated to protect civilians and stabilize situation on the ground. Violent extremism and cross-border escalation of civil wars have been identified as contributing factors to these problems, but UN peacekeeping operations do not have the authority or resources to deal with them. For UN member states, the material and political costs of providing personnel to such UN peacekeeping operations are high. In contrast to this situation, the AU has been engaged in peace support operations (PSOs) within Africa, starting with Burundi in 2003. In Somalia, three AU PSOs with different names and mandates have been deployed for 18 years since February 2007. They have been mandated to defeat the violent extremism group Al-Shabaab, to protect the Federal Republic of Somalia members, and to assist Peace Process/national reconstruction support including the security sector reforms. In this particular context, there has been a shift in Japanese peace cooperation policy. Participation in UN peacekeeping operations has been identified as a primary course of action. However, the deployment of the Japanese Self-Defense Force has been a subject of considerable debate within both policy-making and academic circles. A significant development in the realm of African peace and cooperation policy is the emergence of the concept of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP). The definition of the African continent is not solely determined by the subject of the

"International Contribution" (Kokusai-Kouken), but is also characterized as a region of strategic importance to the national interests of Japan. This paper sets out to trace the historical evolution of Japan's peace cooperation policy in general, before focusing on the country's involvement in peacekeeping operations in Africa. Subsequently, the analysis is narrowed to focus on the Horn of Africa, with particular reference to Japan's involvement in the region. In conclusion, this paper provides an analysis of Japan's peace cooperation policy, as outlined in the report of the Study Group on the Future of Japan's International Peace Cooperation. This report was published by the Secretariat of the International Peace Cooperation Headquarters, Cabinet Office, in June 2025<sup>1</sup>.

**Keywords:** Japanese Peace Cooperation Policy, UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKO), African Union Peace Support Operations (PSOs), Horn of Africa, Somalia, Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)

## **1. Japan's Peace Cooperation Policy since 1945: Evolution, Continuities, and Transformations**

Japan's postwar peace cooperation policy is a reflection of the political environment surrounding this country. Unlike other industrial powers, Japan's contributions to peace have been constrained by its pacifist constitution, particularly Article 9, while simultaneously shaped by U.S. security guarantees and international expectations. Over the past eight decades, Japan's policy has evolved from strict pacifism and economic diplomacy to active participation in international security frameworks. This section traces

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<sup>1</sup> The Secretariat of the International Peace Cooperation Headquarters, Cabinet Office, "Study Group on the Future of Japan's International Peace Cooperation-Summary of Discussion," June 19 2025, [https://www.cao.go.jp/pko/pko\\_e/operations/pdf/202506\\_summary.pdf](https://www.cao.go.jp/pko/pko_e/operations/pdf/202506_summary.pdf). The author of this paper was a member of the study group. the views expressed in this paper are those of the author alone and do not represent the views of the Study Group or the Secretariat.

the major stages of that evolution—highlighting continuities, turning points, and the balance between domestic legal constraints and global responsibilities.

In this particular context, the interpretation of Article 9 also had implications for Japanese peace cooperation policy. Notwithstanding the fact that the article does not refute the notion of international cooperation through United Nations Security Council resolutions, it is evident that the Japanese government has hitherto participated in UN peacekeeping operations exclusively in the humanitarian and developmental sphere<sup>2</sup>. During the Cold War, the deployment of the Japanese Self-Defense Force was not a matter that was considered.

### **1-1 The Foundations of Pacifism (1945–1960)**

In the immediate aftermath of World War II, Japan's 1947 Constitution institutionalized pacifism through Article 9, which renounced the right to wage war and prohibited the maintenance of "war potential." This provision became the cornerstone of Japan's postwar identity as a peace state (Heiwa Kokka). In practice, however, Japan's security needs were addressed through the U.S.–Japan Security Treaty of 1951, which placed defense responsibilities in American hands. The revision of the treaty in 1960 deepened this alliance, situating Japan firmly within the Cold War framework.

During this period, Japan's international role was defined by its economic reconstruction. Rather than projecting military power, Japan cultivated legitimacy through diplomatic engagement and economic cooperation. This early stage established a pattern of emphasizing non-military tools as a form of peace cooperation.

### **1-2 Economic Diplomacy and Comprehensive Security (1960s–1980s)**

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<sup>2</sup> For literature re-examining the interpretation of the Constitution of Japan within the context of the United Nations Charter and international political history, see the following: Hideaki Shinoda, "Why Article 9 of the Constitution of Japan should be interpreted in line with International Law and Why Japanese Constitutional Lawyers Failed to Understand it Appropriately," *Hiroshima Peace Science*, 43 (2021), pp. 89-105, [https://hiroshima.repo.nii.ac.jp/record/2036191/files/hps\\_43\\_89.pdf](https://hiroshima.repo.nii.ac.jp/record/2036191/files/hps_43_89.pdf).

From the 1960s onward, Japan became a leading economic power and used its wealth to support stability abroad. Official Development Assistance (ODA) became the central instrument of its peace cooperation, particularly in Southeast Asia. This reflected a dual purpose: reconciling with neighbors after wartime aggression and contributing to regional stability during the Cold War.

The 1980 Comprehensive Security Policy marked a conceptual expansion of Japan's peace cooperation<sup>3</sup>. Security was no longer defined solely in military terms but extended to economic, food, and energy dimensions. This broadened framework allowed Japan to present itself as a security actor without crossing the constitutional boundaries imposed by Article 9. Japan's role during this era reinforced its reputation as a civilian power, privileging economic statecraft and institution-building over hard security contributions.

### **1-3 Post-Cold War Transformation: From Checkbook to Peacekeeping (1990s)**

The end of the Cold War challenged Japan's limited role in security affairs. The 1991 Gulf War revealed the inadequacy of financial contributions alone: Japan's \$13 billion support package was derided internationally as "checkbook diplomacy," since no personnel were deployed. This criticism triggered intense domestic debate and underscored the gap between Japan's economic status and its diplomatic influence.

In response, Japan enacted the 1992 International Peace Cooperation Law (Act No. 79 1992)—commonly known as the PKO Law— which authorized the Japan Self-Defense Forces (SDF) to participate in PKO under strict conditions: operations had to be in non-combat zones, with host-country consent, and weapons could be used only for self-defense. The most controversial one is that if the Japanese government recognizes that the situation on the ground is too dangerous for the SDF, it can withdraw its troops without UN consent. This is a rather unilateral perspective, and many other troop contributing countries actually decide their own policy in a sophisticated manner. The SDF's deployment to

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<sup>3</sup> Tsuneo Akaha, "Japan's Comprehensive Security Policy: A New East Asian Environment," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Apr., 1991), pp. 324-340.

Cambodia (UNTAC) marked Japan's first overseas military engagement since 1945 and symbolized a historic turning point. Through subsequent missions in Mozambique, Timor-Leste, and the Golan Heights, Japan gradually normalized SDF participation in UN operations.

This period thus represents the transition from purely financial to personnel-based peace cooperation, enhancing Japan's credibility as a responsible international actor.

#### **1-4 Global Security Engagement and “Proactive Contribution” (2000s)**

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent U.S.-led campaigns created new pressures on Japan to expand its international security role. Japan passed the 2001 Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law, which enabled the Maritime SDF to provide refueling operations in the Indian Ocean in support of U.S. and coalition forces. In 2003, the Iraq Reconstruction Special Measures Law authorized SDF units to engage in humanitarian and reconstruction missions in Samawah, Iraq. While restricted to non-combat zones, these missions demonstrated Japan's willingness to adapt its peace cooperation policy to new global security realities.

These measures also marked the gradual evolution of Japan's doctrine toward what would later be described as “proactive contribution to peace” (*sekkyokuteki heiwashugi*). Although framed within the limits of Article 9, Japan's cooperation extended beyond UN PKO to include counterterrorism, post-conflict reconstruction, and humanitarian relief.

#### **1.5. Strategic Reorientation under Abe Administration (2010s)**

A decisive shift occurred in the 2010s under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. The 2013 National Security Strategy—Japan's first comprehensive security doctrine—explicitly articulated the principle of proactive contribution to peace. Two years later, the 2015 Legislation for Peace and Security<sup>4</sup> reinterpreted Article

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<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Japan's Legislation for Peace and Security: Seamless Responses for Peace and Security of Japan and the International Community,” March 2016, [https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000143304.pdf?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000143304.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com).

9 to permit limited collective self-defense, enabling Japan to aid allies under attack even if Japan itself was not directly threatened.

These reforms represented the most significant legal and doctrinal changes in Japan's postwar security policy. They expanded the scope of the SDF's permissible activities and signaled a willingness to assume greater responsibility for regional and global security. While domestically contested, these reforms aligned with international expectations that Japan should contribute commensurately with its status as a major economic and political power. The background to this new policy lies in Japan's economic stagnation and China's political and economic rise. The concept of FOIP served as a prime example of this intent. This concept, announced by Prime Minister Abe in Nairobi on 27 August 2016 during Japan's Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) 6, was initially named a 'strategy'. However, it faced criticism domestically for being overly aggressive and was subsequently changed to a 'vision'. In reality, though, it could well be described as a strategy within foreign and defense policy.

## **1.6. Contemporary Developments and Outlook (2020s–2025)**

In the 2020s, Japan's peace cooperation policy has become increasingly multidimensional. The SDF has taken part in disaster relief operations, anti-piracy patrols off the coast of Somalia, and UN peacekeeping missions, while also supporting freedom of navigation initiatives in the Indo-Pacific. Human security—encompassing health, disaster response, and sustainable development—remains a central pillar of Japan's foreign and aid Policies.

By 2025, Japan has consolidated its identity as a “proactive contributor to peace.” Its approach integrates military, economic, and humanitarian instruments, demonstrating a balance between constitutional pacifism and international responsibility. While Article 9 continues to impose legal constraints, Japan has adapted its peace cooperation policy to evolving global challenges.

## **2. Japan's Participation in Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) in Africa: A Historical Overview**

Japan's involvement in PKO in Africa has been a central component of its broader international peace cooperation policy since the early 1990s. Following the enactment of the PKO Law Japan gained the legal framework necessary to dispatch personnel from the SDF and civilians to participate in United Nations missions. This policy shift marked a significant departure from Japan's previous, strictly non-military international role, constrained by the pacifist principles of Article 9 of the Japanese constitution.

### **2.1. Early Engagement: Mozambique (1993–1995)**

Japan's first PKO deployment to Africa took place in Mozambique, where the SDF joined the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ). Approximately 48 SDF personnel were dispatched to support election logistics and reconstruction efforts following the end of Mozambique's civil war. This mission represented Japan's first significant on-the-ground contribution to African peacebuilding and established a model for future participation.

### **2.2. Expanding Involvement: Golan Heights to Sudan (2000s)**

After the success of ONUMOZ, Japan continued to expand its engagement in peacekeeping and humanitarian activities. In Africa, Japan contributed mainly through engineering, logistics, and humanitarian support. The most notable mission during the 2000s was Japan's dispatch to Sudan under the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), starting in 2008. The SDF engineering unit supported infrastructure rebuilding in the south, reflecting Japan's emphasis on "human security" and reconstruction assistance rather than combat-related roles.

### **2.3. South Sudan: The Largest African PKO Mission (2011–2017)**

Japan's most substantial and politically significant African PKO was its participation in the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), beginning in 2011. The SDF deployed hundreds of engineering troops to Juba and Bor to build roads, bridges, and public facilities. This mission was notable for occurring amid Japan's evolving security policy under the Abe Shinzo administration, which emphasized a "Proactive Contribution to Peace" (*sekkyokuteki heiwashugi*). Despite domestic debate

about the risks of SDF involvement in unstable regions, the mission continued until May 2017, when Japan withdrew its contingent following escalating local violence. The Japanese government has since continued to dispatch several SDF personnel to the UNMISS headquarters.

2.4. Multilateral Cooperation and Policy Evolution

Throughout these deployments, Japan framed its PKO participation as part of its broader “International Peace Cooperation” and “Human Security” policies. African missions have also been integral to TICAD framework, through which Japan has sought to link development assistance, peacebuilding, and regional stability. Japan’s PKO activities in Africa have thus served both humanitarian and diplomatic objectives, strengthening its reputation as a responsible global actor while avoiding direct military engagement.

Japan’s PKO activities in Africa reflect its evolving interpretation of international peace cooperation under constitutional and political constraints. While Japan has avoided combat operations, its engineering and reconstruction-focused missions have contributed meaningfully to post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding efforts on the continent. These engagements demonstrate Japan’s gradual shift from a passive aid donor to a more proactive contributor to global peace and security, particularly in Africa.

Table 1. Japan’s PKO Participation in Africa<sup>5</sup>

Period	Country	UN Mission	Type of JSDF Role	Significance
1993–1995	Mozambique	ONUMOZ	Election support, reconstruction logistics	First PKO in Africa under PKO Law (1992)

<sup>5</sup> Compiled by the author. Excludes humanitarian assistance activities for refugees and IDPs not classified as UN peacekeeping operations under the International Peace Cooperation Act (e.g., Rwanda in 1994).



Period	Country	UN Mission	Type of JSDF Role	Significance
2008–2011	Sudan	UNMIS	Engineering, infrastructure, water projects	Human security-oriented reconstruction
2011–2017	South Sudan	UNMISS	Engineering, road and bridge building	For Japan, Largest and longest PKO mission in Africa

Japan's peacekeeping activities in Africa demonstrate a gradual evolution from a cautious, constitutionally constrained state to a more substantive peace actor. While avoiding combat operations, Japan has emphasized engineering, reconstruction, and humanitarian contributions—areas consistent with its normative commitments to pacifism and human security. These engagements in Mozambique, Sudan, and South Sudan not only advanced African post-conflict recovery but also symbolized Japan's pursuit of international legitimacy through multilateral cooperation. However, such Japanese policy harbors a fundamental contradiction. Whilst many African PKO operations were authorized to use force under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the scope for Japanese Self-Defense Forces activity was extremely limited. The number of personnel within the Self-Defense Forces possessing overseas deployment experience has also declined, presenting a major challenge for how the organization will utilize this experience and engage in PKO operations going forward.

### 3. Japan's Security Policy toward the Horn of Africa

Japan's engagement with the Horn of Africa—principally Djibouti, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, and South Sudan—has developed at the intersection of three policy logics: securing vital sea lanes linking Japan with Europe and the Middle East; supporting African-led efforts to manage conflict and piracy; and operationalizing Japan's post-Cold War doctrines of International Peace Cooperation, more recently, FOIP. This approach combines SDF deployments, capacity-building, and diplomacy, while avoiding direct

combat roles.

The core of Japan's security presence in the region is its long-running anti-piracy mission off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden. Following a sharp increase in pirate attacks, Japan began escort operations in March 2009 under Article 82 of the Self-Defense Forces Law and, subsequently, the 2009 Act on Punishment and Measures Against Acts of Piracy, enabling the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) to protect both Japanese and foreign-flagged vessels<sup>6</sup>. Continuous deployments of destroyers and P-3C/P-1 patrol aircraft have operated in coordination with multinational naval forces<sup>7</sup>.

### **3.1. Djibouti: A Focal Point of the Maritime Security**

In 2011, Japan established its first full-scale, long-term overseas SDF facility in Djibouti to support these operations. The Djibouti base functions as a hub for air patrols, logistics, and, where necessary, evacuation support. The evacuation of Japanese nationals from South Sudan in 2016 and from Sudan in 2023 are examples of this<sup>8</sup>. Djibouti served not only as a base for peace and humanitarian assistance in Africa, but also as a crucial hub for the evacuation of Japanese nationals. This demonstrated that Japan's international peace cooperation policy in Africa contributes to its own national security.

Japan's Horn of Africa policy also emphasizes maritime security capacity-building. Through financial contributions to the International Maritime Organization's Djibouti Code of Conduct trust mechanisms and related initiatives, Japan has supported regional training centers and legal and institutional development for coastal and island states around the Gulf of Aden and Western Indian

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<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA), "Japan's Actions against Piracy off the Coast of Somalia," [https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/piracy/ja\\_somalia\\_1210.html?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/piracy/ja_somalia_1210.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com).

<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT), and Japan Coast Guard releases on escort operations in the Gulf of Aden, [https://www.mlit.go.jp/en/maritime/maritime\\_fr2\\_000000.html?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.mlit.go.jp/en/maritime/maritime_fr2_000000.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com).

<sup>8</sup> Reuters, "Japan sends military planes for evacuation of citizens in South Sudan," July 11, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southsudan-japan-evacuation/japan-sends-military-planes-for-evacuation-of-citizens-in-south-sudan-idUSKCN0ZR189/>; MOFA, "Evacuation of Japanese Citizens and Others from the Republic of the Sudan", April 25, 2023, [https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press1e\\_000418.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press1e_000418.html).

Ocean<sup>9</sup>. Via the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Japan Coast Guard, Japan has provided patrol vessels, pier facilities, and training to bodies such as the Djibouti Coast Guard, thereby strengthening indigenous capabilities in law enforcement, surveillance, and search and rescue.<sup>10</sup> To support the strengthening of maritime law enforcement capabilities, JICA has conducted the Project for Capacity Development of the Djibouti Coast Guard Phase III since 2019, with personnel from the Japan Coast Guard (JCG), including the Mobile Cooperation Team (MCT), regularly deployed for training in on-site response and instructor development. Additionally, JCG contributed to JICA's Knowledge Co-Creation Program (KCCP) on Maritime Law Enforcement, with participants from Mauritius, Djibouti, Kenya, Nigeria, Mozambique, Egypt, and Madagascar attending programs from 2022–2024<sup>11</sup>.

Another crucial framework for maritime security assistance in the Horn of Africa region is support provided through the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)<sup>12</sup>. On 2 June 2013, the Government of Japan agreed with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), as part of TICAD 6, on the 'Strategic Cooperation between Japan and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime – Joint Action Plan'. This was revised in Vienna in August 2019. The priority areas are: 1. Countering terrorism and violent extremism; 2. Trafficking in drugs and other goods; 3. Trafficking in persons; 4. Cybercrime; 5. Transnational organized crime, including terrorism and corruption; 6. Maritime security. As UNODC operates on a project basis, budgetary support from the Japanese government underpins the agency's activities. Among the various initiatives UNODC undertakes worldwide, its work along the African coast—a transit point and conduit for narcotics, arms and human trafficking—contributes to

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<sup>9</sup> International Maritime Organization (IMO), documents on the Djibouti Code of Conduct and partner contributions.

<sup>10</sup> Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), "Project for Capacity Development of Djibouti Coast Guard," project and completion reports, October 2018, <https://openjicareport.jica.go.jp/pdf/1000041970.pdf>; MOFA Japan, "White Paper on Development Cooperation 2021: Japan's International Cooperation," <https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/white/2021/html/topics/topics02.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted from MOFA, "TICAD8 Report 2022-2025", <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/100896830.pdf>, p.20.

<sup>12</sup> MOFA, "Strategic Cooperation between Japan and UNODC-The joint plan of action," <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/100089509.pdf>.

global stability beyond regional security in Africa.

### **3.2. Somalia: Cooperating on countermeasures against threats across the Horn**

With regard to Somalia and regional stabilization, Japan has opted for indirect, multilateral engagement. Tokyo has contributed financially to UN and AU trust funds supporting the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), its successor ATMIS and AUSSOM, and Somali security institutions, including police reform, justice sector support, and explosive hazard management. These contributions are channeled through UN and AU mechanisms, reflecting Japan's preference for African-led and UN-mandated frameworks, and allowing it to assist counter-piracy and counter-terrorism objectives without deploying combat troops. The Japanese government maintains no bases or personnel whatsoever within Somalia, including through JICA. The current situation of providing "remote" support from neighboring countries such as Kenya is undeniably seen as half-hearted by the nations of the Horn of Africa, particularly by the Somali government itself.

### **3.3. TICAD: Regional Security Assistance through the AU**

Diplomatically, Japan's approach is anchored in TICAD process and related initiatives. At TICAD 8 in 2022, Japan announced the appointment of a Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa who advanced peace and stability through engagement with states in the Horn of Africa and by promoting cooperation with IGAD, including on Sudan. TICAD 8 also advanced its New Approach for Peace and Stability in Africa (NAPSA), seeking to integrate preventive diplomacy, governance support, and security assistance<sup>13</sup>.

Japan's support for peace and security in Africa, including the Horn of Africa, from 2022 to 2025, can be summarized as follows: <sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> MOFA, "TICAD 8 Tunis Declaration," 28 August 2022, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/100386655.pdf>; "Eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 8) (Day 2: Plenary 2, Plenary 3 and Closing Session)," August 28, 2022, [https://www.mofa.go.jp/af/af1/page3e\\_001232.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/af/af1/page3e_001232.html).

<sup>14</sup> Quoted from MOFA, "TICAD8 Report 2022-2025", <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/100896830.pdf>, pp. 19-21.

- **Strengthening of Maritime Law Enforcement Capacity Building:** In FY2024, approximately USD 10 million was contributed for maritime law enforcement capacity projects addressing critical issues such as illegal drug trafficking, human trafficking, IUU fishing, undersea cable protection, marine pollution, and piracy.
- **AU Peace Fund:** Under the FY2022 budget, USD 134,000 to the AU Peace Fund for three initiatives: (1) developing knowledge tools for AU Department of Political Affairs and Peace and Security (PAPS), (2) strengthening Pan-African Network of Wise Men (PanWise) and the African Women's Network (FemWiseAfrica), and (3) supporting peacebuilding in the Lake Chad region. In FY2023, USD 100,000 was allocated to enhance Somalia's police capacity ahead of the ATMIS withdrawal, with an additional USD 95,000 for governance efforts in the Sahel.
- **PKO Training Centers** (in collaboration with UNDP) In FY2022, projects totaling USD 2.5 million were implemented in Nigeria, Ghana, Togo, Egypt, Benin, Kenya, and Mali. In FY2023, an additional USD 1.25 million was allocated to centers in Nigeria, Togo, Egypt, and Ghana.
- **UN Triangular Partnership Program:** an additional US\$ 8.5 million to expand training from engineering, medical, C4ISR, and telemedicine to C-IED and environmental management, and to prepare African personnel for AU-led peace support operations.
- **UN Peacebuilding Fund:** Approximately USD 6.91 million in total to the UN Peacebuilding Fund between August 2022 to December 2024, as well as capacity building in Africa through the UN Triangular Partnership Programme (UNTPP).

TICAD 9 in 2025, Japan pledged to explore ways to fill the funding gap for AUSSOM mentioning the UN Security Council resolution 2719 which opens the door for the UN to provide PKO budget to the AU missions, and de facto support for African Countries to Gain Seats in the United Nations Security Council Reform<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> MOFA, "TICAD 9 Yokohama Declaration," 22 August 2025, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/100893431.pdf>.

Table 2: Japanese Activities in the Horn of Africa<sup>16</sup>

Year(s)	Instrument	Country/Area	Mechanism/Modality	Key Legal/Policy Basis (Japan & Intl)
2009– (ongoing)	Anti-piracy Escort Operations in Gulf of Aden	Somalia / Gulf of Aden sea lanes	JMSDF destroyers & P-3C/P-1 aircraft escorting commercial vessels; info-sharing with multinational forces	Japan: Act on Punishment and Measures Against Acts of Piracy (Act No.55/2009); SDF Law (Art. 82); Cabinet decisions. Intl: UNSC anti-piracy resolutions (e.g. 1816 et seq.).
2011– (ongoing)	JSDF Base in Djibouti	Djibouti / Gulf of Aden	Permanent overseas SDF facility; supports anti-piracy air patrols, logistics, limited evacuation & intel support	Japan: Anti-piracy Act 2009; SDF Law; cabinet decisions. Intl: Bilateral arrangements with Djibouti; UNSC anti-piracy framework.
2008– 2011	Participation in UNMIS	Sudan	JSDF staff officers at UNMIS HQ; planning, liaison, logistics support	Japan: International Peace Cooperation Law (PKO Law, 1992); cabinet PKO implementation decisions. Intl: UNSC resolutions establishing UNMIS.
2011– 2017	Participation in UNMISS	South Sudan	GSDF engineering unit & staff officers; roads, camp infrastructure, facilities, support to UN operations	Japan: PKO Law; revised Implementation Plans (2011–2017). Intl: UNSC resolutions on UNMISS mandate.
2013– (phased)	Support to UNMAS & Mine Action	Somalia	Financial contributions to UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action; support for IED clearance & capacity-building	Japan: ODA Charter / Development Cooperation Charter; MOFA budget decisions. Intl: UN mine action framework.
c. 2010s – (phased)	Support to AMISOM/ATMIS & Somali Security Sector	Somalia / region	Voluntary contributions to UN/AU trust funds; equipment & training via international organizations; indirect backing of AU-led operations	Japan: ODA & supplementary budgets; support for African-led peace operations. Intl: UNSC & AU mandates for AMISOM/ATMIS; UN trust fund arrangements.
2011– (phased)	Capacity Development of Djibouti Coast Guard	Djibouti	JICA technical cooperation; training, equipment, facility upgrades for maritime law enforcement	Japan: ODA Charter; JICA schemes. Intl: Djibouti Code of Conduct & regional maritime security frameworks.
2010s– (phased)	Maritime Security Assistance to Regional Littoral States	Somalia, Djibouti, Kenya, Seychelles, etc.	Grants, patrol boats, training, legal/technical support on maritime law & policing	Japan: ODA instruments; MOFA/JICA maritime security initiatives. Intl: Djibouti Code of Conduct; IMO and UNODC frameworks.
1993– (TICAD-relevant)	TICAD Process (Security & Governance Pillars)	Horn of Africa states	Policy dialogue platform linking development, governance, peacebuilding & maritime security support	Japan: TICAD policy framework; Development Cooperation Charter. Intl: Partnership with UN, AU, NEPAD, IGAD.
2022– (ongoing)	Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa / NAPSA	Horn of Africa region	High-level diplomacy, conflict prevention, coordination of Japan's security-development tools	Japan: MOFA decision establishing Special Envoy; NAPSA policy. Intl: Cooperation with UN, AU, IGAD mediation efforts.

Such policies represent the absolute limit of what Japan can realistically implement, given the current domestic situation where public opinion increasingly demands a focus on domestic affairs and welfare policies, the persistent aversion to military matters, and the gradually emerging wariness towards foreigners within the country. Given its diminished status as an economic powerhouse and the challenges of securing sufficient personnel for national defense and public security within an ageing society with a declining birth rate, Japan faces increasing scrutiny over how it will implement its

<sup>16</sup> The comparative table contained within this appendix was initially generated with the assistance of ChatGPT (OpenAI). The author has independently cross-checked and, where necessary, corrected and added the information contained therein.

international peace cooperation policy under severe international circumstances, using limited resources, and how it will position Africa within its strategic and policy framework.

#### **4. Foreseeing Japanese Peace Cooperation and the Horn of Africa**

Based on the above, we will now examine Japan's international peace cooperation policy through the findings of a study group published by the Cabinet Office's PKO Secretariat in June 2025<sup>17</sup>. The background and purpose of this study is as follow:

*Taking into consideration Japan's accumulated contributions in international peace cooperation, recent shifts in the global landscape including the evolving nature of international conflicts, ongoing international discussions on the future of international peace cooperation, and the current implementation framework under the existing International Peace Cooperation Law, the Secretariat convened a study group to broadly gather expert opinions on the future of Japan's international peace cooperation. The group met over three sessions: Session 1 on March 28, Session 2 on April 30, and Session 3 on May 30, 2025)<sup>18</sup>.*

The key points related to Japan's international peace cooperation in the Horn of Africa are as follows.

##### **4-1 the significance of Japan's international peace efforts is outlined as follows:**

- Contributing to international peace is vital for safeguarding Japan's security and national interests.
- Maintaining the international order and restoring the rule of law are essential.
- Strategic engagement is required to maintain and expand Japan's presence in international politics.

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<sup>17</sup> Secretariat of the International Peace Cooperation Headquarters, Cabinet Office of Japan, "Study Group on the Future of Japan's International Peace Cooperation-Summary of Discussion," June 2025, [https://www.cao.go.jp/pko/pko\\_e/operations/pdf/202506\\_summary.pdf](https://www.cao.go.jp/pko/pko_e/operations/pdf/202506_summary.pdf) (hereafter "Summary").

<sup>18</sup> Summary pp.1-2.

- Continuous contributions to UNPKO demonstrate commitment to the international order.

## **4-2 Policy Stance and Strengths**

- Japan is recognized as a stable and trusted actor in the international community.
- Cooperation with the Global South and the EU is crucial.
- Strengthening human resource development and bilateral cooperation through international peace cooperation.

## **4-3 Strategic Reforms**

- Adopt a long-term perspective on peacebuilding and establish sustainable frameworks.
- Enhance public relations activities to raise international awareness.
- Strengthen cooperation with Asia and Africa, and consider engagement in non-UN-led missions.

## **4-4 Engagement in International Peace Operations**

- Continuous contributions to UNPKO are essential.
- Explore cooperation with the EU and AU, particularly strengthening support in maritime security.

## **4-5 Enhancing Coordination**

- Advance the integration of international peace cooperation and security policy while maintaining flexible responsiveness.

This study group was established in response to the release of the report by the Study Group on International Peace Operations at the United Nations in October 2024<sup>19</sup>. While maintaining compatibility with that report, it aims to develop policies more aligned with Japan's international security

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<sup>19</sup> Independent Study commissioned by the United Nations Department of Peace Operations (El-Ghassim Wane, Professor Paul D. Williams and Professor Ai Kihara-Hunt), "The Future of Peacekeeping, New Models, and Related Capabilities," October 2024, [https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/future\\_of\\_peacekeeping\\_report\\_rev30jan\\_1.pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/future_of_peacekeeping_report_rev30jan_1.pdf).



environment.

Two points deserve particular attention. First is the fundamental stance that international peace cooperation is beneficial to Japan's security policy. To achieve this, it is essential to set aside the concept of "international contribution" and maintain a sense of urgency that implementing international peace cooperation bilaterally and multilaterally is indispensable to Japan's national interests. Second, as a strategy to achieve this, emphasis has been placed on pursuing regional security through cooperation with (sub) regional organizations. This was also highlighted by the UN Study Group. Given the political situation within the UN Security Council, the financial circumstances of member states, and inward-looking public opinion, deploying UN missions to Africa will likely remain challenging. Within the UN, the utilization of regional organizations is emphasized precisely because of such realistic assessments. In this regard, the Japanese study group suggested that it is crucial for Japan to continue international peace cooperation by strengthening partnerships with regional and sub-regional organizations, particularly in Africa.

## **5. Conclusion -International Peace Cooperation Policy in Africa under the Takaichi Administration?**

Japan's international peace cooperation policy has been developed on the premise that Japan should, and is able to, "contribute" to the international community. Another core objective was to implement post-war reparations, primarily towards Asian nations. Following the end of the Cold War, international peace cooperation, premised on multilateral coordination, came to be implemented based on the concept of "human security". In both cases, particularly during the Cold War period, Japan's "international contributions" were confined to non-military means, and the sphere of international security was largely excluded. In particular, Africa has been a recipient of development aid and has not necessarily been positioned as a place where Japan pursues its national interests in international security.

Such non-military and Asia-centric international peace cooperation policies have limited Japan's

scope for participating in UN peacekeeping operations in Africa. This situation only began to shift after the 2010s. Even after the conclusion of the Self-Defense Forces deployment to South Sudan, based on the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) framework proposed by former Prime Minister Abe at TICAD, Africa, particularly the East African coast, came to be regarded as a region vital to Japan's national interests. Within this context, the nature of Japan's international peace cooperation also underwent a transformation.

In October 2025, Sanae Takaichi was elected Prime Minister, steering Japan towards a new diplomatic course. Unlike the recent Ishiba administration, Prime Minister Takaichi has been recognized both domestically and internationally for her conservative (and at times right-wing) political stance. Simultaneously, she has acknowledged inheriting the political line of former Prime Minister Abe. Finally, I would like to briefly outline the future prospects for Japan's international peace cooperation policy. Prime Minister Takaichi herself stated, 'I believe the ultimate mission of the nation is to steadfastly protect the lives and property of the people, the territory, territorial waters, airspace and resources, and the sovereignty and honour of the state<sup>20</sup>.' In her policy address delivered to the Diet on 24 October, she stated the following regarding foreign affairs<sup>21</sup>.

*We are now witnessing historic shifts in the balance of power and an escalation of geopolitical competition, which are profoundly shaking the free, open, and stable international order that we have long embraced. (omission).....*

*We will continue to vigorously advance the Free and Open Indo-Pacific as a pillar of our diplomacy, evolving it in step with the times. Under this vision, we will work to strengthen cooperation with like-minded nations sharing fundamental values and with countries of the Global South.*

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<sup>20</sup> Sanae Takaichi's website, "Basic Principles," (kihon rinen) <https://www.sanae.gr.jp/idea.html> (Viewed on 7 November 2025).

<sup>21</sup> Prime minister's Office of Japan, "Policy Speech by Prime Minister TAKAICHI Sanae to the 219th Session of the Diet," October 24, 2025, <https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/104/statement/2025/1024shoshinhyomei.html>.

The latter part is an unofficial translation.

(omission).....

Prime Minister Takaichi is also considering an early review of “The three strategic documents.” On 16 December 2022, the Japanese government formulated the National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, and Defense Capability Development Plan (hereinafter referred to as the three strategic documents) as its national security strategy<sup>22</sup>. It is difficult at this stage to foresee how Japan's international peace cooperation policy will be handled within this framework. However, it seems unlikely that the Japanese government will significantly reduce the cooperation framework it has implemented in Africa to date. Prime Minister Takaichi has appointed Mr. Keiichi Ichikawa as Secretary General of the National Security Secretariat. He is regarded as the originator of the FOIP concept within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the Abe administration. Given that his predecessor had only taken up the post six months prior, it is anticipated that Prime Minister Takaichi will pursue FOIP or a foreign policy based upon it. Within this framework, policy towards the Horn of Africa, particularly its coastal security – a crucial hub for Japan's economic activities – is expected to remain a priority.

The Japanese Government should prioritize support for young people as the target demographic and sub-regional organizations as the target institutions in its assistance to the Horn of Africa. The active establishment and deployment of AU-led international peace operations is not highly anticipated. Within this context, Japan's “low-key” yet steady international peace cooperation should focus on supporting the social inclusion and participation of young people in stabilizing Somalia and improving the humanitarian crisis and peace in Sudan. This should be achieved by coordinating with sub-regional organizations like IGAD rather than the AU itself. Triangular partnership programs, previously implemented through the PKO Training Centre and bilateral frameworks in the field of international peace activities, also merit continuation. However, as various nations, including South Korea, join these programs, Japan faces increasing difficulty in maintaining its comparative advantage.

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<sup>22</sup> Ministry of Defense, “Defense Policy,” [https://www.mod.go.jp/en/d\\_policy/index.html](https://www.mod.go.jp/en/d_policy/index.html) (viewed on November 7, 2025).

With PKO cases diminishing, the number of Self-Defense Forces personnel with mission experience is also declining. The framework for Official Security Assistance (OSA) should also be maintained while future policy directions are reconsidered. Against this backdrop, maritime security should be more fully integrated into international peace cooperation policy. Issues concerning the sea often originate on land. The Horn of Africa can be considered the frontline of maritime security. Implementing policy in this region as part of international peace cooperation, through youth support initiatives in collaboration with sub-regional organizations like IGAD and project-based UN agencies such as UNODC, is necessary.