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EMERGING PEACEKEEPING CONTRIBUTORS IN UN MISSIONS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract. This article examines the participation of emerging states in United Nations peacekeeping missions, with a focus on Kazakhstan in comparative perspective. Using a qualitative comparative approach, the study analyses Kazakhstan alongside Indonesia and South Korea to identify differences in the scale of participation, strategic motivations, and foreign policy objectives. The findings show that while Kazakhstan's contribution remains limited in scale, it demonstrates a steady upward trend and increasing institutionalization. The comparison reveals that peacekeeping participation serves not only security purposes but also broader diplomatic and strategic goals, including international recognition and foreign policy positioning. The study also identifies key challenges faced by emerging contributors, such as limited resources, institutional coordination, and evolving operational requirements. The article contributes to understanding how emerging states use peacekeeping as a tool of international engagement and security governance.

Keywords: UN peacekeeping, emerging states, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, South Korea, foreign policy, comparative analysis, international security

Introduction

United Nations peacekeeping missions play an important role in maintaining international peace and security. Since the end of the Cold War, the number of peacekeeping operations has increased significantly. These missions are deployed in different regions of the world and aim to prevent conflicts, monitor ceasefires, and support political stabilization in post-conflict societies. Nowadays, peacekeeping operations remain a key instrument for addressing international security challenges. [1],[2].

Participation in peacekeeping missions varies among states. Some countries contribute large numbers of troops and police personnel, while others participate only on a limited scale. Traditionally, the largest troop contributors have been countries from South Asia and Africa, including Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan [3]. However, in recent years a growing number of emerging states have begun to take part in peacekeeping missions. For these states, participation in UN peacekeeping often serves several purposes. It allows them to support international peace and security, strengthen military experience, and increase their international visibility [4].

Kazakhstan represents one of the states that has gradually developed its participation in UN peacekeeping missions. Since gaining independence, the country has sought to expand its engagement in international security initiatives and multilateral cooperation. The establishment of the Kazbat peacekeeping unit and Kazakhstan's participation in missions such as the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) illustrate the country's growing involvement in international peacekeeping activities.

At the same time, emerging contributors differ in their approaches and motivations for participation in peacekeeping missions. While some countries deploy large military contingents, others participate more selectively and use peacekeeping mainly as part of their foreign policy strategy. Scholars note that peacekeeping participation can serve diplomatic purposes by enhancing international reputation and strengthening a country's position within multilateral institutions [5].

This article therefore examines Kazakhstan's participation in UN peacekeeping missions in a comparative perspective. By analysing Kazakhstan alongside other emerging contributors, the study aims to identify similarities and differences in the scale of participation, motivations, and foreign policy objectives behind peacekeeping engagement. However, despite the growing literature on UN peacekeeping, limited attention has been paid to the comparative analysis of emerging contributors from different regions, particularly Kazakhstan in relation to Asian cases such as Indonesia and South Korea. This study aims to address this gap by examining how emerging states use peacekeeping participation as part of their broader foreign policy strategies.

Materials and Methods

This study employs a qualitative comparative approach to examine the participation of emerging states in United Nations peacekeeping missions, with particular focus on Kazakhstan. The research is based on a case study analysis comparing Kazakhstan with selected emerging peacekeeping contributors, including Indonesia and South Korea. These cases were selected because they represent states that have expanded their participation in UN peacekeeping operations while simultaneously pursuing broader foreign policy objectives through multilateral engagement.

The analysis relies primarily on secondary data sources, including academic literature, policy reports, and official United Nations peacekeeping statistics. In addition, official statements and policy documents related to national peacekeeping strategies were examined in order to better understand the motivations behind state participation in peacekeeping missions.

The comparative approach makes it possible to identify similarities and differences in the scale of participation, strategic motivations, and foreign policy

objectives of emerging peacekeeping contributors. By examining Kazakhstan alongside other states that have developed active participation in UN peacekeeping operations, the study aims to provide a broader understanding of how emerging states use peacekeeping engagement as part of their international security and diplomatic strategies. The study also incorporates descriptive analysis of peacekeeping deployments and institutional development in order to assess the evolving role of Kazakhstan within UN peacekeeping frameworks.

Results

Development of Kazakhstan's participation in UN peacekeeping missions

Kazakhstan began to develop its participation in international peacekeeping operations after gaining independence in 1991. In the early stages of its foreign policy, the country prioritized regional stability and cooperation with international organizations. Over time, participation in United Nations peacekeeping missions became an important element of Kazakhstan's international engagement and its contribution to global security governance [6].

At first, Kazakhstan's peacekeeping activity started with joining CENTRASBAT (Central Asian Battalion), which included military units from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. After dissolving the CENTRASBAT, Kazakhstan developed its participation in peacekeeping missions broadly. One of the key steps in the development of Kazakhstan's peacekeeping capacity was the creation of specialized military units prepared for international missions. In particular, the Kazakhstan peacekeeping battalion (KAZBAT) was established in the early 2000s to train military personnel for participation in peacekeeping operations and humanitarian missions. The establishment of such units allowed Kazakhstan to gradually integrate into international peacekeeping structures and to improve the professional training of its armed forces [7].

Kazakhstan gained its first practical experience in international peacekeeping activities during the stabilization mission in Iraq between 2003 and 2008. During this mission, Kazakh military engineers were primarily engaged in demining operations and the disposal of unexploded ordnance, as well as providing assistance to the civilian population. According to official reports, Kazakh peacekeepers destroyed thousands of explosive devices and contributed to improving the security environment in the region. This experience became an important stage in the development of Kazakhstan's peacekeeping capabilities and strengthened its reputation as a responsible participant in international security initiatives [8]. This experience not only enhanced operational capabilities but also marked Kazakhstan's first practical contribution to international peacekeeping efforts.

In the following years, Kazakhstan expanded its participation in United Nations peacekeeping missions. A significant step in this direction was the

deployment of Kazakh peacekeepers to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Participation in this mission demonstrated Kazakhstan's readiness to contribute to international peacekeeping efforts and increased its visibility within the UN peacekeeping system [9].

In addition to military participation, Kazakhstan has also focused on the development of institutional mechanisms for peacekeeping. Specialized training programs and peacekeeping preparation centers have been established to ensure that Kazakh military personnel meet international standards required for participation in UN missions. These initiatives reflect Kazakhstan's broader strategy of strengthening its role in international security cooperation and expanding its diplomatic engagement through peacekeeping activities [10].

Overall, Kazakhstan's participation in peacekeeping operations has evolved from limited technical contributions to a more structured and institutionalized form of engagement in international missions. Although the scale of Kazakhstan's deployments remains relatively modest compared with major troop-contributing countries, the country increasingly views peacekeeping participation as an important instrument of its foreign policy and international security strategy. Another important aspect of institutional development is the gradual integration of peacekeeping into Kazakhstan's broader foreign policy strategy. Participation in UN missions is increasingly viewed not only as a military activity but also as a diplomatic tool that enhances the country's international image and strengthens its role in global security governance. This reflects a broader trend among emerging states that use peacekeeping as an instrument for increasing their visibility and influence in international affairs.

At the same time, Kazakhstan continues to face challenges in further developing its peacekeeping capacity. These include the need to expand training programs, increase the number of personnel prepared for international missions, and improve coordination between state institutions involved in peacekeeping activities [9]. Addressing these challenges is essential for ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of Kazakhstan's participation in UN peacekeeping operations.

Comparison with other emerging peacekeeping contributors

In recent decades, several emerging states have increased their participation in United Nations peacekeeping missions as part of their broader foreign policy strategies. Countries such as Indonesia and South Korea have actively expanded their peacekeeping activities and have become important contributors to UN missions. Comparing Kazakhstan's peacekeeping experience with these countries allows for a better understanding of the role that peacekeeping plays in the international engagement strategies of emerging states.

Indonesia is one of the most active peacekeeping contributors among developing countries. The country has participated in UN peacekeeping operations since the 1950s and has significantly increased its troop contributions

in the past two decades. Indonesian peacekeepers are deployed in several UN missions across Africa and the Middle East, including operations in Lebanon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and South Sudan. Participation in peacekeeping missions has become an important element of Indonesia's foreign policy and its efforts to strengthen its international reputation as a responsible regional actor [11].

South Korea has also expanded its role in UN peacekeeping operations as part of its strategy of international engagement. Since the 1990s, South Korea has gradually increased its contributions to peacekeeping missions by deploying engineering units, medical teams, and military personnel to various UN operations. These activities reflect the country's commitment to international security cooperation and its desire to strengthen diplomatic relations with partner states and international organizations [12].

Compared with Indonesia and South Korea, Kazakhstan's participation in peacekeeping operations remains relatively modest in terms of troop numbers. However, Kazakhstan has gradually expanded its involvement in UN missions and has developed specialized peacekeeping units capable of participating in international operations. Kazakhstan's engagement in missions such as the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon demonstrates its intention to strengthen its role within the UN peacekeeping system and to contribute to international peace and security [9]. Despite differences in the scale of participation, all three countries view peacekeeping missions as an important instrument of foreign policy. Participation in UN missions allows emerging states to strengthen diplomatic relations, gain international recognition, and contribute to global security governance. For Kazakhstan, Indonesia, and South Korea, peacekeeping operations also serve as an opportunity to enhance military professionalism and strengthen cooperation with international partners.

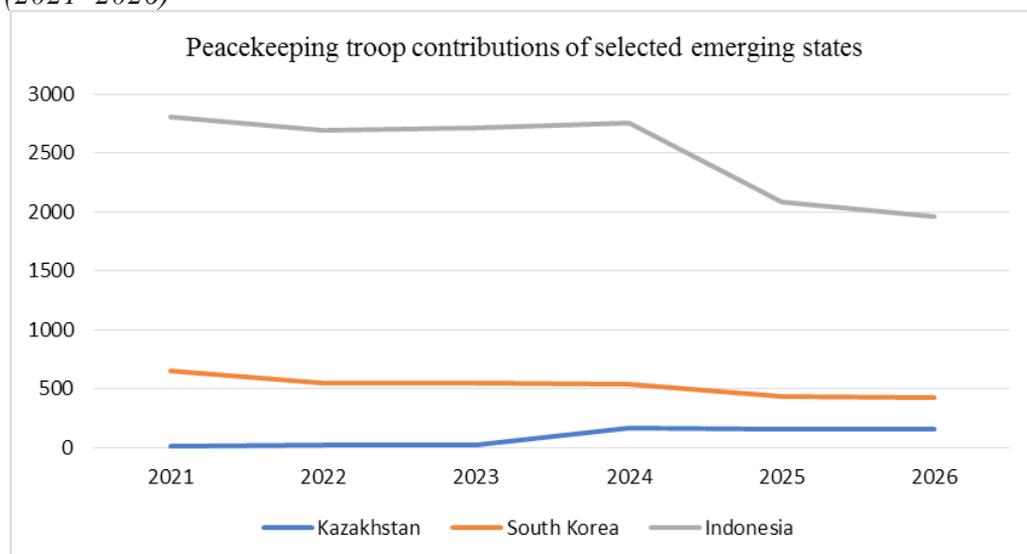
Table 1. Comparison of emerging peacekeeping contributors

Country	First participation in UN peacekeeping	Level of contribution	Main regions of deployment	Strategic Motivation
Kazakhstan	2000s	Limited but increasing	Middle East	International recognition, security cooperation
Indonesia	1950s	Large contributor	Africa, Middle East	Global diplomatic engagement
South Korea	1990s	Moderate contributor	Africa, Middle East	International cooperation and security diplomacy

Table 1 demonstrates the differences and similarities in peacekeeping participation among emerging contributors such as Kazakhstan, Indonesia, and South Korea. Although these states differ in the scale and duration of their involvement in UN peacekeeping operations, they share a common strategic interest in strengthening their international engagement through multilateral security initiatives. Indonesia represents one of the most active contributors among the three countries, with a long history of participation in UN peacekeeping missions since the 1950s. Its large troop contributions and deployments across multiple regions demonstrate a strong institutional commitment to peacekeeping as part of its foreign policy strategy. South Korea, while contributing fewer troops compared with Indonesia, has steadily expanded its involvement since the 1990s and views peacekeeping participation as an important instrument of international cooperation and diplomatic engagement.

Kazakhstan's participation in UN peacekeeping missions is more recent and comparatively limited in scale. However, its gradual expansion reflects broader efforts to strengthen international engagement and contribute to global security initiatives.

Figure 1. UN peacekeeping troop contributions of selected emerging states (2021–2026)



Source: United Nations peacekeeping troop and police contributors statistics[6].

Figure 1 illustrates the differences in troop contributions to United Nations peacekeeping missions among selected emerging states. Indonesia remains the largest contributor, maintaining consistently high troop levels despite a gradual decline after 2024. South Korea shows a moderate but stable level of participation, reflecting a more cautious and selective approach to peacekeeping engagement.

In contrast, Kazakhstan's contribution remains significantly lower in absolute terms; however, it demonstrates a notable upward trend, particularly after 2023.

This pattern suggests that emerging peacekeeping contributors follow different trajectories shaped by their foreign policy priorities, institutional capacity, and strategic ambitions. While Indonesia emphasizes large-scale participation, and South Korea adopts a balanced approach, Kazakhstan appears to be in a phase of gradual expansion, using peacekeeping as a tool for increasing its international presence.

Beyond troop numbers, the experience of Indonesia and South Korea suggests that peacekeeping participation should also be understood as a form of diplomatic positioning. In both cases, contributions to UN missions serve not only security purposes but also broader foreign policy goals, including international visibility, reputation building, and multilateral engagement[12], [13].

The expansion of peacekeeping participation among emerging states is closely linked to the development of national institutional frameworks and strategic policy orientation. Countries such as Indonesia and South Korea have gradually established specialized training systems, legal mechanisms, and inter-agency coordination structures to support their involvement in United Nations peacekeeping missions. These institutional developments enable not only the increase in troop contributions but also the diversification of roles within missions.

Indonesia, for instance, has invested significantly in peacekeeping training centers and has developed a long-term strategy aimed at becoming one of the leading troop-contributing countries. This institutional approach allows Indonesia to maintain relatively high levels of participation and to expand its engagement across multiple missions. Similarly, South Korea has focused on professionalizing its peacekeeping units and aligning participation with broader foreign policy objectives, including international cooperation and security partnerships.

In comparison, Kazakhstan's institutional development in peacekeeping remains in a formative stage. While the country has demonstrated a growing commitment to international peacekeeping operations, its participation is still limited in scale. However, recent increases in troop contributions suggest a gradual strengthening of institutional capacity. Kazakhstan's approach appears to be cautious and incremental, reflecting both resource constraints and the strategic prioritization of regional security commitments.

At the same time, the development of peacekeeping capabilities in emerging states is not limited to military dimensions. Increasing attention is being paid to the integration of civilian components, training in international humanitarian law, and cooperation with international organizations. These elements are becoming essential for effective participation in modern multidimensional peacekeeping missions.

Overall, the comparison indicates that the level of peacekeeping engagement is strongly influenced by the degree of institutional preparedness and strategic planning. States that invest in long-term institutional development are better positioned to sustain and expand their participation, while those with more limited institutional frameworks tend to follow gradual and selective approaches.

Challenges of emerging peacekeeping contributors

Despite the growing involvement of emerging states in United Nations peacekeeping operations, their participation is often accompanied by a range of structural and strategic challenges. These challenges limit both the scale and the effectiveness of their contributions and highlight the gap between political ambition and operational capacity[14].

One of the primary constraints is the availability of resources, including financial support, trained personnel, and technical equipment. While countries such as Indonesia have managed to maintain relatively high levels of troop deployment, sustaining such commitments requires significant long-term investment. For states like Kazakhstan, limited resources necessitate a more cautious and gradual approach, resulting in smaller but steadily increasing contributions.

Another key challenge lies in institutional coordination. Effective participation in peacekeeping missions requires cooperation between multiple government bodies, including defense, foreign affairs, and specialized training institutions. In many emerging states, these coordination mechanisms are still developing, which can affect the efficiency of deployment and the integration of peacekeeping into broader foreign policy strategies[15].

In addition, issues of international visibility and recognition play an important role. While participation in peacekeeping operations is often intended to enhance a country's international profile, smaller contributors may struggle to gain sufficient visibility within the global peacekeeping system. This creates a paradox in which states invest in participation but do not always achieve proportional diplomatic or reputational returns.

Another important dimension concerns the evolving nature of peacekeeping itself. Modern missions increasingly require not only military capabilities but also expertise in civilian protection, governance support, and post-conflict reconstruction. This multidimensional character of peacekeeping places additional demands on contributing states, particularly those that are still developing their institutional and training capacities.

Finally, emerging contributors face strategic dilemmas regarding the balance between international commitments and domestic or regional priorities. For Kazakhstan, for example, participation in UN peacekeeping must be balanced

with its role in regional security frameworks and its broader foreign policy objectives[15]. This balancing act can influence both the scale and the direction of its peacekeeping engagement.

Overall, these challenges suggest that the expansion of peacekeeping participation among emerging states is not a linear process. Instead, it is shaped by a combination of resource constraints, institutional development, strategic considerations, and evolving international expectations. Understanding these limitations is essential for a comprehensive assessment of the role of emerging states in contemporary peacekeeping. This also highlights the need for further research on how emerging states translate peacekeeping participation into long-term strategic and diplomatic outcomes.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight that the participation of emerging states in peacekeeping operations should be understood not only in quantitative terms but also in relation to broader political, institutional, and strategic dynamics. The comparison between Kazakhstan, Indonesia, and South Korea demonstrates that peacekeeping engagement is closely linked to foreign policy positioning and the pursuit of international recognition.

From a realist perspective, the expansion of peacekeeping participation reflects the strategic interests of states seeking to enhance their role within the international system. For emerging states, contributing to UN missions provides an opportunity to increase their visibility, strengthen diplomatic ties, and signal their commitment to global security. In this sense, peacekeeping becomes not only a tool of soft balancing but also a mechanism of international status construction, through which states seek to redefine their role within the global security architecture[16].

At the same time, the findings also support constructivist arguments that emphasize the role of identity, norms, and legitimacy. The growing diversification of public perceptions in Central Asia, as well as the increasing importance of governance-related practices in peacekeeping missions, suggest that legitimacy is no longer derived solely from institutional arrangements or historical ties. Instead, it is increasingly shaped by societal attitudes, international norms, and the perceived behavior of peacekeeping actors.

The comparative analysis further indicates that emerging states follow different models of peacekeeping engagement. Indonesia represents a model of large-scale participation, driven by long-term institutional investment and strategic ambition. South Korea reflects a more selective and professionalized approach, aligning peacekeeping with broader foreign policy and security objectives. Kazakhstan, in contrast, appears to follow a gradual and adaptive model, expanding its participation incrementally while balancing international commitments with regional priorities.

Importantly, the results show that peacekeeping participation is not a linear process of growth. Instead, it is shaped by a combination of constraints, including institutional complexity and resource dependence, which significantly influence the capacity of states to sustain peacekeeping commitments. These factors explain why even politically committed states may expand their participation cautiously and selectively [17].

Furthermore, the findings suggest that the nature of peacekeeping itself is evolving. Modern missions increasingly combine military, political, and governance functions, requiring contributing states to adapt to more complex operational environments. This transformation reinforces the idea that effective peacekeeping is no longer defined solely by troop contributions, but also by the ability to engage in multidimensional stabilization efforts and to build local legitimacy.

Overall, the study demonstrates that the role of emerging states in peacekeeping is becoming more complex and differentiated. Rather than simply increasing participation, states are redefining how peacekeeping fits within their broader foreign policy strategies. It reflects a shift toward more flexible and hybrid forms of security engagement, where military contribution, diplomatic positioning, and normative considerations are closely interconnected. These limitations confirm that participation in peacekeeping is not determined solely by political will, but also by structural and institutional conditions that shape the scope and sustainability of contributions [17].

Conclusion

This article examined the participation of emerging states in United Nations peacekeeping missions, with a focus on Kazakhstan in comparative perspective. The analysis demonstrated that while Kazakhstan's contribution remains limited in scale, it shows a consistent upward trajectory and increasing institutional development.

The comparison with Indonesia and South Korea revealed that peacekeeping participation is not only a security practice but also an important instrument of foreign policy. For emerging states, engagement in UN missions contributes to strengthening international visibility, developing military and institutional capacities, and enhancing diplomatic positioning within the global system.

At the same time, the study identified several challenges faced by emerging contributors, including limited resources, coordination issues, and the growing complexity of modern peacekeeping operations. These factors constrain the expansion of participation and require long-term institutional investment and strategic planning.

Overall, the findings suggest that emerging states are not merely increasing their presence in peacekeeping missions but are gradually redefining their role in international security governance. Kazakhstan's experience reflects a broader trend in which peacekeeping participation becomes part of a more flexible and multidimensional foreign policy strategy.

Future research may further explore how emerging states translate peacekeeping participation into long-term political, economic, and strategic outcomes, as well as how these contributions influence their position within the evolving global security architecture.

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БҰҰ БІТІМГЕРШІЛІК МИССИЯЛАРЫНА ҚАТЫСУШЫ ДАМУШЫ МЕМЛЕКЕТТЕР: САЛЫСТЫРМАЛЫ ТАЛДАУ

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Аңдатпа. Бұл мақалада Біріккен Ұлттар Ұйымының бітімгершілік миссияларына дамушы мемлекеттердің қатысуы Қазақстан мысалында салыстырмалы түрде талданады. Зерттеу сапалы салыстырмалы әдіске негізделіп, Қазақстан мен Индонезия және Оңтүстік Кореяның бітімгершілік әлеуеті мен әскер контингентінің көлемі салыстырмалы түрде талданады. Мақсаты-бітімгершілік операцияларына қатысу ауқымы, стратегиялық уәждер және елдердің сыртқы саяси бағыттарындағы айырмашылықтарды анықтау. Зерттеу нәтижелері Қазақстанның бітімгершілік қызметке қатысу көлемі салыстырмалы түрде шектеулі болғанымен, оның тұрақты өсім көрсетіп, институционалдық тұрғыдан дамып келе жатқанын көрсетеді. Салыстырмалы талдау бітімгершілік миссияларға қатысу тек қауіпсіздікті қамтамасыз ету құралы ғана емес, сондай-ақ мемлекеттердің халықаралық беделін арттыру және дипломатиялық позициясын нығайтуға бағытталған сыртқы саясат құралы екенін дәлелдейді. Сонымен қатар, мақалада дамушы мемлекеттердің бітімгершілік қызметке қатысуында кездесетін негізгі қиындықтар, атап айтқанда ресурстардың шектеулілігі, институционалдық үйлестіру мәселелері және қазіргі заманғы бітімгершілік операциялардың күрделенуі қарастырылады. Зерттеу қорытындысы дамушы мемлекеттердің халықаралық қауіпсіздік жүйесіндегі рөлін қайта қарастырып, бітімгершілікті кеңірек сыртқы саяси стратегияның бір бөлігі ретінде пайдаланатынын көрсетеді.

Тірек сөздер: БҰҰ бітімгершілігі, дамушы мемлекеттер, Қазақстан, Индонезия, Оңтүстік Корея, сыртқы саясат, салыстырмалы талдау, халықаралық қатынастар

РАЗВИВАЮЩИЕСЯ УЧАСТНИКИ МИРОТВОРЧЕСКИХ МИССИЙ ООН: СРАВНИТЕЛЬНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ

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Аннотация. В данной статье анализируется участие развивающихся государств в миротворческих операциях Организации Объединённых Наций на примере Казахстана в сравнительной перспективе. Используя качественный сравнительный подход, авторы рассматривают Казахстан в сопоставлении с Индонезией и Республикой Корея с целью выявления различий в масштабах участия, стратегических мотивациях и внешнеполитических целях. Результаты исследования показывают, что, несмотря на относительно ограниченный

масштаб участия, Казахстан демонстрирует устойчивую положительную динамику и постепенное институциональное развитие в сфере миротворчества. Сравнительный анализ подтверждает, что участие в миротворческих миссиях выполняет не только функции обеспечения безопасности, но и служит инструментом внешней политики, способствуя укреплению международного имиджа и дипломатического позиционирования государств. В статье также выявляются ключевые проблемы, с которыми сталкиваются развивающиеся участники, включая ограниченность ресурсов, институциональные сложности и усложнение современных миротворческих операций. Сделан вывод о том, что развивающиеся государства постепенно переосмысливают свою роль в системе международной безопасности, используя миротворчество как элемент более широкой внешнеполитической стратегии.

Ключевые слова: миротворчество ООН, развивающиеся государства, Казахстан, Индонезия, Южная Корея, внешняя политика, сравнительный анализ, международная безопасность

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