

PM Modi concerned over no say to countries providing troops

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United Nations: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced that India will contribute an additional battalion of 850 troops for UN peacekeeping operations, but also raised concern that troop contributing countries have no role in decision-making.

"India's commitment to UN Peacekeeping remains strong and will grow," Modi said in his address to the UN Summit on Peace Operations here yesterday.

Announcing India's new intended contributions, Modi said the country will contribute additional battalion of up to 850 troops in existing or new operations and three police units with higher representation of female peacekeepers.

He also announced India's commitment to provide critical enablers; deployment of technical personnel in UN missions; and, additional training for peacekeepers at facilities in India and in the field.

"Success of peacekeeping ultimately depends not on the weapons they (soldiers) carry but by the moral force of the UNSC," he told the gathering including Obama, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and leaders from a large number of other countries.

"The problems arise to a large extent because troop contributing countries do not have a role in the decision-making process," he said, adding "they do not have adequate representation in senior management and as Force Commanders".

Underlining the difficult circumstances under which troops have to do their duty, Modi said peacekeepers today are called upon not only to maintain peace and security, but also address a range of complex challenges.

"Mandates are ambitious but resources are limited... Today's peacekeepers are called upon not only to maintain peace and security, but also address a range of challenges," the Prime Minister said.

He called for peacekeeping missions to be deployed prudently with full recognition of their limitations and in support of political solutions.

Thanking Obama for hosting the summit, he said it is timely not just because of the 70th anniversary of the world body but also because the security environment is changing, the demands on peacekeeping are growing and the resources are harder to find.

Modi expressed pleasure that the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations has recognized these issues and hoped that the panel's recommendations will be considered soon.

India is among the largest contributors to the UN peacekeeping operations with over 1,80,000 troops having participated in missions - more than from any other country.

The country has participated in 48 of the 69 UN missions so far and was the first country to contribute a Female Formed Police Unit to UN Mission in Liberia. It lost 161 of its peacekeepers in the line of duty.

India has also been providing training to peacekeeping officers from a large number of countries and till date has

trained nearly 800 officers from 82 countries.

Modi pointed out that Indian soldiers had been working on peacekeeping missions since World War II during which it lost more than 24,000 troops and nearly half of that went missing.

"This legacy of sacrifice is shared by three nations present here," he said, in an apparent reference to Pakistan and Bangladesh.

He said that a memorial wall for the fallen peacekeepers should be erected expeditiously, for which India will contribute financially also.

- PTI