

## Enhancing the Competence of Indonesian Military Observers in Addressing Assignment Challenges in the Minusca Mission in the Central African Republic

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### Abstract

United Nations peacekeeping operations in the Central African Republic through the United Nations/Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) require Military Observer (Milobs) to possess a high level of competence in dealing with a complex, dynamic, and multicultural operational environment. These competencies include technical skills, cross cultural communication, environmental adaptability, as well as analytical and decision-making abilities. In carrying out their duties, Milobs serve as observers, reporters, mediators, and liaisons among parties involved in conflict situations, making personnel readiness a critical factor for mission success. This study aims to analyze the implementation of pre-deployment training for Military Observer at the Indonesian Peacekeeping Mission Center (PMPP TNI) in enhancing personnel competence and readiness for deployment to MINUSCA. The study employed a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. Informants consisted of training participants, instructors, training organizers, former Milobs, and currently deployed Milobs. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the pre deployment training conducted by PMPP TNI has been aligned with United Nations standards and has successfully developed the basic competencies required of Military Observers. However, a gap remains between the competencies provided during training and the operational requirements in MINUSCA, particularly in French language proficiency, cross-cultural communication, and adaptation to conflict dynamics. The integrated training program conducted in 2025 together with the Rapidly Deployable Battalion (RDB) and Engineering Company (Kizi) enhanced training realism and inter-unit coordination skills, but reduced the focus on Milob-specific competencies. This study concludes that the pre-deployment training program has established a solid foundation for competency development. Nevertheless, improvements are required in curriculum design, training methods, and context-based competency development tailored to mission-specific conditions in order to enhance the readiness and effectiveness of Indonesian Military Observers in supporting the success of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

**Keywords:** Pre-Deployment Training, Military Observer, Competence, PMPP TNI, MINUSCA, Personnel Readiness



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### INTRODUCTION

The United Nations (UN) peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic (CAR), known as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), operates in one of the most complex conflict environments in Africa. Since the outbreak of civil conflict in 2013, the country has experienced prolonged political instability, armed violence, humanitarian crises, and weak state institutions. The conflict has involved multiple armed groups competing for political influence and natural resources, resulting in widespread insecurity, population displacement, and severe disruptions to socio-economic development (United Nations Security Council, 2023). In response to these challenges, the UN established MINUSCA through Security Council Resolution 2149 in 2014 to support peacebuilding, civilian protection, political stabilization, and institutional recovery

throughout the country. As one of the largest contributors to United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO), Indonesia actively participates in international peace missions as part of its commitment to global peace and security. This participation reflects Indonesia's constitutional mandate and its foreign policy principle of being independent and active in promoting international peace. Within MINUSCA, Indonesia deploys both military contingents and individual personnel, including Military Staff Officers (Milstaff) and Military Observers (Milob). Unlike armed contingents, Military Observers perform their duties without weapons and are responsible for observing security developments, monitoring ceasefire agreements, reporting incidents, facilitating dialogue among conflicting parties, and supporting conflict resolution efforts (United Nations Department of Peace Operations [UNDPO], 2023).

The operational environment faced by Military Observers in MINUSCA requires a broad range of competencies beyond traditional military skills. Military Observers must demonstrate strong analytical abilities, intercultural communication skills, negotiation capabilities, adaptability, emotional resilience, and professional ethics. They frequently operate in remote areas characterized by poor infrastructure, limited logistical support, language barriers, cultural diversity, and volatile security conditions. Furthermore, Military Observers are expected to maintain impartiality while engaging with local communities, government institutions, armed groups, humanitarian organizations, and multinational peacekeeping personnel. These demanding responsibilities make competency development a critical determinant of mission effectiveness and individual performance (Spencer & Spencer, 1993). Although the Indonesian Peacekeeping Mission Center (PMPP TNI) has implemented pre-deployment training programs aligned with United Nations standards, various studies and operational experiences indicate that gaps still exist between training outcomes and field requirements. Challenges related to French language proficiency, cross-cultural communication, conflict mediation, and adaptation to the socio-political dynamics of the Central African Republic continue to affect the effectiveness of Military Observers during deployment. Additionally, the integration of Military Observer training with other peacekeeping units often reduces opportunities for mission-specific competency development. As a result, some personnel may encounter difficulties in applying acquired knowledge and skills when facing the realities of operational environments in MINUSCA.

From a defense diplomacy perspective, enhancing the competency of Indonesian Military Observers is not merely a matter of individual professional development but also an essential strategy for strengthening Indonesia's international reputation and contribution to global peacekeeping efforts. Competent Military Observers serve as representatives of Indonesia in multinational environments and contribute significantly to the credibility and success of UN peace operations. Therefore, continuous evaluation of training systems, competency development frameworks, and personnel preparation processes is necessary to ensure that Indonesian Military Observers can effectively fulfill their responsibilities in increasingly complex peacekeeping missions. Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the competencies required by Indonesian Military Observers in MINUSCA, identify operational challenges encountered during deployment, and evaluate the effectiveness of pre-deployment training conducted by PMPP TNI. The findings are expected to provide recommendations for improving training curricula, competency development strategies, and personnel preparation policies to enhance the readiness and effectiveness of Indonesian Military Observers in future United Nations peacekeeping operations.

### **Research Gap and Novelty**

Previous studies on United Nations peacekeeping operations have primarily focused on the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions, operational challenges in conflict areas, and the

performance of peacekeeping personnel after deployment. Several studies have examined the role of Military Observers (Milobs) in MINUSCA, the effectiveness of pre-deployment training, and the operational environment in the Central African Republic (Wicaksono, 2021; Irawan et al., 2021; Nugraha, 2022). However, limited research has specifically analyzed the alignment between the competencies developed through pre-deployment training and the actual multidimensional challenges encountered by Indonesian Military Observers during MINUSCA assignments. Existing literature also tends to assess training effectiveness or operational performance separately, without comprehensively integrating competency development, peacekeeping requirements, and mission-specific operational demands within a single analytical framework.

Accordingly, this study addresses the identified gap by examining the competencies of Indonesian Military Observers in relation to the operational realities of MINUSCA and evaluating how pre-deployment training conducted by the Indonesian Peacekeeping Mission Center (PMPP TNI) contributes to personnel readiness. The novelty of this research lies in its integrated analysis of competency development, peacekeeping operational requirements, and training effectiveness through the application of Competency Theory, Peacekeeping Theory, and Kirkpatrick's Training Evaluation Model. By focusing on the Indonesian Military Observer experience in MINUSCA, this study offers both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of mission-oriented competency frameworks and adaptive training strategies that can enhance the effectiveness of Indonesian personnel in future United Nations peacekeeping operations.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study employs a qualitative research design with a descriptive case-study approach to examine the competencies of Indonesian Military Observers (Milobs) in addressing operational challenges during their deployment to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). A qualitative approach is considered appropriate because the research seeks to explore experiences, perceptions, and competency-related issues within a complex peacekeeping environment rather than to measure variables quantitatively. This approach enables an in-depth understanding of how individual competencies are developed, applied, and evaluated in response to multidimensional operational demands in United Nations peacekeeping missions. The case selected for this study is the deployment of Indonesian Military Observers assigned to MINUSCA and the implementation of pre-deployment training conducted by the Indonesian Peacekeeping Mission Center (PMPP TNI). This case was chosen due to its strategic relevance to Indonesia's contribution to international peacekeeping operations and the unique challenges faced by Military Observers operating in a conflict-affected environment characterized by security instability, cultural diversity, and complex humanitarian conditions. The study focuses on examining the relationship between competency development, training effectiveness, and operational performance within the MINUSCA mission context.

Data collection was conducted through multiple qualitative techniques to ensure the depth, validity, and credibility of the findings. Primary data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with key informants directly involved in Military Observer training and deployment, including PMPP TNI instructors, training organizers, former Military Observers, currently deployed personnel, and peacekeeping experts. Secondary data were collected through document analysis, including United Nations peacekeeping guidelines, PMPP TNI training manuals, operational reports, mission briefings, academic publications, and policy documents related to peacekeeping operations. Observation data were also utilized to support

the interpretation of training activities and competency development processes. The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. To enhance the trustworthiness of the study, data triangulation was employed by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentary sources. The analysis was further guided by Competency Theory (Spencer & Spencer, 1993), United Nations Peacekeeping Theory (United Nations Department of Peace Operations, 2008), and Kirkpatrick’s Training Evaluation Model (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016), providing a comprehensive framework for examining competency development and training effectiveness in the context of MINUSCA operations.

**RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This section presents the empirical findings derived from interviews, document analysis, and observations regarding the competencies of Indonesian Military Observers (Milobs) assigned to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). The findings are organized according to the main themes identified during the research process, namely: operational challenges in MINUSCA, competency readiness of Indonesian Military Observers, and the effectiveness of pre-deployment training conducted by the Indonesian Peacekeeping Mission Center (PMPP TNI). The analysis highlights the relationship between competency development and the operational demands encountered in a complex peacekeeping environment.

**Table 1. Research Findings on Indonesian Military Observer Competencies in MINUSCA**

Main Theme	Research Findings	Operational Implications
Operational Challenges	Security instability, armed group activities, poor infrastructure, and logistical constraints in operational areas.	Military Observers require high adaptability and situational awareness.
Communication Challenges	Limited French language proficiency and cultural differences with local communities.	Communication barriers may affect information gathering and conflict mediation effectiveness.
Technical Competencies	Personnel possess adequate observation, reporting, patrol, and UN operational procedure skills.	Supports mission execution according to UN standards.
Behavioral Competencies	Professionalism, discipline, impartiality, and teamwork were identified as strengths.	Enhances credibility and trust among local stakeholders and multinational personnel.
Training Effectiveness	PMPP TNI training aligns with UN standards and provides fundamental peacekeeping competencies.	Supports basic readiness before deployment.
Competency Gaps	Insufficient mission-specific simulations, French language training, and intercultural communication exercises.	Potential gaps between training outcomes and field requirements.
Improvement Strategies	Context-based curriculum, advanced language training, negotiation exercises, and realistic mission simulations.	Expected to enhance operational readiness and mission effectiveness.

Source: Developed by the author based on interview, observation, and document analysis (2026).

**Operational Challenges Faced by Indonesian Military Observers in MINUSCA**

The findings indicate that Indonesian Military Observers operate in a highly complex security environment characterized by armed conflict, weak state institutions, poor infrastructure, and humanitarian instability. Informants revealed that one of the primary challenges is the vast geographical area of responsibility combined with limited transportation

and communication infrastructure. Military Observers are frequently required to conduct long-distance patrols in remote locations where security threats from armed groups remain significant. In addition to security concerns, respondents emphasized the difficulties associated with cultural diversity and language barriers. French serves as the primary working language in the Central African Republic, while numerous local dialects are spoken by communities. Consequently, Military Observers must possess strong intercultural communication skills to facilitate dialogue, gather information, and establish trust with local stakeholders. Informants also highlighted that unpredictable political developments and rapidly changing conflict dynamics require personnel to demonstrate adaptability, critical thinking, and sound decision-making capabilities under pressure.

### **Competency Readiness of Indonesian Military Observers**

Research findings show that Indonesian Military Observers generally possess strong military professionalism, discipline, and operational experience. Their competencies in observation, reporting, patrol management, and compliance with United Nations procedures are considered adequate and consistent with international peacekeeping standards. These competencies contribute positively to mission effectiveness and enhance Indonesia's reputation within multinational peacekeeping environments. However, the study identified several competency gaps that may affect operational performance. The most significant gaps relate to French language proficiency, advanced negotiation skills, and cross-cultural communication competencies. Former and active Military Observers reported that communication difficulties occasionally limited their ability to interact effectively with local communities and government representatives. Furthermore, the dynamic nature of peacekeeping operations requires continuous development of analytical and mediation skills, which are increasingly important in multidimensional missions such as MINUSCA.

### **Effectiveness of Pre-Deployment Training at PMPP TNI**

The findings indicate that PMPP TNI has implemented pre-deployment training programs based on United Nations peacekeeping standards and guidelines. Training activities include mission orientation, peacekeeping doctrine, observation and reporting procedures, conflict management, human rights awareness, and field exercises. Participants generally expressed positive perceptions regarding the quality of instructors, training facilities, and learning materials. Nevertheless, several respondents argued that the training curriculum remains insufficiently contextualized to the specific realities of MINUSCA. The integration of Military Observer training with other peacekeeping components often reduces the time available for mission-specific competency development. As a result, critical competencies such as French language proficiency, cultural awareness, negotiation techniques, and scenario-based decision-making exercises receive limited attention. Informants suggested that more realistic simulations and mission-oriented training modules would significantly improve operational readiness.

### **Discussion**

The findings support Spencer and Spencer's Competency Theory (1993), which argues that superior performance is influenced not only by knowledge and technical skills but also by deeper characteristics such as motivation, adaptability, self-concept, and personal traits. In the context of MINUSCA, Military Observers require a combination of technical competence, intercultural communication skills, emotional resilience, and professional judgment to perform effectively in complex operational environments. The identified competency gaps demonstrate

that technical military expertise alone is insufficient for success in contemporary peacekeeping missions. The study also confirms the relevance of United Nations Peacekeeping Theory as articulated in the Capstone Doctrine (United Nations Department of Peace Operations, 2008). Military Observers are expected to uphold the principles of consent, impartiality, and non-use of force while simultaneously facilitating communication among conflicting parties and supporting civilian protection efforts. These responsibilities require competencies that extend beyond traditional military training and emphasize diplomacy, mediation, and cultural sensitivity.

Furthermore, the findings can be interpreted through Kirkpatrick's Training Evaluation Model (2016). At the reaction level, participants expressed satisfaction with the training program. At the learning level, evidence suggests that personnel acquired essential peacekeeping knowledge and skills. However, at the behavior and results levels, several competency gaps remained apparent during operational deployment, particularly in language proficiency and intercultural engagement. This indicates that while PMPP TNI training successfully develops foundational competencies, additional improvements are necessary to ensure that acquired skills can be effectively transferred to mission environments. Based on these findings, enhancing the competency of Indonesian Military Observers requires a more mission-oriented training approach. Such an approach should include intensive French language training, advanced negotiation and mediation exercises, culturally adaptive learning modules, and realistic field simulations based on actual MINUSCA operational scenarios. Strengthening these components would improve personnel readiness, increase operational effectiveness, and reinforce Indonesia's contribution to United Nations peacekeeping missions.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that the effectiveness of Indonesian Military Observers (Milobs) in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) is significantly influenced by the alignment between personnel competencies and the multidimensional challenges encountered in the mission area. The operational environment of MINUSCA is characterized by security instability, limited infrastructure, cultural diversity, language barriers, and rapidly changing conflict dynamics. These conditions require Military Observers to possess not only technical military competencies but also advanced communication, negotiation, analytical, and adaptive capabilities. The findings reveal that Indonesian Military Observers generally demonstrate strong professionalism, discipline, and operational competence; however, several challenges remain, particularly in French language proficiency, cross-cultural communication, and mission-specific problem-solving skills. The study further finds that the pre-deployment training program conducted by the Indonesian Peacekeeping Mission Center (PMPP TNI) has provided a solid foundation for preparing personnel in accordance with United Nations peacekeeping standards. The training successfully develops essential competencies related to observation, reporting, conflict management, and peacekeeping procedures. Nevertheless, gaps remain between the competencies acquired during training and the actual operational requirements in MINUSCA. These gaps are primarily associated with limited mission-specific simulations, insufficient language preparation, and the need for greater emphasis on intercultural communication and negotiation skills. From the perspective of Competency Theory, Peacekeeping Theory, and Kirkpatrick's Training Evaluation Model, the findings indicate that enhancing Military Observer readiness requires a more comprehensive and mission-oriented approach to competency development. Therefore, PMPP TNI should strengthen its training curriculum by incorporating intensive French language instruction,

realistic mission-based exercises, intercultural communication modules, and advanced mediation and negotiation training. Such improvements are expected to enhance personnel readiness, operational effectiveness, and Indonesia's contribution to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Ultimately, this study highlights that competency development is not merely a training requirement but a strategic investment in strengthening Indonesia's role in global peace and security. By continuously improving the quality of Military Observer preparation, Indonesia can further enhance its credibility, professionalism, and effectiveness as a significant contributor to international peacekeeping missions under the United Nations framework.

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