

Mapping uncertainties in the United Nations peace operations

Ayako Kagawa ^{a,*}

^a *United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), Ayako Kagawa – kagawa@un.org*

* Corresponding author

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Abstract:

Following the devastation of the Second World War with one central mission of the maintenance of international peace and security, the United Nations has strived to prevent conflict, assist parties in conflict make peace, deploy peacekeepers and create the conditions to allow peace to hold and flourish. Cartographers in the United Nations have been striving in supporting these efforts through production and dissemination of maps, geospatial products and services for the Blue Helmets and the international community over the decades.

This paper examines and describes the expectations and the limitations of mapping uncertainty in the United Nations. The paper will take examples of the deployment maps and its symbols, semiotics and visual encoding surrounding symbolization of uncertainty to explore how cartographic communication discourse is bounded by the contextualization of the issues at hand. Additionally, the paper also examines the implications of the organizational digital transformation for the United Nations peace operations and how this impacts the leveraging of cartographic and geospatial information technology in its decision-making process and whether this trend will allow to expand the currently existing cartographic communication discourse within the Organization.

The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations.
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