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ACCORD
THE AFRICAN CENTRE FOR THE CONSTRUCTIVE RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

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EDITORIAL

BY **VASU GOUNDEN**

August 2009 marks 11 months since the onset of the global financial crisis that catapulted the world into the recent recession. Africa's relative isolation from global capital markets has not shielded it entirely from the effects of the recession, as commodity prices – on which many African states are so reliant – plummeted concomitantly with demand. Amongst its many effects, the recession is resulting in aid to Africa being scrutinised and decreased, despite the benefits it has rendered the continent in combating malaria, cholera, tuberculosis and AIDS; creating gender parity in schools; elevating levels of basic education; and strengthening the agricultural sector.

A further worrying trend has been lower levels of support by Western states to United Nations (UN) peacekeeping undertakings. With the UN peacekeeping budget currently at US$8.2 billion dollars for the year 2009-2010, the Committee for Administration and Budget has stressed the need for strict financial management in a weakened global economic climate. The recent economic crisis has also further dampened the enthusiasm of a number of countries to contribute troops and equipment to peacekeeping. The reality is that peacekeeping on the cheap is never successful, as history has shown. Within five years of peacekeeping operations ceasing, conflict often resumes in approximately half of post-conflict countries.

Decreased funding for peacekeeping operations will have an adverse effect on restive situations in countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Sudan, Somalia and Chad, for example. Peacekeeping operations in these countries are already critically under-resourced. Consolidating hard-won peace, however small, in places such as Sierra Leone and Burundi, will entail a commitment to reconstruction efforts aimed at strengthening the security sector, as well as addressing broad socio-economic recovery and reconstruction processes, amongst other aspects – all of which require substantial financial commitments.

This year witnessed the escalation of conflict in the Eastern DRC, with the UN mission struggling in its efforts to protect the civilian population against the onslaught from the various armed groups operating in the region. The international community remains hard-pressed to find an adequate solution to the Darfur, Sudan crisis, and conflict still rages between Sudan and its neighbour, Chad. The delayed deployment of UN peacekeepers to the region further exacerbates this crisis.

In Somalia, the election of a new president and the adoption of Sharia law has not resulted in stability and peace; conflict continues to escalate. The African Union (AU) Mission for Somalia continues to suffer from meagre financial support, and its full complement of eight thousand troops is yet to be fulfilled by AU member states. Prior to the recession, the international community was reluctant to intervene in Somalia; now, they are even less committed to resolving the issues and problems that continue to plague the country.

Whilst the recession and financial uncertainty has slowed economic growth in the developed world, what remains certain is that, if aid for peacekeeping and peacebuilding in Africa continues to decrease, then the effects on the developing world will bring even further suffering to millions of people. It will be important for the international community to thoughtfully re-examine its modus operandi when it comes to peacekeeping and peacebuilding, so as to ensure the more efficient and effective use of resources.

This issue of *Conflict Trends* covers the specific developments in African peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and the synergies and overlapping concerns that exist between them. With the current global economic decline, the challenges of peacekeeping and peacebuilding on the continent are even more acute. It is these challenges that we must address, realistically and over the long term, if keeping the peace and building the peace are to succeed on the African continent.

Vasu Gounden is the Founder and Executive Director of ACCORD.

PEACE OPERATIONS IN AFRICA: SEVEN CHALLENGES, ANY SOLUTIONS?

WRITTEN BY **PAUL D. WILLIAMS**

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As of 30 June 2009, the African continent is home to 10 military peace operations. Six of these are United Nations (UN) missions – in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), Chad/Central African Republic (CAR) (MINURCAT), Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (MONUC), Liberia (UNMIL), Sudan (UNMIS) and Western Sahara (MINURSO). One mission is a hybrid UN-African Union (AU) operation in Darfur, Sudan (UNAMID). The other three missions are the AU operation in Somalia (AMISOM); the Economic Community of Central African States (CEMAC) operation in CAR (MICOPAX); and the Special Task Force in Burundi, run by South Africa. These operations involve over 73 000 uniformed

Above: Peacekeepers mandates have become much broader and they are encouraged to undertake tasks beyond just monitoring ceasefires.

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Peacekeepers in Africa operate in zones where the reoccurrence of warfare is a constant threat.

peacekeepers and represent approximately 70% of the UN's worldwide deployments.

As these figures demonstrate, Africa occupies a special place in the world's attempts to maintain international peace and security. But peacekeepers on the continent also face a wide range of complex problems, which have dramatically affected their ability to bring stable peace to Africa's war zones. This short article analyses seven of the most fundamental challenges facing peace operations on the continent. None of these challenges are new but, while some of them are theoretically amenable to short-term solutions, others have no easy answers. The latter group of challenges will require the world's governments to come to a consensus on the problems that peace operations are supposed to fix, and what expectations they can reasonably be expected to meet.

1. Complex Conflicts

No armed conflicts are simple, but post-Cold War Africa has produced some of the world's most protracted and complex conflicts. These wars are particularly complicated environments for peacekeepers, for several reasons. First, Africa's wars do not fit neatly within state borders. Thus, while the sinews of war in east, west and central Africa regularly stretch across political boundaries, peace operations have generally been deployed to particular countries, or parts of countries. As a result, peacekeepers have only ever been able to deal with part of the problem confronting them. International recognition of the cross-border nature of the conflicts across Sudan, Chad and the CAR, and the deployment of related peace operations, is thus a welcome development.

A second complicating factor is the problematic nature of most of the peace agreements that peacekeepers have been asked to support. These agreements are often problematic in at least two senses: they are not fully comprehensive inasmuch as they are signed by a limited number of the warring factions, and/or they do not address the complete range of incompatibilities that caused the war. This leaves peacekeepers operating in zones where the reoccurrence of warfare is a constant threat. In some cases, the war may not have stopped at all, and peacekeepers are viewed as hostile elements attempting to impose an unjust peace. The fate of the AU Mission in Sudan after the Darfur Peace Agreement of May 2006, and the AU Mission in

Somalia after the Djibouti Agreement of August 2008, are cases in point. In the Darfur case, an externally mediated peace agreement was initially only signed by the government and one rebel faction; when AU peacekeepers were tasked with helping to implement some of the agreement's provisions, the rebel groups that did not sign the agreement no longer viewed the peacekeepers as impartial. A similar story was evident in the Somali case, where al-Shabaab rebels regarded AMISOM peacekeepers as surrogate forces for the Transitional Federal Government.

A third problem is the large numbers of conflict parties, many of which have unprofessional armed forces sometimes comprised of militias, thugs and criminals who do not respect the laws of war or consistently follow chains of command. This has raised the likelihood that armed groups will deliberately target civilians, either because they are considered enemies or because they possess resources useful to the belligerents. A related challenge is that the belligerent parties often form bewildering and shifting alliances: without a sophisticated grasp of local political dynamics, it can be difficult for peacekeepers to know who to support. Moreover, armed groups whose members rely upon warfare to generate their livelihood will have a vested interest against ending the conflict and, hence, will generally resent the presence of peacekeepers.

2. Multiple Peacekeepers

No single organisation is equipped to deal with all of Africa's conflict-related problems. Although the UN has been the most significant peacekeeping organisation in post-Cold War Africa, it has not had a monopoly on conflict management activities. Instead, contemporary Africa has witnessed peace operations undertaken by a wide range of international organisations and states. In addition to the UN, twenty-first century Africa has seen peace operations conducted by the AU (in Burundi, the Comoros, Sudan and Somalia); by the continent's sub-regional organisations – most notably the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire; as well as by external organisations, principally the European Union (EU). On some occasions, individual states have also conducted peace operations. This includes African governments – most notably South Africa's initiatives in Burundi – as well as European governments, such as

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AMISOM peacekeepers stand guard outside the Somali presidential palace in Mogadishu. The al-Shabaab rebels regard AMISOM peacekeepers as surrogate forces for the government.

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UNAMID remains some 10 000 uniformed personnel short of its authorised strength.

the United Kingdom (UK) in Sierra Leone and France in Côte d'Ivoire.

This proliferation of peacekeeping actors has posed two principal challenges. At the strategic level, it has been difficult to ensure coordination between these different actors over goals and methods. While most actors agree in the abstract sense that greater coordination is necessary for effective peacekeeping, none of them wants to be "coordinated", if this means following another institution's agenda. Such strategic coordination is especially important during the planning stages for potential missions. In addition, given the AU's inability to pay for its own peace operations, its relationship with the UN and EU has become particularly complicated. This has led to a protracted debate over how to ensure African "ownership" of operations that are paid for predominantly by Western states or the UN; for example, as with the AU missions in Sudan and Somalia. At a more tactical level, the multiplicity of actors poses challenges related to interoperability – not least the fact that commanding multinational peacekeeping forces is made more difficult because personnel from different countries will have been exposed to different doctrine and training, and use distinct equipment.

3. Not Enough Soldiers

Peace operations in Africa have commonly been forced to operate with insufficient numbers of troops. It has long been standard practice for politics at the UN Security Council to result in authorised deployment numbers at the low end of the recommended spectrum. This has been done both to save on financial costs and in order to increase the likelihood that member states will meet these targets. An additional dimension to this problem is the length of time it can take for peacekeepers to arrive in the field. For example, although MONUC was established in 1999, it did not deploy in significant numbers until mid-2001. Similarly, the AMISOM operation in Somalia took nearly two

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF THE CROSS-BORDER NATURE OF THE CONFLICTS ACROSS SUDAN, CHAD AND THE CAR, AND THE DEPLOYMENT OF RELATED PEACE OPERATIONS, IS THUS A WELCOME DEVELOPMENT

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The willingness of Western states to deploy their own soldiers is an important barometer of their political commitment to missions in Africa.

years to achieve half its authorised troop strength. Some glaring gaps remain today: 18 months into its operations, UNAMID remains some 10 000 uniformed personnel short of its authorised strength; AMISOM is still missing nearly half of its soldiers after 30 months in the field; and MONUC has yet to receive the 3 000 reinforcements authorised by the Security Council in November 2008.

4. Not Enough Western Soldiers

Most of the peacekeepers currently deployed in Africa are from the continent or from states in South Asia, especially Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. The point here is not that these soldiers are incapable of fulfilling the tasks assigned to them – many of them are good peacekeepers. Rather, the point to emphasise is that the developing world is doing far more than its fair share of peacekeeping in Africa.

Since the so-called "Black Hawk Down" incident in Somalia in 1993, Western states have been reluctant to send their own soldiers on UN peacekeeping missions.[1] Indeed, in the twenty-first century, France, the UK and the United States (US) combined have generally contributed less than 300 uniformed personnel to UN peacekeeping operations in Africa. This has consistently represented under 0.5% of the UN total. Instead of contributing their own personnel, these states have emphasised their financial contributions to UN operations, as well as various training and assistance programmes they have undertaken to enable more African soldiers to carry out peacekeeping tasks.[2]

When these states have sent their troops to Africa to carry out peacekeeping tasks, they have tended to do so outside UN command and control structures and for short periods of time – as occurred during the UK's Operation Palliser in Sierra Leone (2000), the French-led Operation Artemis in the DRC (2003) and the EU's deployment (EUFOR RD) in the DRC (2006). In this regard, the recent willingness of European states to deploy troops to Chad and the CAR as the precursor to the UN's MINURCAT operation – and keep many of them deployed after the handover to the UN mission – was a welcome departure from this general trend.

Part of the rationale for encouraging more Western forces to participate in African peacekeeping is their ability to conduct high-end military tasks, and because of the equipment and logistical support that generally accompanies their deployment. Furthermore, the willingness of Western states to deploy their own soldiers, rather than simply write cheques, is an

important barometer of their political commitment to missions in Africa.

5. Not Enough Police

The days when peace operations were the sole preserve of the military are long gone. As peace operations in Africa have been asked to undertake a wider range of peacebuilding tasks during the transition from war to stable peace – particularly those related to strengthening the rule of law – there has been much greater need for the deployment of civilian police rather than just soldiers. For example, the UN Security Council has authorised the deployment of considerable numbers of police for its African operations: over 6 400 for UNAMID, over 1 400 for MONUC, over 1 200 for UNMIL, just under 1 200 for UNOCI, and over 700 for UNMIS. At the time of writing, the UN missions in Darfur (c. 3 000) and the DRC (c. 600) are operating with substantial shortfalls in the number of police. A major part of the problem is that good police officers are in even greater demand by the world's states than good soldiers. As a consequence, many countries lack spare policing capacity, and those that do are often reluctant to send many of their police officers abroad, especially into dangerous environments where legal and justice systems have been destroyed. In this context, the recent announcement by the US's Obama administration that it is investigating "different ways to support the increasing need for effective formed police units" is good news.[3]

6. Complex Mandates

Apart from relatively rare cases – such as the situations in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) – peacekeepers in Africa have been asked to undertake far more tasks than monitor a ceasefire or demilitarised zone. Instead, they have been mandated to help build the institutions of liberal democratic governance in some of the continent's most protracted war zones. As the Indian representative to the UN recently stated, "Peacekeeping mandates have become too broad and too all-encompassing."[4] The usual lists of tasks range from electoral supervision, human rights monitoring, civilian protection, assisting the delivery of humanitarian relief, providing security and order, strengthening the rule of law, and overseeing disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR) programmes. These may represent impossible mandates, at least in the short term.

The central challenges stemming from these daunting mandates revolve around three issues. The first is where peacekeepers are given contradictory instructions. A prime example is the case of MONUC, which has been mandated to support President Joseph Kabila's government and protect the country's civilians. The problem here is that the government's armed forces have also been responsible for a significant proportion of the crimes committed against Congolese civilians.

The second challenge related to mandates is the lack of clarity and ambiguity that often pervades the text handed down by the UN Security Council and other mandating authorities. As the current head of the UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations recently observed, "Mandates... are more complex than ever, and there remains a lack of consensus on how certain mandate tasks should be fulfilled."[5] Part of the problem here is that peacekeepers are often told to "assist"

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With the focus on strengthening the rule of law during peacebuilding, good police officers are in even greater demand by the world's states than good soldiers.

authorities and "support" processes without being given further specific instructions on how to do this. Alternatively, a related problem stems from the fact that the national contingents comprising a peace operation will often interpret these general instructions to mean different things in operational terms.

A third set of challenges stem from the inherent difficulty of the tasks that peacekeepers are being asked to undertake, especially with limited resources and according to externally-driven timetables. Here, arguably, four agendas stand out as being particularly challenging: DDR, SSR, strengthening the rule of law, and civilian protection. The first three of these agendas raise huge issues involving not just transformation of the (usually multiple) military forces, but transformation of society on a quite breathtaking scale. It is hard enough to persuade former combatants to disarm and demobilise, let alone reintegrate them into society – a hugely daunting objective, especially in countries where the formal economy is usually in tatters and employment prospects are dire.

The tasks are equally challenging in relation to civilian protection. At a fundamental level, actors still disagree about what civilian protection actually entails – is it about physical protection, protecting livelihoods, or protecting people's rights? Moreover, few of the world's soldiers and peacekeepers receive extended training in these relevant tasks. The institutions that authorise peace operations in Africa have also been loath to specify when exactly peacekeepers are responsible for protecting civilians. Clearly, peacekeepers are not supposed to harm civilians, nor are they supposed to stand by while civilians within their areas of deployment are massacred. But it is not at all clear what obligations peacekeepers have to protect civilians in locations beyond their zones of immediate deployment. Nor does this uncertainty stop local civilians from expecting peacekeepers to protect them. As the French representative at the UN observed, for the local population, "the ability of the Organization [UN] to protect civilians is the standard by which we will be judged."[6] Force commanders on the ground have thus faced agonising dilemmas: if a commander with 200 troops witnesses an attack on civilians carried out by twice that many hostile soldiers, what is the appropriate response? Or if a commander intervenes to prevent an attack on civilians by a small band of hostile forces, what is to prevent them returning later on with far greater numbers and exacting revenge upon the local populace, or the peacekeepers, or both?

7. Too Many "Bad" Peacekeepers

A seventh challenge is for the organisations conducting peace operations to ensure that their personnel do not abuse the locals that they are sent to help. In practice, however, peacekeepers have sometimes abused their positions of power. Although in extreme cases this has involved peacekeepers murdering locals – as in the case of Canadian peacekeepers in Somalia in 1993 – the more common problems have been corruption and the sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) of local civilians. Corruption has come in a variety of forms, but among the most prominent examples in recent years have been peacekeepers in the DRC involved in the illicit trade in gold and other goods, including arms, and peacekeepers in AMISOM engaging in arms trafficking. In relation to SEA, there have been numerous scandals involving peacekeepers raping and sexually abusing local women and children, as well as engaging in human trafficking.

Although media outlets sometimes focus on these abuses to the exclusion of other more positive achievements, these are serious problems and need to be dealt with. Indeed, because of their massively damaging effect on the reputation and legitimacy of peacekeepers and peacekeeping operations in general, corruption and SEA should be considered strategic challenges to the effectiveness of peacekeeping, and should be treated with a concomitant degree of seriousness.

AS PEACE OPERATIONS IN AFRICA HAVE BEEN ASKED TO UNDERTAKE A WIDER RANGE OF PEACEBUILDING TASKS DURING THE TRANSITION FROM WAR TO STABLE PEACE – PARTICULARLY THOSE RELATED TO STRENGTHENING THE RULE OF LAW – THERE HAS BEEN MUCH GREATER NEED FOR THE DEPLOYMENT OF CIVILIAN POLICE RATHER THAN JUST SOLDIERS

Conclusions

Are there ways to overcome these challenges? The short answer is yes and no. Peacekeepers are clearly not going to change the nature of African wars any time

soon. The organisations that authorise peace operations must, therefore, be clear about when it is sensible to deploy peacekeepers and when is it time to say no. Although written nearly a decade ago, the conclusions of the so-called Brahimi Report remain as sound as ever: peacekeepers should only be deployed when they are tied to a viable political strategy, and when mandates can be linked to the reality of available resources.[7]

In addition, no single organisation will be able to handle the full spectrum of conflict management challenges facing the continent. This means that the challenges of strategic coordination are not going away. For the time being, the most crucial relationship to get right is the trilateral one between the UN, the AU and the EU. Here, the conclusions reached by the so-called Prodi panel represent a sensible way forward.[8] Among other things, the panel concluded that current efforts to fund African peace operations were unsustainable, and that too great a peacekeeping burden was being placed on African institutions that were not yet ready to perform the necessary tasks. To ease the financial crisis, the panel recommended the creation of a multi-donor trust fund to support the AU peacekeeping capacity, and that UN-assessed funding should be used to support UN-authorised AU peacekeeping operations for up to six months.

The news is better with regard to the shortage of personnel. Indeed, it would be relatively easy for the UN's member states to increase the number of troops and (with a bit more effort) police that they contribute to peace operations in Africa. Western states, in particular, could send many more soldiers and police, but are unlikely to do so in the near-term because of the financial crisis and the strategic focus on operations in Afghanistan and the Balkans. Perhaps one way to compromise would be to concentrate less on generating specific numbers of uniformed personnel, and pay more attention to supplying peace operations with the capabilities necessary to create particular effects on the ground. This would involve supplying peace operations with greater intelligence-gathering capabilities, more air assets and armoured vehicles, and more special forces.

With regard to mandates, it is probably unrealistic to expect that the huge gap will be closed between the grandiose objectives written in resolutions and communiqués and the resources that the world's states give to their peacekeepers. States will always find reasons to talk a better game than they play. Similarly, genuine debates will persist over how to interpret mandates in specific circumstances. On the other hand, much more could be done to train and equip peacekeepers to carry out the core functions identified here – namely DDR, SSR, rule of law, and civilian protection.

Finally, the UN and other organisations engaged in peacekeeping must work hard to stop their personnel from abusing their positions. This will take time, resources and a shift in management cultures, but it can and must be done.

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Endnotes

1 The "Black Hawk Down" episode refers to the violent confrontation that occurred in October 1993 between US soldiers and Somali militias in Mogadishu, following a botched attempt by US forces to apprehend senior advisors of the warlord Mohammed Farah Aidid. Eighteen US soldiers were killed, and over 70 wounded. An unknown number of Somalis were killed, with estimates ranging from 130 to over 1 000.

2 These include the G8's Global Peace Operations Initiative, the US African Contingency Operations Training Assistance, the French Reinforcement of African Peacekeeping Capacities, and the UK's peacekeeping training programmes.

3 UN doc. S.PV/6153, 29 June 2009, p. 23.

4 UN doc. S.PV/6153 (Resumption 1), 29 June 2009, p. 13.

5 UN doc. S.PV/6153, 29 June 2009, p. 3.

6 UN doc. S.PV/6153, 29 June 2009, p. 8.

7 'Report of the Panel on UN Peace Operations', UN doc. A/55/305-S/2000/809, 21 August 2000.

8 'Report of the African Union-United Nations Panel on Modalities for Support to African Union Peacekeeping Operations', UN doc. A/63/666-S/2008/813, 31 December 2008.

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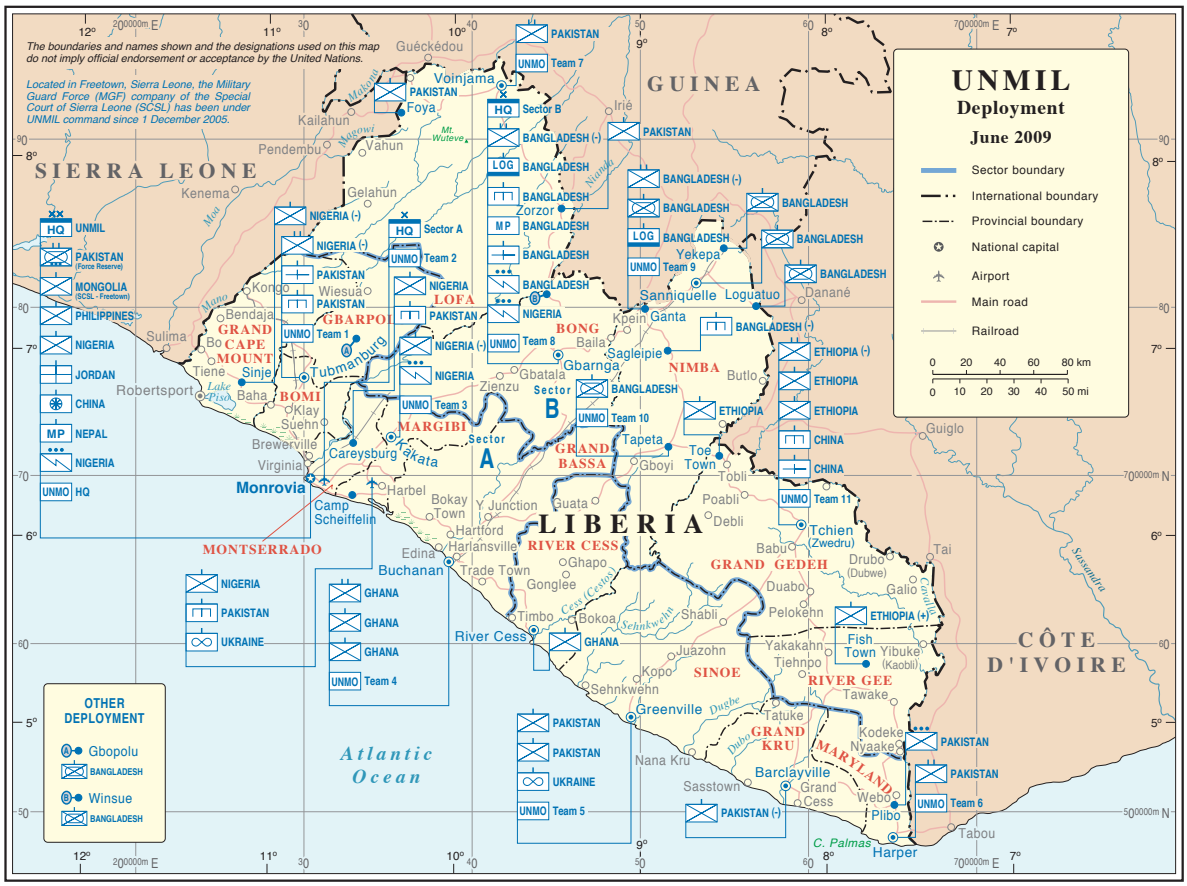
ASSESSING THE UNITED NATIONS APPROACH TO POST-CONFLICT PEACEBUILDING IN AFRICA: THE MISSION IN LIBERIA

WRITTEN BY **WILFRED GRAY-JOHNSON**

Introduction

Since 1992, the United Nations (UN) has modified its perspective[1] on peacebuilding in post-conflict countries, moving beyond the "traditional" peacekeeping operations to include peacebuilding. This perspective, articulated in the UN Agenda for Peace, has guided most mandates of various UN missions in Africa and its peacekeeping since the end of the Cold War. This article examines the UN's approach to post-conflict peacebuilding in Africa, and uses the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) as a case study. It is argued that the UN has made significant gains in recent peacekeeping operations that have peacebuilding as an integral component of their mandate. However, despite some measurable success, a number of problematic areas need to be addressed if the UN is to ensure that peace gains are further strengthened.

Above: UNMIL's multidimensional mandate combined immediate security functions with longer-term activities associated with building peace.



Map No. 4211 Rev. 20 UNITED NATIONS
June 2009 (Colour)

Department of Field Support
Cartographic Section

The number of peacebuilding interventions undertaken in Africa by the UN has grown steadily since the organisation was established, particularly between 1960 to 2007 – beginning with the UN Operation in the Congo (ONUC) and the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT). From 1960 to 2007, there have been at least 25 UN missions in Africa, out of 63 UN missions around the world from 1948 to 2009. However, unlike traditional peacekeeping operations that focused on facilitating or providing military separation of belligerent forces and interstate conflicts and wars, creating buffer zones, monitoring ceasefires and, subsequently, reporting violations to the Security Council – the UN has adjusted its various peacekeeping mandates to respond better to a new "conflict paradigm" that has emerged since the end of the Cold War. Today, a majority of conflicts are intrastate in character; that is, conflict occurs amongst people in one country. As Call and Wyeth have pointed out, "Civil wars – historically more difficult to settle and to keep settled – now comprise 95 percent of the world's armed conflicts."[2] Also, the nature of interventions has become more complex – requiring a whole range of different approaches. According to UN statistics, close to 50% of countries coming out of conflict experiences relapse into fighting within five years of signing a peace agreement.[3]

There are many obstacles to sustainable peace, many of which are related to nation-building – not just state-building. In 1992, the UN Department of Political Affairs emphasised the political nature of peacebuilding, building on the Brahimi Panel report, which states that "effective peacebuilding is, in effect, a hybrid of

SINCE 1992, THE UN HAS MODIFIED ITS PERSPECTIVE ON PEACEBUILDING IN POST-CONFLICT COUNTRIES, MOVING BEYOND THE "TRADITIONAL" PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS TO INCLUDE PEACEBUILDING

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The shift in the UN's peacekeeping mandate to include peacebuilding followed criticisms that traditional peacekeeping operations left many conflicts unresolved.

political and development activities targeted at the sources of conflict".[4] Perhaps the shift in the perspective of peacekeeping to include peacebuilding emanated from criticisms of the UN that:

1. traditional peacekeeping operations left many conflicts unresolved; and
2. peacekeeping was having the effect of maintaining an unstable status quo that would inevitably collapse in the long run.[5]

However, another factor responsible for the relapse in violent conflicts was the lack of a comprehensive peacebuilding strategy capable of informing policies and programming. This is because most post-conflict governments tend to be overwhelmed with immediate life-saving activities, rehabilitation of infrastructure, and the establishment and consolidation of state authority. Often, little or no attention is given to address critical conflict issues and foster reconciliation. "Failed peacebuilding efforts, represent one of the worst risk factors for new wars"[6] – such as the reoccurrence of violence following the failure of the 1991 Bicesse Peace Accords for Angola and the 1993 Arusha Accords for Rwanda.

Peacebuilding in Peacekeeping Missions

In 2001, the UN Security Council not only recognised the value of including peacebuilding elements into the mandates of peacekeeping operations, but also recognised the interrelationship of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding (and most recently state-building) and the need for a comprehensive and integrated strategy to preserve the results achieved during peacekeeping operations and to prevent the recurrence of conflict. In addition, some UN missions in Africa – Liberia, for example – were guided by a set of principles and priorities for peacebuilding that were predicated upon fundamental values and principles that guide the work of the UN and which are central to conflict prevention and mitigation. These include: cultivating a culture of inclusion and tolerance; fostering an environment

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The first all-female UN peacekeeping unit was deployed to Liberia in 2007.

of transparency and accountability; ensuring equality and access to opportunity; and instilling a commitment to protection under the law. These principles, found in many key UN documents on peace, security and development[7], guide the thinking around peacebuilding priorities in most post-conflict countries, and serve to test whether and how the activities of the UN are achieving results that contribute to sustaining peace.

Furthermore, discussions on the role of peacekeeping missions in peacebuilding were encouraged and accelerated by the UN Secretary General's 2001 analysis in 'No Exit without Strategy', which argued that sustaining peace involves helping warring parties move their struggles from the battlefield to an "institutional framework" capable of resolving present and future political disputes.[8] In the same year, the Security Council addressed the interrelationship between peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding, and noted the need for a comprehensive and integrated strategy in order to preserve the results achieved from peacekeeping interventions, and to prevent the recurrence of conflict. The Security Council also underscored the value of including peacebuilding elements in the mandates of peacekeeping operations, and suggested that a peacebuilding strategy should be based on:

- interdependence between sustainable peace, security and development in all dimensions;
- meeting the basic criteria of relevance, coherence and consistency of programmes and actions, the consent and cooperation of the authorities of the state concerned, continuity in and conclusion of the process, cooperation and coordination among organisations and other actors involved, and cost-effectiveness of the overall peacebuilding operations.[9]

The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission also helped to shape the UN's approach to post-conflict environments, by aiming to address the causes of conflict and targeting relevant institutions, and providing catalytic funding to help mitigate conflict peacebuilding needs in post-conflict countries.[10]

However, despite the evolving understanding around the practice of peacebuilding, the development and implementation of comprehensive peacebuilding strategies within UN missions remains relatively untried. Several peacebuilding strategies undertaken in countries with UN missions or other UN peace operations highlight that, while there are differences in scope and emphasis, all the strategies are concerned with addressing the root

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UNMIL peacekeepers stand guard outside a polling station in Monrovia, during vote-counting in the presidential election run-off between George Weah and Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, in November 2005.

causes of conflict, and laying out specific criteria for selecting programmatic responses. All these strategies cover the security, political, social and economic dimensions of peacebuilding.

Peacebuilding Efforts within the UN Mission in Liberia

From its inception, UNMIL's multidimensional mandate – outlined in Security Council resolution 1509 of 2003 – combined immediate security functions with longer-term activities often associated with peacebuilding. The latter included: contributing to international efforts to protect and promote human rights; security sector reform, including the training of civilian police and the formation of a new and restructured military; and support for the implementation of the peace process, including re-establishing and consolidating state authority throughout the country, as well as establishing a national legal framework and restoring proper administration of natural resources. The mandate also referred to the need for a gender dimension to post-conflict peacebuilding, by addressing violence against women and girls.

Following the 2006 elections in Liberia, UNMIL's mandate progressively shifted to include more peacebuildng dimensions. While the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) led UNMIL's efforts to consolidate peace at the strategic level, different sections in UNMIL undertook various peacebuilding functions. The Political section analysed structural weaknesses in the political system and highlighted areas to strengthen political institutions for democratic consolidation. The Rule of Law section supported efforts to re-establish the administration of reform, while the Human Rights section continued to focus on building the capacity of the government and civil society institutions to monitor, protect and promote human rights. The Joint Mission Analysis Cell (JMAC) proposed regular threat assessments, while

ONE OF THE REASONS FOR THE SKEWED UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIETY, POLITICAL COMMUNITY AND POLITICAL ORGANISATION STEMS FROM CONFUSION OVER CORE CONCEPTS INCLUDING THE STATE, GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY ON THE ONE HAND, AND CONFLICT AND VIOLENT CONFLICT ON THE OTHER

GETTY IMAGES

UNMIL soldiers collect ballot boxes from a neighbourhood in Monrovia (2005).

the Joint Security Assessment Team analysis (JSAT) produced a comprehensive and collaborative assessment of the security situation in each county in the country.

The Civil Affairs section, responsible for the restoration and consolidation of state authority, was mandated to carry out a number of functions related to peacebuilding, conflict resolution and reconciliation. The Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Recovery section focused on war-effected populations, the re-estalishment of their livelihoods and undertaking risk assessments of potential hotspots that could lead to instability. In addition, the UN County Support Team mechanism supported the building of local administrative capacity at county level, as part of the efforts to re-establish state authority and capacity.

Through the Office of the Deputy SRSG (Recovery and Governance), peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity gained significant momentum, and attempts were made to develop a more strategic approach to mainstream conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding into UNMIL. The Office of the Deputy SRSG also produced 'An Agenda for Peacebuilding for the United Nations in Liberia', which sought to articulate – in clear peacebuilding terms and processes – a methodology through which the integrated UN could provide coordinated support to the Government of Liberia to enhance peacebuilding in Liberia.[11]

Challenges

In practice though, while many aspects of peacebuilding have been undertaken as part of the UN's post-conflict interventions in Liberia, the approaches have been characterised by a lack of strategy, coordination and complementarity between actors, among other factors.

Coherence

It is not easily apparent how the various peacebuilding activities undertaken by various sections in peacekeeping missions, as with UNMIL, coalesce into a single Mission strategy with clear objectives, processes and outcomes. One of the reasons for this incoherence is that analysis of what constitutes peacebuilding by UNMIL is not fully integrated, although the Joint Security Assessment Team (JSAT), UNMIL's Consolidated Drawdown and Withdrawal (CDW) plan and the Integrated Mission Priorities and Implementation Plan (IMPIP) do provide some indications of this. It is also not clear how UNMIL's work has fully addressed the peacebuilding challenges and specific context in Liberia.

Limited Capacity

While UNMIL staff have some knowledge of peacebuilding, there is not enough expertise or critical capacity for the analysis of peacebuilding and explaining it to other constituencies. Even though the study of peacebuilding may not necessarily require expert knowledge, understanding the society, politics, processes of change and dynamics of conflict and peace in an in-depth way is quite essential. This dearth of appropriate knowledge has implications for how peacebuilding is approached, how the impact of peacebuilding activities is understood and how the various initiatives labeled as peacebuilding are evaluated.

Problematic Assumptions

The understanding of peacebuilding within UNMIL rests on at least two problematic assumptions. The first assumption is that peacebuilding is primarily about activities and projects, and that the primary response to the challenges of building durable peace in a post-conflict county like Liberia requires resources and programming. UNMIL operations in Liberia have undertaken a standard set of activities, which are presumed to lead to peace – but without fully appreciating the structures, institutions, dynamics and attitudes that constitute a peaceful society. While such peacebuilding activities may likelv have an impact on consolidating peace, they are not necessarily sufficient for overcoming the structural divisions that created the conditions for violent conflicts in the first place.

The second assumption is that there are specific technical skills and mechanisms for conflict resolution, conflict management and peacebuilding, which build peace. The conflict-sensitive peacebuilding workshops, and some of the material produced by UNMIL in 2007, were very useful for introducing some of the analytical elements for conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding, but they also promoted a technical approach focusing on special conflict resolution skills, peace education, dialogue, early warning mechanisms and conflict management structure outside of normal state and societal structures. This presupposes that 14 years of civil war occurred in Liberia because of an absence of such skills alone, and that the presence of such skills and education explains the stability found in other African countries that have not experienced civil war.

Conceptual Confusion

One of the reasons for the skewed understanding of society, political community and political organisation stems from confusion over core concepts including the state, government and society on the one hand, and conflict and violent conflict on the other. The state is a particular form of political organisation – distinct from government, which manages the affairs of the country. In this regard, peacebuilding in most post-conflict countries – as in Liberia – should consider the peculiarities of post-conflict countries' states and their history of social diversity and fragmentation which, most times, influences and affects conflicts significantly, and should therefore be considered in peacebuilding.

Overlooked Factors

One of the consequences of such analytical confusion is that certain aspects of building peace in post-conflict countries are being overlooked. The structural causes of the war in Liberia, for example, are well understood – in particular the deep-rooted structural cleavages established by the very creation of the state, which institutionalised social division, marginalisation and exclusion, perpetuated by those who controlled the state. However, UNMIL's peacebuilding efforts did not seem to be addressing these structural issues related to the state and its control sufficiently. The focus on state capacity and on consolidating the authority of the state, as well as the focus on the grassroots and rural areas, while important, should not detract from the critical need to address the basic foundation of the Liberian State, which involves substantially more than capacity.

FOR PEACE TO BE IRREVERSIBLE IN LIBERIA, SIGNIFICANTLY MORE WORK NEEDS TO BE DONE BY UNMIL TO ADDRESS THE STRUCTURES, ATTITUDES AND PROCESSES THAT PREDISPOSE LIBERIA TO VIOLENT CONFLICT AND INSTABILITY, AS WELL AS STRENGTHENING THE STRUCTURES, ATTITUDES AND PROCESSES THAT DEEPEN AND CONSOLIDATE PEACE

Operational Dilemmas

Peace will not be sustained in Liberia unless Liberians take ownership of the process to consolidate peace. While there are capacity constraints across government, civil society organisations and local communities, it is through the commitment and endeavours of these constituencies that peace will be consolidated in post-conflict countries. In the case of Liberia, while the

government has given many indications of its commitment to consolidate peace, UNMIL is assuming too much leadership in peacebuilding, and may be performing some of the responsibilities of the state in rural areas, rather than supporting the state.

Finally, UNMIL is expected to work within the timetable established by the Security Council and the CDW plan. However, peacebuilding itself does not necessarily fit within these operational timetables. The UN and the international community have invested significant resources in peace operations; there is pressure for the UN to focus on results that indicate a successful peace operation. Therefore, there is a tendency to overemphasise tangible results at the expense of indentifying changes in norms, rules and perceptions. Violent conflict emerges as much from perceived and subjective differences as from objective differences.

Conclusion

Liberia is currently stable and enjoys a significant degree of peace, in large part through the contributions and actions of UNMIL and its military presence throughout the country. However, peace in Liberia remains fragile. Given that the majority of Liberians seem to be weary of war, it is unlikely that former combatants will remobilise for war or that elites will urge violence to attain their goals. Nevertheless, this does not suggest that there is not the potential for violence. The capacity to remobilise for war remains, while the conditions that perpetuate inequality, exclusion and domination still exist and undermine Liberia's prospects for real equitable development to benefit all Liberians. Therefore, for peace to be irreversible in Liberia, significantly more work needs to be done by UNMIL to address the structures, attitudes and processes that predispose Liberia to violent conflict and instability, as well as strengthening the structures, attitudes and processes that deepen and consolidate peace. The UN's approach to peacebuilding in Africa will certainly have to consider all of this in its efforts to consolidate peace in post-conflict African countries further.

Wilfred Gray-Johnson is the Director of the Liberia Peacebuilding Office - Liberia Peacebuilding Fund Secretariat, established in January 2009.

Endnotes

1 Perspective in this context is used to denote understanding of the various elements that must be considered if the UN is to foster genuine peace in post-conflict countries.

2 Call, Charles T. with Wyeth, Vanessa (eds.) (2008) *Building States to Build Peace*. A project of the International Peace Institute. Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p. 1.

3 UN post-conflict assessments, 12 March 2009, Available at: <www.ens-newswire.com/ens/mar2009/2009-03-12-01.asp> Accessed on: August 2009.

4 Call, Charles (2005) Institutionalizing Peace: A Review of Post-Conflict Concepts and Issues for DPA. Consultant report, 31 January 2005.

5 Article on peacebuilding, Available at: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peacebuilding> Accessed on: 21 July 2009.

6 Call, Charles T. with Wyeth, Vanessa, *op. cit*.

7 See, for example, the Charter of the UN (1945); UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948); Millennium Declaration (2000); An Agenda for Peace (1992); In Larger Freedom: Towards Security, Development and Human Rights for All (2005); A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility: Report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges & Change (2004).

8 See Report of the Secretary General, No Exit Without Strategy: Security Council Decision-making and the Closure or Transition of UN Peacekeeping Operations, 20 April 2001, S/2001/394.

9 Security Council Addresses Comprehensive Approach. Security Council 4278th Meeting, SC/7014, 21 February 2001.

10 Prior to the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, differences in the approach were dependent on the mandate of the institution. Whilst the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) has emphasised the political nature of peacebuilding, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) has historically argued for a developmental understanding of the concept.

11 *An Agenda for Peacebuilding*, p. 2. The agenda reviewed current thinking on the UN in Liberia and on the causes of conflict in Liberia, examined peacebuilding efforts planned and underway, set out principles and priority areas for peacebuilding, discussed the UN envisaged support to these processes through existing frameworks, and offered views on how progress would be assessed. This agenda formed the basis for the development of a concept note for a Government of Liberia – UN Programme for strengthening peacebuilding in Liberia.

THE REINTEGRATION PROCESS FOR CHILD SOLDIERS IN LIBERIA[1]

WRITTEN BY **JANEL B. GALVANEK**

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The 14-year conflict in Liberia was notorious for the young age of its combatants. In the first part of the conflict – during which Charles Taylor launched his rebellion, which eventually engulfed the country and led to his election as president in 1997 – it is estimated that children under 18 made up approximately 30% of the fighters.[2] During the second phase of the conflict, which officially came to an end in August 2003, there were an estimated 15 000 child soldiers.[3] All three signatories to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement: Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) rebel groups, as well as Taylor's government troops, were guilty of using children as soldiers. Particularly infamous was Taylor's "Small Boys Unit", made up of young boys who were known to call Taylor "*papay*", or father.[4]

Child Soldiers in Liberia

The experience of Liberian child soldiers is similar to that of other child soldiers throughout the world – a life of brutality inflicted upon them, and which they inflict upon others. Separated from their families, many children were treated inhumanely, tortured, beaten and drugged. Many of these young combatants witnessed horrible atrocities

Above: Girl soldiers in Liberia were known for their ferocity.

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Child soldiers in Liberia experienced brutality inflicted upon them, and in turn inflicted brutality upon others.

or participated in them directly, often including cruel initiation rites. Connections with their previous lives and their families were severed, and they were forced to recognise that the rebels were now their family.

Children were recruited into the fighting forces in Liberia in various ways. The most deplorable form of recruitment was simple abduction, which took place when villages or schools came under attack or when children strayed from their village or refugee camp. However, although many children in Liberia were forcibly recruited to fight, a large number of children "volunteered". Reasons for volunteering included hunger, simple survival and the protection of themselves and their families. They may have lost their families in the fighting and saw no other choice for survival other than becoming a soldier. Most disturbing, however, is the fact that many children volunteered to fight because they had been witnesses to atrocities committed in their communities, and had seen their friends and families being killed. These children chose to join a rebel force simply for revenge. Girls were often abducted solely to become the "wives" of the fighters, essentially being forced into sexual slavery. This sexual abuse led to serious health problems among the abused girls, and unwanted pregnancies were prevalent. Such abuse does not mean, however, that girls were not trained to fight. On the contrary, girl soldiers in Liberia were known for their ferocity.

DDR Process

As in many post-conflict countries, a disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process was implemented in Liberia as the best way to encourage combatants to lay down their arms and return to civilian life. In general, the principles for the reintegration of adult ex-combatants and for child soldiers are very similar; yet, because children have become involved in fighting forces during the crucial years of their psychological and emotional development, they have special needs that should be addressed during their reintegration.

MANY OF THESE YOUNG COMBATANTS WITNESSED HORRIBLE ATROCITIES OR PARTICIPATED IN THEM DIRECTLY, OFTEN INCLUDING CRUEL INITIATION RITES

When the DDR process in Liberia began in earnest in 2004, child soldiers were disarmed with adult combatants, but the reintegration process for children and adults was completely separate. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) organised and oversaw the official process in Liberia for children under 18 years. In total, 11 780 children accessed the various reintegration programmes.[5]

Interim Care Centres

The demobilisation phase of the DDR process in Liberia entailed the childrens' temporary stays at interim care centres (ICCs). These centres acted essentially as temporary camps where the children could live and receive medical and psychological care, away from the threat of fighting or contact with their commanders, until their families could be located and they could be reintegrated back into their communities. It was here that the children were prepared for their actual long-term reintegration. There were seven child protection agencies (CPAs) that were responsible for the implementation of the ICCs; for instance, Don Bosco Homes, Christian Children's Fund and Save the Children. Contracts were given by UNICEF

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Playing football together allowed demobilised children, from opposing fighting factions, to move beyond their conflicts and animosity when they played together as a team.

to those agencies that were most capable of handling the reintegration process – those with the capacity, available staff and prior experience.

A child's average time spent at an ICC was anywhere between four and 12 weeks. The various activities and duties of the children at the ICCs were designed to keep the children occupied throughout the day. The typical daily routine included meals, exercises, prayer time, schooling, rest time, sport activities, and often a film viewing in the evening, if possible.

Most CPA representatives wholeheartedly agreed that recreational activities, particularly football, were an excellent way to help the children find their way back to a normal childhood. Often, children from opposing factions were present at the same ICC, which had the potential to cause serious problems. Placing them on a football team together proved to be the best option to avoid any conflict. After some time, the children were much more concerned about their teams' names and the goals they had scored than in what force they had previously fought. According to a CPA representative from Don Bosco, they realised very quickly that football is a unifying force for the kids, and a great way to heal. The busy schedule and sports activities also proved to be a very good way to deal with children with drug addictions. Essentially, the children were not permitted to lounge around, become bored and think about obtaining drugs. There just wasn't enough time. The specific punishment of not being allowed to play football also seemed to work remarkably well – the children simply did not want to miss out on the day's game.

Family Reunification

Individual family tracing began as soon as possible after a child had arrived at the ICC and had been

MANY CHILDREN HAD BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR ATROCITIES COMMITTED IN THEIR COMMUNITIES, AND MANY FAMILIES WERE INITIALLY VERY HESITANT TO WELCOME THEM BACK

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Former child soldiers play cards at an interim care centre. Demobilisation entailed the childrens' temporary stays at such centres.

interviewed. In some cases, the children did not initially provide truthful information about themselves and their families. Many children had heard unfounded rumours about what could possibly happen to them if they gave their real names, and therefore gave only their fighting names, or completely fabricated names. In such circumstances, patience proved to be the best policy. As children began to be reunited with their families, those who had lied slowly began to realise that the process was genuine, and they eventually approached their caregivers with their correct personal information.

The process of reuniting a child combatant with his family and community was not always easy. Many children had been responsible for atrocities committed in their communities, and many families were initially very hesitant to welcome them back. For this reason, the CPAs helped to establish a Child Welfare Committee (CWC) in each community. These committees were composed of community leaders – including elders, teachers and pastors or imams – as well as the child's parents. The activities of the CWCs were essential to bring about a peaceful settlement between the community and the child. Many communities simply needed to be informed of what the child had been through, and they were then willing to welcome them home.

The reunification of "officially" demobilised children with their families proved to be a large success in Liberia. The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers quotes a 90% success rate in family reunification.[6] The high success rate was, in large part, due to the involvement of the CWCs, and the continuous dialogues and mediations organised by the CPAs in their counties. In a very small number of cases, the families could not be convinced to accept their children back into the community and other alternatives had to be found, such as foster care for the younger children and "independent living" for the older children, which entailed a CPA paying for a place for the child to live and providing material support.

Education and Skills Training Programmes

Once the demobilised child combatants had been successfully reintegrated into their families or communities, they were given the option of either going to school or taking part in a skills training programme. Younger

children were encouraged to get a formal education, while older children were encouraged to learn a trade that they could market in the future.

The children who chose to go back to school were enabled to do so through the Community Education Investment Programme (CEIP). This programme allowed demobilised children to attend school without paying school fees. In exchange, UNICEF and the CPAs provided learning and educational materials to the schools and communities for the benefit of all children, not just for those associated with the fighting forces. This helped to decrease the stigmatisation associated with being a child soldier dramatically, because all children in the community benefitted from the materials. The CEIP programme also provided psychosocial counselling to the demobilised children throughout the three-year programme, as well as "child protection training" (how to work with children who had been soldiers) for all members of the community who had contact with them. Furthermore, the CPA supplied the community with recreational materials such as sports or music equipment, and organised various activities together with the CWCs to bring the people of the community together, and to encourage the social integration of the demobilised children.

Many demobilised children were either not interested in going back to school for basic education or felt that a skills training programme would better provide them with the opportunity to make money and support themselves and their families. A variety of skills training courses were offered: carpentry, masonry, agriculture, animal husbandry, auto mechanics, electrician training, tailoring, cosmetology, soap-making, tie and dye, and "pastry" (baking). The children were generally allowed to decide which programme they would like to take part in, but vocational counselling was provided to help them decide what would be best for them in their community.

The set-up of the skills training programmes varied slightly between the various CPAs. Some agencies offered in-centre training with their own trainers and found internships for the children after their training was complete, while others contracted local master artisans to train the children. In exchange for the training, the artisan would often be provided with new equipment and/or a stipend, depending on his or her needs. This cooperation with the artisans enabled the children not only to get the valid training that they sought, but also allowed them to experience the daily running of a business first-hand.

When the children had finished with their skills training programme, which normally lasted for a period of nine months, they were each given a toolkit. These toolkits contained everything that was needed to start their own business. For example, a tailoring kit contained a sewing machine, scissors, thread, needles and cloth. These toolkits were considered essential for children to be able to succeed in their business. Problems arose when the distribution of the toolkits was delayed for some reason at the end of the programme. The graduates had been promised the kits and when they didn't arrive on time, this led to some confusion, which at times became violent. Other skills training programmes offered their graduates not only toolkits, but start-up loans when the training was finished. These start-up loans were intended to help the children build a structure to start their own business.

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A child soldier walks to a United Nations disarmament camp in the Liberian city of Buchanan (March 2004).

For older children who wished for the opportunity to access a skills training programme as well as to receive basic education, the possibility was made available to them through an Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP). Supported by UNICEF's education unit, the ALP condensed six years of primary schooling into three years, and was taught either in the afternoons or evenings. This had several advantages for the participants. First, it

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Younger demobilised child combatants were given the opportunity to attend school, while older children had the opportunity to learn a trade and take formal classes.

allowed older children to receive an education at the same time as learning a skill, so that they were not forced to choose between employment and education. Secondly, participants in the ALP were not obliged to share a classroom with younger children, which may have been unpleasant. Instead, the ALP classes were strictly for older children and youth. Many of the CPAs had some form of ALP, which was essential for promoting education for all ex-child combatants, regardless of age.

Monetary Payments

Certainly the biggest problem that arose during the DDR process for child soldiers was the distribution of the transitional safety-net allowance (TSA). This US$300 was given to all ex-combatants – adults and children. Most CPAs were strictly opposed to the children receiving this TSA, and voiced their concern to the United Nations. US$300 is almost $20 000 (Liberian), which is more than an average Liberian's income for two full years. Giving a small child this money was seen as rewarding the child for what he did, which is not acceptable in Liberian culture. Essentially, giving these children such a large amount of money and sending them back into often very poor communities with broken family structures reversed the traditional roles in the family, by making the parents dependent on the child. This created problems within the family, as the parents became involved in receiving this allowance, which was not intended. The money was intended to be used for the benefit of the child, but sometimes the parents had other ideas for the money. Furthermore, the distribution of this TSA created segregation between those children who had fought and those children who did not. Again, it seemed as if the ex-child combatants were being financially rewarded for their actions, which created resentment and led to further stigmatisation of child combatants. In the end, the concerns of the CPAs went unheeded, as the distribution of the TSA

WELL-PLANNED, WELL-IMPLEMENTED AND WELL-INTENDED, THE ENTIRE PROCESS WAS CARRIED OUT, BY AND LARGE, ACCORDING TO INTERNATIONAL PRINCIPLES, AND SHOULD BE A MODEL FOR FUTURE REINTEGRATION PROJECTS

was part of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

Monthly allowances were *not* provided to the children during their skills training, in this case in accordance with the CPAs wishes, but this proved to be a big challenge nonetheless. The main problem with this arrangement was the dissimilarity to the adult reintegration programmes. Ex-combatants 18 years of age or older who participated in a skills training programme received a monthly allowance of US$30. Any combatant under the age of 18 received no monthly allowance. For obvious reasons, this angered many of the older child combatants, who no longer considered themselves "children". Many of these children were treated as adults and expected to act as adults during the war. For them, to be considered children was both insulting and perplexing. Many of them could not understand why they were not receiving a monthly allowance, while their "adult" friends were.

Conclusion

Judging the success of the reintegration process for child soldiers in Liberia by how well the process followed the specific guidelines and principles set forth for reintegration – specifically The Paris Principles[7] and the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards[8] – it can be determined that the process was a qualified success. Well-planned, well-implemented and well-intended, the entire process was carried out, by and large, according to international principles, and should be a model for future reintegration projects. If, for some reason, the principles were not followed, there was either a valid, understandable reason for this deviation, considering the circumstances, or the deviation was considered as regrettable by the actors involved, and generally viewed as something that could have been done better.

The success of a reintegration process for former child soldiers, however, cannot be judged solely upon how well the guidelines were followed. This research was limited to the reintegration process itself. There are several factors that such a limited study could not realistically consider. For instance, the high number of children successfully reunified with their families in Liberia only applies to those children who were demobilised through the "official" DDR process. These children were given a demobilisation card, and their information was collected by the CPAs and UNICEF Liberia. All children who chose not to enter the official DDR process – for whatever reason – never received a demobilisation card, and therefore could not access official reintegration benefits. It is unknown exactly how many ex-child combatants fell into this category although, if 15 000 child combatants were estimated in 2003 and 11 780 went through the official DDR process, this means that many children were left out. Therefore, many questions remain. Where are these children? Why did they not go through the DDR process? Could this have been avoided? Were they successfully reunited with their families without assistance? Were they able to access educational programmes or any other benefits?

Nevertheless, the process of reintegration for officially demobilised child soldiers in Liberia was successful for various reasons, and enables us to have a closer look at how such a complex process should best be implemented. The positive aspects of the process are obvious; for example, the extensive community involvement, the comprehensive psychosocial support, and the option of educational and skills training for all demobilised combatants. The creation and development of the CWCs assisted, if not ensured, the successful reunification and reintegration of the children into the communities, and the community dialogues and mediations by CPAs should be emulated in other regions. Moreover, the specific success of the interim care centres in Liberia certainly deserves further examination as a model for future reintegration programmes. However, there were also weaknesses in the system, of which planners of future DDR programmes must be aware and take into consideration, in order to provide proper attention and care to those children who have served with fighting forces.

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1 This article is based on field research conducted in Liberia in 2008 for the author's Masters thesis at the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy, University of Hamburg, Germany.

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ADDRESSING SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN LIBERIA

WRITTEN BY **NIELS NAGELHUS SCHIA** AND **BENJAMIN DE CARVALHO**

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Introduction

This article addresses the implementation of gender perspectives in post-conflict reconstruction efforts through two cases, namely the broader conceptual implementation of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution 1325 and the construction of physical units for the protection of women and children adjacent to Liberian National Police (LNP) stations throughout Liberia.

In addressing the specific measures undertaken within the framework advanced through implementation of UNSC resolution 1325, this article addresses the extent to which these measures address the root causes of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Rather than advocating the provision of aid for relatively limited and isolated projects, it is suggested that the international community and donors should address SGBV within a wider and more comprehensive framework including *all* rule of law institutions, rather than focusing on short-term issues and rapid impact projects that fit within the relatively narrow priorities of Western governments.

Above: United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 highlights the protection of human rights of women and girls.

Furthermore, it is argued that addressing SGBV effectively cannot be undertaken without understanding how "modern" and traditional systems of justice function and interact.

Based on visits to the Women and Children Protection Section (WACPS), and interviews with non-governmental organisation (NGO) workers, United Nation (UN) officials and Liberian government officials, it is argued that the UN's efforts to address SGBV in Liberia are limited by unrealistic expectations based on Western understandings of the effectiveness of formal and centralised processes and institutions, at the expense of a deeper understanding of the situation and the causes of SGBV. This situation has led the international community to propose an unrealistic framework of normative expectations to be fulfilled. As such, the root causes of SGBV are not investigated, nor the political, cultural and economic characteristics of violence, which are specific to Liberia and need to be addressed in order to improve the security of women and children in the country.[1]

This article is based on fieldwork undertaken in Liberia in December 2007, May 2008 and January-February 2009.

The Implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 in Liberia

Since resolution 1325 was unanimously adopted in 2000, gender issues have become a central concern to peacekeeping operations and have been highlighted on the political, military, development and humanitarian agenda in order to build peace in war-torn societies. The resolution established women's roles as more than merely passive victims and caretakers. The resolution clearly:

- incorporates a gender perspective in training and in peacekeeping operations;
- advocates the full participation of women in decision-making and in conflict resolution and peace processes;
- highlights the protection of human rights of women and girls; and
- promotes gender mainstreaming in the UN reporting systems as well as programmatic implementation mechanisms.

The resolution also points out the necessity of including women as active players in peace processes and in recovery phases.

Today, almost nine years after the resolution was passed, one would assume that the implementation of 1325 was systematically and widely incorporated in UN peacekeeping operations. Liberia – with a female president, a female UN Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG)[2], the first all-female unit of UN peacekeepers deployed by India, and a national action plan on 1325 – may give an impression of a post-conflict country where the content of 1325 is well implemented and has had a successful impact. However, one of the most critical tasks for the Liberian government today is to create a foundation for legitimacy, accountability, sustainability and ending impunity. There are still sporadic riots in the capital city, Monrovia, and throughout the country, which the Liberian government is having difficulties handling on its own, largely due to the weak security sector. The LNP and the justice sector are often inefficient, and the police are still not allowed to carry guns. Additionally, poor infrastructure, a high level of illiteracy, corruption and a generally weak state contribute to the Liberian government's severe problems in achieving control, not only in the regions, but also in Monrovia. Crime is one of Liberia's major problems today, and crime statistics of violence against women are overwhelming. In 2009, rape is the most frequent crime on the LNP's crime statistics, and the frequency of sexual exploitation of women is reported to be high. Women who are raped will often be deserted by their men, and the family – and the cornerstone of society – thus disintegrates. As such, violence and the abuse of women and children continue to be serious problems for the victims, but also comprehensive challenges for the Liberian government and society at large. As such, the content of resolution 1325 is much more developed in the dimension of political representation – for example, through females in key positions – than in the security and welfare dimension.[3]

SINCE RESOLUTION 1325 WAS UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED IN 2000, GENDER ISSUES HAVE BECOME A CENTRAL CONCERN TO PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS AND HAVE BEEN HIGHLIGHTED ON THE POLITICAL, MILITARY, DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN AGENDA IN ORDER TO BUILD PEACE IN WAR-TORN SOCIETIES

The Successful Implementation of WACPS

In spite of the efforts made by international actors to have the LNP's WACPS working to provide women and children with a special recourse to justice institutions, a

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Crime is one of Liberia's major problems today, and crime statistics of violence against women are overwhelming.

number of challenges remain unaddressed. Many of these challenges are also a product of how these sections were established and funded, the lack of a coherent and comprehensive understanding of the functioning of justice institutions in Liberia, the challenges that reforming or building these institutions represent, and how these new institutions are to interact with traditional institutions and practices.

In September 2005, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) proudly announced that 25 officers of the LNP had completed their certification in "women and children protection" and were to staff the newly established WACPS of the LNP. This had been established by UNICEF in collaboration with the LNP and the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) Civilian Police (CIVPOL). These police officers had been given training to "improve their skills and techniques in managing and handling sexual violence cases".[4]

Three years later, there is a WACPS of the LNP in every county capital in Liberia (15 in total). Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (DSRSG) Henrietta Mensa-Bonsu has touted the success of the WACPS, and stated that "more and more women and children are coming out to report crimes".[5]

Throughout the entire country, new LNP county headquarters have been constructed or renovated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with funding from the Norwegian government. A representative of the Norwegian government stated that the construction of WACPS is "a dream come true".[6] UNMIL can now proudly confirm that "WACPS are now active in 21 locations throughout Liberia", thanks to a contribution of US$1.6 million from the Norwegian government (the biggest WACPS, adjacent to the LNP national headquarters in Monrovia, is yet to be constructed).[7] UN Police Commissioner Henrik Stiernblad proudly stated that "women and children need not be subjected to further victimisation".[8] Finally, the SRSG, Ellen Margrethe Løj, praised the Norwegian effort for understanding that "the recovery and development of Liberia's rule of law institutions requires an additional bolster to both human and financial resources".[9]

In spite of these efforts, however, UNMIL has been forced to recognise the fact that "sexual violence against

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In some police stations, the WACPS simply consists of a small space dedicated to women and child protection.

women and children remains a central reality of life in Liberia"[10]:

> […] reported rate of rape cases remains the same during the year – on average 54 reported cases per month countrywide. Only during this year Women and Children Protection Section of UNICEF handled 2 352 cases of which 707 were Gender Based Violence (GBV) including sexual violence. Out of the 707 cases, 272 were sent to court, 235 pending and 200 cases withdrawn. 124 survivors of sexual violence 0-35 years of age (3 boys, 116 girls and 5 women) accessed psychosocial care, protection and medical services at the two Safe Homes. 98 were reintegrated into their families and communities, 26 are currently receiving services at the Safe Home, established by UNICEF for sexually violated girls.[11]

The figures referred to here are limited to reported cases.

Challenges and Problems of the WACPS

During fieldwork in 2008 and 2009, four WACPS in four different counties in Liberia were visited. While it is clear that the WACPS may be a step in the right direction, there are challenges that remain, including the establishment of such a specialised unit that does not take other rule of law institutions into account and may, in turn, lead to new problems.

The problems surrounding the WACPS are in many ways symptomatic of the way in which post-conflict reconstruction is managed by international donors and the UN in general – namely that there is lack of coherence, no comprehensive and deep understanding of how the issues relate to each other, and an undue channelling of resources into projects that fit with the donors' perspective rather than the needs of the community. SGBV and the protection of women and children is no doubt an important task; it also fits within the Scandinavian priorities, and therefore is an attractive way to spend aid money.

Not all police county headquarters have separate buildings for the WACPS. In some police stations, the WACPS simply consists of one room dedicated to women and child protection (such as the ones in Robertsport and Voinjama), in which the officers dedicated to this work supposedly have their required working space. This is, however, not necessarily the case. These rooms

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Victims of sexual and gender-based violence in Liberia do not always get their cases investigated.

are, in practice, used for different purposes including, in some instances, providing accommodation for police officers undertaking training programmes.

Other WACPS are more impressive. In Tubmanburg, for instance, the WACPS is more imposing and modern than the main police station, and employs about half of the police officers in the city. Police in Bomi County were also reported to have one vehicle and two motorcycles at their disposal, but, here too, rooms in the WACPS were used for accommodating police officers.

The Need for a Coherent and Comprehensive Approach to SGBV

The WACPS were established with the intention of addressing the pressing concerns the international community had with SGBV in Liberia. That women and children now have a dedicated section within the LNP that deals with SGBV will, no doubt, ensure that these issues are addressed by the police. The question that nevertheless remains is what happens once a crime is reported to WACPS. For instance, one of the issues that the establishment of WACPS was meant to address is the relatively high degree of impunity for SGBV crimes. But, as a legal specialist interviewed in Monrovia stated, "The problem in Liberia is not that victims of rape don't get justice, but that *nobody* gets justice here!"[12]

In a country where judges in many cases do not have knowledge of the penal code, and where the police only rarely possess investigative tools and skills, it is doubtful whether the establishment of the WACPS alone will lead to a higher rate of conviction. Furthermore, the problems may be exacerbated by the fact that victims who do report crimes lose faith in the institutions of justice, as reported criminals seldom face convictions.

The problem is that specific donor programmes wish to address specific issues that may be in line with

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Liberian police lack basic resources, such as vehicles and fuel, and are unable to efficiently and fully carry out their jobs.

priorities in the donor country rather than with a specific coherent and comprehensive approach to judicial reform. Furthermore, while rule of law institutions are, to some degree, present in Monrovia, they are often not available outside the capital city. As one NGO worker involved in SGBV work explained, "No place outside of Monrovia has all the pieces of rule of law".[13]

Challenges with Reporting SGBV Crimes to the Police

As the WACPS are based mainly in county capitals, reporting crimes that have taken place in other places is an enormous challenge for victims of SGBV. The police have little presence in rural areas, and transportation is scarce. In rural areas, reporting a crime thus requires the victim to make the journey to the nearest WACPS in order to report it. This can be both practically and economically challenging. Furthermore, as the police themselves lack the most basic resources, they are unable to provide victims with much help to return to their homes. Many counties have only a limited number of vehicles; some counties have only a single police car or motorcycle, and even less means available to pay for fuel. Victims reporting to the police are thus often left in the difficult position of having reported a crime and identified the perpetrator (who, more often than not, is known to the victim), without the police having the means to investigate or even follow up on the crime.

Faced with a dire lack of infrastructure and resources, the LNP also questions why such cases should be prioritised. "Why should one, for instance, use the only police vehicle available in the county and the little fuel available to the police to drive, often up to hundred kilometres, and investigate a crime which took place days before, when the perpetrator has most certainly fled the premises?" a police officer questioned.[14]

While the building and establishment of the WACPS is a step in the right direction, the fact that the sections

are not part of a larger and more comprehensive effort to (re)build the institutions of the rule of law may, in the long run, undermine the efforts to combat SGBV. As one NGO worker stated in Monrovia, "What's in it for the victims? Why should they report a rape when they know the perpetrator, and nothing ever really happens?"[15]

Lack of Police Capacity and Resources

Once a crime has been reported, the police need to investigate. However, as the police have little mobility, in large part due to lack of vehicles and fuel, victims often have to pay for the police to come and investigate. Depending on where the crime took place, this can be quite an investment on the part of the victims of SGBV. Furthermore, as the police lack both investigative resources and manpower, perpetrators are most often not caught, as escaping the scene of the crime in the presence of the police is all that is required to avoid arrest. The police have no means to follow up on crimes committed and, most often, crimes end up in the "Kept in View" (KIV) category.

The logistics provided to the LNP for the WACPS include computers and electric generators. However, computer literacy is often limited, and the generators require fuel, which is also used for driving. The dire lack of resources to go out and actually investigate crimes seems to be a much more pressing problem than providing advanced computer equipment. The resources provided for the WACPS have not taken into account the working methods of the local police, and their needs.

"Modern" and Traditional Justice Institutions

Finally – and this is perhaps where the international community has done the least – the efforts to address SGBV and the impunity of perpetrators, as well as the general (re)building of the institutions of the rule of law, must be seen in the context of which functions the new institutions are to fulfil, and which ones are already fulfilled by the traditional system. Rather than seeking to supplant the traditional system, one needs to understand how these systems can supplement each other. In this respect, it is important to understand how the different institutions interact in practice today. Victims of SGBV do not always get their cases investigated. As a police officer indicated, once a victim has reported a crime, the police "investigate, but sometimes compromise".[16] Recourse to the WACPS, in other words, is no guarantee that the case will be investigated or passed through the court system. And while it is beyond the scope of this article to address the desirability of this, one thing is nevertheless clear: as long as the international community has absolutely no understanding of how the traditional system works, there is little chance that effective measures to counter SGBV in rural areas will succeed.

Illustrative of the international community's complete lack of understanding of the Liberian traditional institutions is the fact that most people interviewed had little understanding of the Liberian penal code. As a case in point, most UN personnel and NGO workers saw it as a great success that rape had been introduced in the penal code as a crime, in 2005, as the result of pressure from the international community. The Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) News, which is part of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, states in the Liberia country profile that "Liberian law prohibits domestic violence; however, violence against women has become widespread. Several NGOs have programmes to help abused women and girls, and to increase awareness of their rights. […] In December 2005, parliament passed legislation to make rape illegal."[17] Such a view is incorrect. The new rape law did not constitute rape as a crime, as rape was already on the statutes. It did *modify* and add to these laws with, for instance, making new provision for rape within a marriage, and against engaging with minors between the ages of 16 and 18. However, the similar view advanced by most representatives of the international community encountered during the three fieldwork trips to Liberia indicates the extent to which the UN system and others in the international community lack the full knowledge to address SGBV in a comprehensive manner.

CRIME IS ONE OF LIBERIA'S MAJOR PROBLEMS TODAY, AND CRIME STATISTICS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ARE OVERWHELMING

Conclusion

The international response to SGBV in Liberia – in spite of having been touted as one of the great success stories in implementing UNSC resolution 1325 by the UN and the Liberian government – has, so far, at best been misguided. The issue of SGBV tends to be fragmented, and the response to it addresses specific issues that often fit the narrow agendas of international donors rather than taking into account the needs of the rule of law institutions as a whole. While these quick-impact projects

may be necessary, they tend to require too much focus, and hinder a holistic approach to reforming the rule of law institutions. As long as no-one in Liberia gets justice, women and children will not get it either – regardless of how many police stations and courthouses are built.

Reducing SGBV to a legal problem or an issue of the rule of law only is not the intent here. A working justice system is necessary to address SGBV, but may not be sufficient. However, in addressing the root causes of SGBV, the UN also stumbles. Why so many men rape women and children – sometimes younger than a year old – in Liberia is a serious and difficult question to answer. UNMIL is trying to tackle it now, but should have dealt with it years ago. Instead, the bureaucratic machinery becomes entangled in small manageable projects that show quick progress and superficial results, which imply that the issues are being dealt with when, in fact, they often are not. The international response to SGBV in Liberia focuses too much on symptoms, and too little on causes.

Instead of addressing the dual system of customary and statutory law, and determining how they can complement each other, international actors often act out of an understanding of Liberia as a "terra nullius" – a place where nothing of what existed prior to the UN's intervention can be used.[18] Paradoxically, in certain cases – such as the training and competency of judges and magistrates in the statutory system – little has been done to address this issue through the training of new personnel.

Finally, addressing SGBV in Liberia requires a comprehensive response, which takes into account all the institutions of the rule of law as well as addressing the underlying causes behind it, rather than reactively treating the symptoms only.

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WOMEN IN PEACE PROCESSES: LESSONS FROM THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO AND UGANDA[1]

WRITTEN BY **SURENDRINI WIJEYARATNE**

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Introduction

In 2000, the United Nations (UN) Security Council adopted resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.[2] The resolution was the first of its kind in the Security Council explicitly to call on member states to include women's rights, gender equality and women's participation in peace and security initiatives, including in developing and implementing peace agreements. Nearing the 10-year anniversary of 1325, the resolution has proven to be a valuable tool in advocating for, and getting women to, the negotiating table. Yet, most peace processes are designed around the principal belligerent political and military leaders, who are predominantly men. When women do manage to get to the negotiating table, they are often confronted with the challenges of being included on equal standing with male counterparts, and of including substantive women's rights and gender equality provisions into agreements.

Recent peace processes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Uganda illustrate the

Above: Women from civil society and churches played a bridging role between the government and rebel group participants.

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United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 calls on member states to include women's rights, gender equality and women's participation in peace and security initiatives.

advances made in getting women to the negotiating table, and offer practical lessons in enabling women to be as effective as possible in negotiating peace. The Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD) and Goma Peace Process in the DRC demonstrated the role that women played in the negotiations, as well as the challenges experienced in sustaining the mobilisation for peace and women's rights. The Juba Peace Process, between the Government of Uganda (GoU) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), similarly offers a number of lessons, in supporting women participating directly in peace talks and as civil society advocates. This article analyses women's participation in the ICD, the Goma Peace Conference and the Juba Peace Process, and offers lessons for donors to further more effective support for women's participation in peace processes.

Women's Participation in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue

The parameters for the ICD in the DRC were outlined in the 1999 Lusaka Peace Accords. The Accords called for inter-Congolese political negotiations to bring together all Congolese fighting and political factions to agree, inter alia, on institutional reform, elections, a draft constitution and reform of the Congolese army. Notably, the specific articles in the Accords that refer to the inter-Congolese dialogue do not mention women's participation or reflect any consideration for gender equality.[3]

After the signing of the Lusaka Peace Accords, advocacy from African and international actors led to the inclusion of women in the various negotiating team delegations to the ICD. In addition, representatives from churches and civil society organisations were elected in the provinces and included in the dialogue.[4] Women participated in the peace talks as representatives of the parties to conflict, political parties, civil society and the churches.

Women as Partners for Peace in Africa-DRC (WOPPA-DRC), Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), the Nairobi Peace Initiative (NPI) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), joined forces to hold a four-day negotiation training workshop in Nairobi, Kenya. The workshop was intended for women as pre-negotiation preparation for participating in the ICD. The training was successful in bringing together women from different parts of the country, government and rebel groups, civil society and the

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The absence of women from peace talks and negotiations is a major impediment to advancing gender equality and women's rights issues in the final negotiated agreements.

diaspora. Initially, women stuck to representing their "group" or party position. Over the four days, positions softened, with women abandoning party alliances and working together for a common agenda. Women from civil society and the churches played a bridging role between the government and rebel group participants.

The ICD is noteworthy in getting women to the table in an active capacity, as opposed to only being observers. Despite the accomplishment, it is important to realise that the total number of women delegates was significantly lower than the minimum standard of 30% women's political participation commonly called for by the UN. Of the total delegates at the ICD, only 9% were women.[5] Civil society women made up close to 25% of the civil society delegations, with the women representatives of political and armed forces being significantly fewer in number. If civil society was not included at the ICD, then the percentage of women would have been far lower than 9%.[6]

In addition to the delegates, an expert group of women subject matter specialists accompanied the official negotiations. Female experts were selected for their knowledge on key issues such as security sector reform (SSR); demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR); and constitutional law. The expert group worked parallel to the formal negotiations, developing strategies and proposals to inform the official delegates (both male and female). The women delegates, in particular, relied on the expert group to provide a deeper gender analysis on specific items being negotiated, which may have been outside of the delegates' individual experience and knowledge base.

The female delegates and the experts combined to form a "Women's Caucus". The caucus was conceived as a temporary and informal mechanism to ensure that gender equality issues were addressed at the ICD. The informal status of the caucus allowed for discussions, debates and deliberations to take place between women of opposing groups. The presence of the caucus also helped to create space outside the formal negotiations, in which women delegates from different parties to the conflict could meet.

Unfortunately, the Women's Caucus also created suspicion among male delegates, as to why women from "their party" were meeting with women from opposition groups. This suspicion, coupled with

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Women are sometimes included in peace processes after substantial advocacy from women's groups.

the tough negotiating environment, took its toll on women's solidarity. The fact that women were not allocated a block of seats to form their own negotiation block at the ICD created pressure on women delegates to maintain and promote their party line, even if it contradicted or neglected women's rights issues.

In terms of donor support for women's participation, it is unclear if there was any deliberate continuity of efforts between the Nairobi training workshop[7] and the ICD in terms of designing processes to enable continued confidence building. The lack of sustained support, financially and technically, made the caucus vulnerable to the politically charged and deeply suspicious negotiating environment. In spite of the substantial advocacy and joint pressure women exerted at the ICD, the Women's Caucus and sense of women's solidarity was deeply weakened by the end of the ICD.

Women's Participation at the Goma Peace Conference

The Goma Peace Conference, held between 6 and 17 January 2008, brought together various Congolese armed groups operating in North Kivu and South Kivu provinces in the eastern DRC, government representatives and members of churches and civil society to form an agenda for peace, security and development in the two conflict-ridden provinces.The conference included women's participation; however, compared to the scale of violence against women in North and South Kivu, issues of violence against women, sexual violence, women's rights and gender equality were not sufficiently addressed. The breakdown in women's solidarity after the ICD may have contributed to the lack of mobilisation of women's groups for the Goma Conference. Given the levels of violence against women – and, in particular, sexual violence in eastern Congo – the need for women's solidarity and advocacy was urgently needed. Although there were some women delegates at Goma, an organised women's "peace lobby" was missing.

RESOLUTION 1325 ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY WAS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND, IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL, EXPLICITLY TO CALL ON MEMBER STATES TO INCLUDE WOMEN'S RIGHTS, GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PEACE AND SECURITY INITIATIVES, INCLUDING IN DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING PEACE AGREEMENTS

The lack of a women's movement at the Goma Conference was cited as a major impediment to advancing gender equality and women's rights issues in the main negotiated agreement, the Act of Engagement[8] and in the Amani Program[9]. Some women leaders from the east were unable to attend the conference for security reasons, or were too overwhelmed in responding to the ongoing violence and daily work to participate.

A significant lesson for donors and external supporters to peace talks from the ICD and the Goma Peace Conference is that sustained support is required for women's groups and women that participated in dialogue processes, over the medium to long term,

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UN Special Envoy and former president of Mozambique, Joaquim Chissano, led the Juba peace process.

after the conclusion of initial negotiations. For example, citing the Goma conference, it is unclear if the women that participated at the ICD from the east were contacted to participate in the conference. Further, it was unclear whether UNIFEM, FAS or WOPPA maintained contact with the women delegates and experts after the ICD for follow-up for the implementation phase of the agreements.

Women's Participation at the Juba Peace Process

The Juba Peace Process began in 2006 when the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) agreed to mediate peace talks between the LRA of Uganda and the GoU. In November 2007, a gender advisor for the peace talks was appointed to UN Special Envoy and former president of Mozambique, Joaquim Chissano, who led the peace process. The push for a gender advisor came from the UN Security Council, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

The advisor was initially met with resistance, with some members of the international facilitation team not seeing the relevance of gender issues in peace talks. However, the resistance faded and Chissano subsequently raised gender issues in meetings with the mediator and the parties to the conflict. Having a gender resource person for Chissano proved critical to including women's rights issues in the talks.

The first items negotiated in the Juba talks – namely the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CHA) – were not gender sensitive. "Hostilities" in the CHA was narrowly defined, and did not address acts of sexual and gender-based violence such as sexual slavery and rape committed during the conflict. Additionally, all of the peace agreement guarantors responsible for monitoring the implementation of the CHA were men.

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Ugandan State Minister for Defence, Ruth Nankabirwa, addresses a press conference regarding the state of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) peace talks with the Government of Uganda in Juba (August 2006).

As such, even if violations against women were included in the CHA, women may have been unlikely to report sexual violations to male guarantors.

The Juba peace talks were more closed negotiations than the ICD. There were two principal parties to the conflict, each with a delegation of about 12 people. The LRA delegation had two women representatives, and the GoU had one women representative. A number of observers from women's groups, churches, communities and civil society organisations were present at the negotiations, but were not allowed to intervene during the talks. In terms of lessons, the seniority of women on the delegations is key to their effectiveness and influence. Women on the LRA delegation appeared to have had more influence on their delegation than the woman in the government delegation, who did not have the same level of seniority or influence as some of the men on the team.

The Initiative for Gender Justice and UNIFEM supported two women's coalitions to participate in the Juba peace talks as observers. These coalitions worked to draft gender-sensitive protocols on items under negotiation and gave them to delegates, the mediator and the facilitator. However, tensions between the two coalitions arose, with the Ugandan Women's Peace Coalition perceived by some women from the north as being dominated by elite women from the south, who were not directly affected by the conflict. Differences in capacities and experience between women living in the south – who had more access to education and jobs compared with women living in the internally displaced camps in the north – also contributed to perpetuating negative stereotypes of "Acholi women", "northern women" and "southern women".

Empowering women from diverse communities and with different experiences may require working with them separately if their skills, capacities and experience are substantially different. However, such engagements require a strategic approach on the part of external supporters to ensure that support for the groups does not unintentionally reinforce conflict divides, perpetuate negative stereotypes or increase competition between groups.

Lessons and Good Practice for Donors

For donors seeking to support women's participation in peace talks, the experiences from the DRC and Uganda provide important lessons. The ICD and Juba talks can both be described as successes in women's participation, because women participated actively – although in much more limited numbers than men – in the actual peace talks. However, both processes also demonstrate that getting to the negotiating table is

GENDER ADVISORS ON MEDIATION AND FACILITATION TEAMS PROVIDE INVALUABLE LEGAL AND OTHER GENDER ADVICE TO MEDIATORS, FACILITATORS AND PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT

not enough. Having influence to make change is the ultimate goal. To this end, seven areas emerge from the examples of the DRC and Uganda which, if strengthened, can help to enable the more effective participation of women in peace processes.

1. Numbers Matter

One woman – or even a few women – on negotiating teams is not enough to ensure that gender issues are examined in peace agreements. This is seemingly obvious, yet the experiences from Uganda and the DRC demonstrate that, too often, women are not initially included in the negotiating teams of parties to conflict. When they are included – often after substantial advocacy from women's groups – only one or two women are appointed to the delegations. Female delegates repeatedly pointed out that one or two women are not enough to have influence, and that the minimum standard of 30% participation should be supported. Civil society representation was critical in both the ICD and Juba peace talks for increasing the numbers of women participating directly in talks, as observers and experts. The ICD example clearly shows that the number of women on the negotiating teams of rebel groups and political parties were very limited, often to only one or two individuals. The Juba talks were similar, in that only one woman was on the government delegation and two women on the LRA delegation. The inclusion of civil society and church representation at the Juba talks helped to create space for greater numbers of women to participate in the peace process.

2. Seniority

Women in political negotiations must be at a sufficiently senior level on par with male counterparts to have influence. Equally, female delegates need to be experienced in negotiations and in political dialogue, to be equipped to raise gender issues during negotiations.

3. Gender Advisors

The gender advisor to the UN Special Envoy at the Juba peace talks is a noted good practice. Gender advisors on mediation and facilitation teams provide invaluable legal and other gender advice to mediators, facilitators and parties to the conflict. In the absence of such a focal point, it is difficult for civil society organisations – especially grassroots women's groups – to know when and how to contribute to the negotiation process.

4. Content Experts

Female delegates mentioned that, during negotiations, they did not have enough experience across sectors to be able to unpack gender analyses on all issues. As such, subject matter experts with specialised knowledge on, for example, DDR, SSR, human rights and so on, can help to bring gender analysis on specific issues under deliberation. The Women's Caucus format from the ICD was one such example, where civil society experts at the negotiations assisted delegates in deepening gender analyses and women's rights content.

5. The Limits of Women's Solidarity

The ICD was a strong example of women working across conflict lines to develop a common agenda for negotiations. However, such gains were limited when women entered the mainstream talks. Pressure on women to represent party or group positions sometimes conflicted with women advocating for a common agenda on peace and women's rights. Bridges built during "women's only" pre-negotiations or capacity-building workshops were precarious when women entered the tough political environment. In the case of the Juba peace talks, the vastly different experiences of women in southern Uganda – who had more access to jobs and education than women living in the displaced camps in the north – created challenges for women to work together. Tensions between different women's groups led to two women's coalitions participating in the talks as observers. Strategies and approaches for supporting women's participation in peace processes need to cater to the specific context, an assessment of the capacities of women, and conflict dynamics influencing the extent to which women may be able to work together.

THE ICD IS NOTEWORTHY IN GETTING WOMEN TO THE TABLE IN AN ACTIVE CAPACITY, AS OPPOSED TO ONLY BEING OBSERVERS. DESPITE THE ACCOMPLISHMENT, IT IS IMPORTANT TO REALISE THAT THE TOTAL NUMBER OF WOMEN DELEGATES WAS SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER THAN THE MINIMUM STANDARD OF 30% WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION COMMONLY CALLED FOR BY THE UN.

6. Negotiating with Men

In both the DRC and Uganda, women reported that they found it difficult to negotiate in front of, and with, men. This difficulty applied to both men on their negotiating teams and men from the other parties to the conflict. The women were trained and empowered more among other women than with men, and therefore found it challenging to translate both the skills and gender issues agreed on for negotiations, into the peace talks with men. While skills development and the empowerment of women are clearly needed and beneficial, external supporters to peace talks also need to consider whether the women are being empowered to face the reality of the negotiating environment in which they will be working.

7. Gender Budgets for Peace Talks

Women's participation and effectiveness in peace processes is fundamentally influenced by the extent to which specific funds are provided to support women's capacity-building and sustained participation in dialogue initiatives. Funding for women's participation was a noted challenge at the ICD, the Goma Peace Conference and the Juba peace talks. Budgets developed to fund peace talks and other dialogue efforts specifically and amply need to fund gender advisors, women delegates to talks, capacity-strengthening initiatives, and the participation of civil society and expert women in dialogue processes.

Conclusion

A good deal has been accomplished since 2000 in including women in peace processes. Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security has proven to be an instrumental tool in pressuring governments, parties to conflict, mediators and facilitators, and donors to fund and include women in peace talks. The examples of the ICD and Juba peace talks demonstrate the positive impact of women's rights organisations and peace activists in calling for women's participation in peace processes.

However, simply getting women to the negotiating table is not enough. As the examples from the DRC and Uganda demonstrated, women are too often confronted with hurdles in fully advancing peace and women's rights. Donors and external actors, by being more responsive and strategic in their support to women, can help to develop the conditions for more effective women's participation in peace processes.

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Endnotes

1 This article is based on research undertaken in July-August 2008 in the DRC, Uganda and southern Sudan. Full research reports are available on the Canadian Council for International Co-operation website, Available at: <www.ccic.ca/e/002/humanitarian_peace.shtml>, Accessed on: 27 July 2009; Wijeyaratne, Surendrini (2008) *Is Canada Turning its Back on the Democratic Republic of Congo?*. Canadian Council for International Co-operation; Wijeyaratne, Surendrini (2008) *Peace and Justice in Northern Uganda*. Canadian Council for International Co-operation.

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6 Ibid.

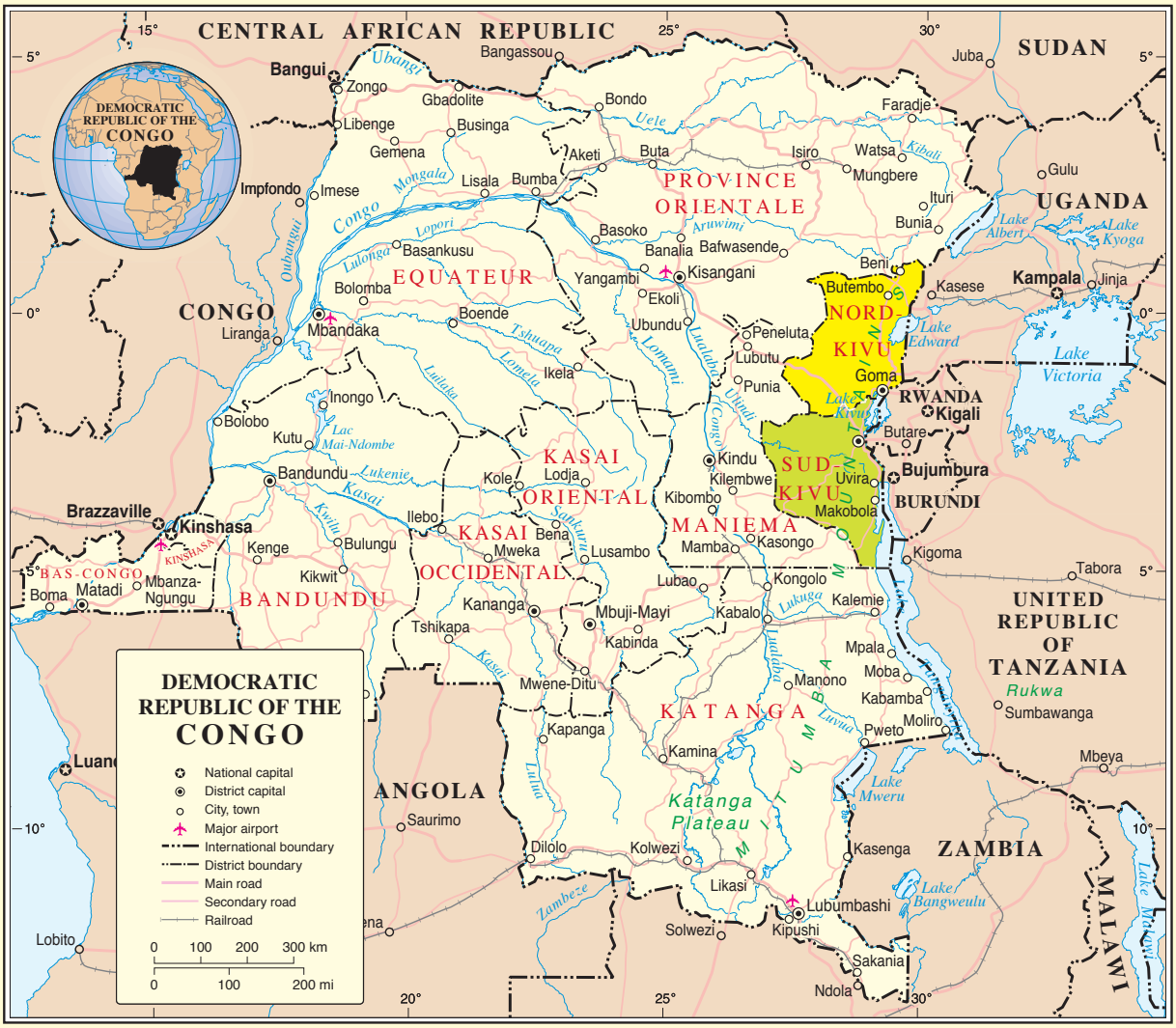
7 The Nairobi workshop, held between 15 and 19 February 2002, was a negotiation capacity-building workshop for Congolese women from various political factions, armed groups, churches and civil society organisations. The workshop was organised by Women as Partners for Peace in Africa-DRC (WOPPA-DRC), Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), the Nairobi Peace Initiative (NPI), and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

8 The Act of Engagement was signed on 23 January 2008 by the Government of the DRC and 22 armed factions operating in North and South Kivu provinces in the east of the country.

9 The Amani Program was established after the Goma Conference to implement agreements in the Act of Engagement.

THE SECURITY DILEMMA IN NORTH KIVU, THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

WRITTEN BY **DOMINIC BURBIDGE**



Introduction

> "[When the shooting began] the Mayi-Mayi [Mai Mai] left their post, retreating through the village and disappeared... People fled in all directions after the Mayi-Mayi left; the Mayi-Mayi were yelling at us to leave. The [Congolese Rally for Democracy] RCD thought the Mayi-Mayi were among the civilians so they opened fire on the crowd."[1]

After gaining independence in 1960, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) was paralysed by a 37-year dictatorship until the state eventually collapsed. The transition from being a failing state to a collapsed state came through the final blow of what has now been described as "Africa's first world war", which began in 1998. In Eastern DRC, intractable conflict has endured, despite elections in 2006.

This article explores the relevance of the "security dilemma" model for understanding ethnic group and conflict party interaction in the North Kivu conflict in the decade between 1998 and 2008. These dates help separate the analysis of the conflict's internal dynamics

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In a security dilemma, violence is encouraged through groups arming themselves competitively.

from changes incurred by international intervention. The year 1998 saw the end of the second incursion into the DRC by Rwanda, and 2009 began with heavy intervention into North Kivu by Rwandan forces cooperating with the DRC government against the Hutu rebels, The Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). Indeed, the start of 2009 saw the capture of the National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP) leader, Laurent Nkunda, by the Rwandan army, paving the way for more international response to the militant groups operating in North Kivu.

The Political Theory Behind Ethnic Security Dilemmas

A security dilemma can be defined as a situation where efforts to increase one's own safety threatens the safety of others. In a security dilemma, violence is encouraged through groups arming themselves competitively. A necessary condition for a security dilemma is that there is no common power able to resolve conflicts or settle disputes of interest peacefully. Without a common power, efforts to increase one's security unnerves those with less adequate protection. Snyder and Jervis define security dilemmas generically as "a situation in which each party's efforts to increase its own security reduces the security of the others. This situation occurs when geographical, technological, or other strategic conditions render aggression the most advantageous form of self-defense".[2]

In a security dilemma, large numbers of people make decisions about their own security, "contingent on their expectations about the decisions of others".[3] This is a point maintained in Schelling's *Micromotives and Macrobehavior*, which argues that "[i]f each of us believes that the other will attack without warning at the first opportunity, each of us may feel it necessary in self-defense to attack without warning at the first opportunity."[4] Security concerns spiral, making the search for safety an important cause for a conflict's continuation.

A security dilemma exhibits not an *instance* of conflict but a *flow*, with the decision-making process reflecting Schelling's "tipping" model. Originally used to explain the way in which migration can change the nature of a neighbourhood, the tipping model shows how the choices of the majority follow suit to the determined decisions of a minority. Some individuals may take their decisions independently, whilst others (the majority) take

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The Mai Mai, a loose coalition of traditional and local militia, was formed as a response to the inadequacy of local institutional security.

them contingent to the environment. Describing such group interaction through identity engineering on social and economic levels allows for a complementary mix between material explanations (groups acting in pursuit of resource wealth) and security explanations (groups acting in self-defence).

In linking security concerns to the role of the state, it can be further argued that "it is the collapse of old orders, notably the State, that brings about the retreat to ethnic nationalism as the residual, viable identity."[5] The state exercised no sovereignty over North Kivu between 1998 and 2008 – a vacuum ensured the anarchical condition. State failure provides the limiting case for understanding how individuals respond to violence when they cannot turn to a neutral authority for safety and security. In an anarchical environment freed from institutional restraint, individuals "often seek safety, profit, or both".[6] Attempts by the DRC government to regain control of the anarchical environment through military intervention, rendered the state's military arm simply another competitive actor.

The main alternative explanation to a security dilemma for the continuation of group conflict is greed, termed here as violent predation. It has three important differences to the security dilemma as a cause for a group's aggressive behaviour:

1. motivation for aggression comes from within the group;
2. the group displays preferences that are incompatible (and, thus, not in competition) with its rival; and
3. the group is confident in its own security.

The Case of North Kivu

> "People are living through an extraordinary drama here in Eastern Congo – from Peto down near the Zambian border right up to Am, on the Sudan/Uganda border – it's a black hole where no-one is safe and where no outsider goes... Every night there is another village attacked, burned and emptied. It could be the Mayi-Mayi – a traditional local militia – or the Interahamwe, or the regular army, or deserters from any group, no-one knows..."[7]

With a population of four million, North Kivu is home to people from the DRC itself, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda – making it the place of residence for five main communities: the Nande, Banyarwanda, Hunde, Nyanga

and Tembo. The Nande people make up roughly half the population of North Kivu, whilst around 30% of the North Kivu population is Hutu and 20% Hunde, Nyanga and Tutsi. The Tutsi, Kumu, Tembo and Mbuti (pygmy) communities constitute small minorities.[8] Tensions between these ethnic groups have grown as a result of forced waves of migrations from Rwanda, competition for land and citizenship, and – most recently – the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

Following the Rwandan genocide, both Tutsi and Hutu refugees entered the Kivus armed and fearful for their lives. Violence and divisions grew from this newfound hotbed of conflict. Continuing to operate from the DRC, the Hutu para-military group (Interahamwe) persisted in carrying out attacks into Rwanda. Reprisals by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF)-led government consisted of two invasions into the DRC, in 1996 and 1998. Though these interventions aimed to remove the threat of the Hutu rebels, the first gave active support for the removal of the Mobutu dictatorship by Laurent Kabila and Congolese Tutsis. After the removal of Mobutu in 1997, Laurent Kabila broke his ties with Rwanda and Uganda. A full-scale war between these countries, with other African nations taking sides, ensued (constituting the second of Rwanda's formal incursions into the Kivus).

Three main non-governmental militant groups operated in North Kivu during the years 1998 to 2008: the FDLR (Hutu rebels), the CNDP (Tutsi rebels) and the Mai Mai (local militia). The "Congolese Tutsi" identity merges older Tutsi immigrants with the recent Tutsi refugee influx from the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Laurent Nkunda led a rebel militant group, the CNDP, aiming to protect Congolese Tutsis. The rebellion started in opposition to the brassage process of military integration. As Nkunda claimed, "Most people of Rwandan origin who go to brassage choose demobilization rather than face death in the [Congolese] army."[9]

The FDLR emerged from the genocide's Rwandan Hutu refugees in the DRC, its leadership mainly made up of leaders of the former Rwandan army. According to Hans Romkema's analysis, in 2004, the FDLR controlled about 20% of the Kivus (North and South) and exercised control over between 30% and 40% more.[10] It must be kept in mind, however, that this information reflects the territorial control prior to Nkunda's 2007 and 2008 expansions.

The Mai Mai, a loose coalition of local militia, was formed as a response to the inadequacy of local institutional security. Formed in conditions of anarchy, the Mai Mai are a "highly fluid, fragmentary and internally incoherent phenomenon."[11] They often operated alongside government forces and the FDLR against the CNDP. If there is ideological unity to the Mai Mai, it consists in opposition to Tutsi dominance in the Kivus. A 2007 International Crisis Group report explains that:

> "Control over gold and coltan mines has since 1998 been a prime motive for fighting between the Mai Mai themselves. The anti-Tutsi and, by extension, anti-Banyarwanda agenda is one of the unifying forces since Rwandophones remain the easy scapegoat for all political and economic frustrations in the Kivus."[12]

Table 1 provides estimates of the numbers making up the militarised groups in North Kivu, as of November 2008.

The relationships between the main opposition groups formed a triangle of conflict, whereby the national DRC army, cooperating with the Mai Mai, was able to "cast a blind eye" at the fighting between the CNDP and FDLR, as described in Diagram 1. (The broken line signifies how active cooperation did not occur between these

Table 1: Forces in North Kivu[13]

Name	Description	Number	Relationship with Other Groups
CNDP (National Congress for the Defence of the People)	Tutsi rebels, led by Laurent Nkunda	6 000	Opposed to the FDLR and DRC army. Share similar attitude towards the FDLR as the Rwandan government. View the FDLR, DRC army and Mai Mai as united in opposing the aims of the CNDP.
FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda)	Rwandan Hutus (including the Interahamwe)	6 000 -7 000	Ideologically opposed to Tutsis. Carry out attacks into Rwanda against Tutsis.
Mai Mai	Militia	3 500	Pro-DRC government.
MONUC (United Nations Mission in the DRC)	United Nations (UN) Force	6 000 (in North Kivu)	Operate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter (peace enforcement).
DRC army (FARDC)	National armed forces	90 000 (nation-wide)	Consider all leaders of groups operating in North Kivu that are not democratically elected as illegitimate.

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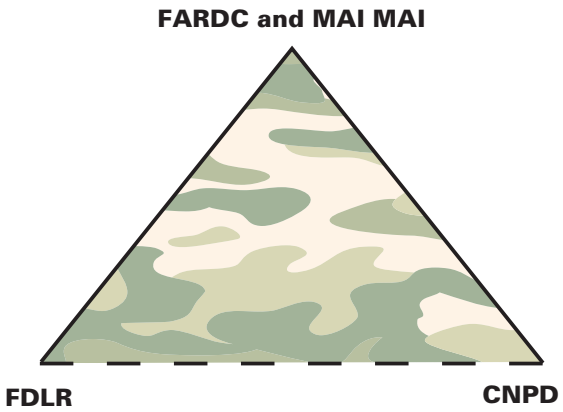
National Congress for the Defence of People (CNDP) fighters prepare to go to the frontline after what they claim were attacks by pro-government Mai-Mai militia and anti-Tutsi Rwandan Hutu rebels, alongside Congo army (FARDC) soldiers in Kiwanja (November 2008).

two groups, as the CNDP and FDLR were opposed in their ultimate goals.) Any of the two corners of the triangle were in a position to "team up" against the third, under the principle of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend".

Diagram 1: Triangle of Conflict in North Kivu



Over the period 1998 to 2008, the DRC administration was accused by Rwandan military officers of supplying the FDLR with arms.[14] Cooperation between government forces and the FDLR highlights how the FDLR was used in a predatory way by the DRC administration. This, in turn, heightened CNDP security concerns. As a CNDP representative commented, "The Mai-Mai, the FDLR and the FARDC all form a coalition which threatens the security not only of the Tutsis but of all the communities."[15]

The Economisation of Security Concerns

In North Kivu, businessmen held interviews with Human Rights Watch on the relationship between themselves and CNDP leader, Laurent Nkunda. One businessman stated that, "The presence of Laurent Nkunda reassures the Rwandophones. If Nkunda were not there, few Rwandophones would stay... We are not asking for much, just survival."[16] This reliance on Tutsi rebels was intensified at the 2006 elections, which

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Laurent Nkunda, the National Congress for the Defence of People (CNDP) leader, was captured by the Rwandan army in early 2009.

significantly reduced the influence of other Congolese Tutsi leaders. Both for security and the retention of land holdings, businessmen relied on Nkunda's soldiers for protection. As one important businessman in Goma remarked, without adequate political representation, Congolese Tutsis were facing "a time bomb".

Rich mineral resources in North Kivu provide attractive prospects for those with military dominance. The cooperation between military groups and the upper economic class is, therefore, of mutual benefit. In the Kivu war economy, "profits increasingly motivate the violence, and violence increasingly makes profits possible for all belligerents."[17] In a precarious way, the economic success of Tutsi businessmen improved with the increased strength of Nkunda's rebels. In this way, the persistent conflict of North Kivu between 1998 and 2008 took on an economic dynamic, countering the irrationality of war.

North Kivu is rich in resources such as tin, gold, coal and tantalum ore. Illegal markets of resource trade self-expanded and sowed the seeds for future clashes of interest. North Kivu is a case of what the Congolese call *"Système D":* informal economics of survival. The interlinked flow of resource competition and conflict presents a situation of "intractable economics", which can be defined as illegal economic activity that has persisted over time and refused to yield to attempts to arrive at an agreement that respects the concept of private property. In terms of the security dilemma, intractable economics serves the flow of conflict by increasing the sustainability of aggressive military behaviour.

Predatory Behaviour Amidst Anarchy

The example of Laurent Nkunda highlights the ability of individual ambition using a threatened ethnic identity to further particular interests; a case of top-down violence "mobilized by political leaders and entrepreneurs".[18] Nkunda made use of a local radio station, held public meetings in Masisi and Rutshuru, and used programmes in schools to promote his ideology. Some of Nkunda's officers talked about the creation of a "Republic of Virunga", with one referring to the area of North Kivu as "our little state".[19] Nkunda put a lot of effort into returning Congolese in Rwanda back to North Kivu, and boosted his armed forces with forced recruitment. Furthermore, up until his arrest in 2009, Nkunda made full use of international media attention to outline his own plans for the Kivus. Throughout his comments to journalists, Nkunda maintained that his actions were forced by the aggression of the Tutsi persecutors. Although there was a real security concern causing the politicisation of Tutsi ethnicity, this sense of grievance was clearly abused by Nkunda.

THE INTERLINKED FLOW OF RESOURCE COMPETITION AND CONFLICT PRESENTS A SITUATION OF "INTRACTABLE ECONOMICS", WHICH CAN BE DEFINED AS ILLEGAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY THAT HAS PERSISTED OVER TIME AND REFUSED TO YIELD TO ATTEMPTS TO ARRIVE AT AN AGREEMENT THAT RESPECTS THE CONCEPT OF PRIVATE PROPERTY

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Rwandan troops began withdrawing from the Eastern DRC in early 2009.

Although evidence of striving for a "Hutuland" – which would lead to "the unity of the Hutu people and the necessary victory of the majority"[20] – was far more abstract compared with Nkunda's intentions, a clear sense of predatory purpose also arose in the FDLR. Often, rather than satisfying the need for survival, FDLR combatants looted and pillaged for personal enrichment.

Conclusion

The case of North Kivu shows how a security dilemma can operate alongside competing efforts of violent predation. Although most people act in fear of the unstable scenario in which they find themselves, particular players are able to use the chaos to pursue their aims ruthlessly.

Pouligny describes the UN mission in the DRC, MONUC, as attempting to act in a situation "where ethnicity is a repertoire of political disputes and is highly manipulated by local political entrepreneurs".[21] Attempts to address security concerns impartially have not matched the scale of such problems, despite the troubles in the DRC having resulted in the UN's single largest mission. Between 1998 and 2008, MONUC was the only institution in the eastern DRC aiming to uphold the rule of law and displaying an unpoliticised attitude toward ethnic identity. Underlying such difficulties in promoting rule of law was an inability to administer impartial justice consistently across a large population. Rape, for example, used as a weapon of war, is so widespread that it constitutes an intractable human rights violation, and is largely unrecorded and unpunished.

By understanding conflict in terms of a security dilemma, the necessity of peacebuilding efforts to react impartially towards group divisions through the promotion of rule of law and accountability is apparent.

ATTEMPTS BY THE DRC GOVERNMENT TO REGAIN CONTROL OF THE ANARCHICAL ENVIRONMENT THROUGH MILITARY INTERVENTION, RENDERED THE STATE'S MILITARY ARM SIMPLY ANOTHER COMPETITIVE ACTOR.

However, the case of North Kivu between 1998 and 2008 shows further that a chaotic environment's continuation depends on the ongoing actions of particular agents, whose interests are served by that same anarchy. Forcing these key actors to be held accountable should thus have a ripple effect in slowing and reversing the spiral of anarchy.

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THE SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP OF MONUC AND SOUTH AFRICA

WRITTEN BY **EDWARD JOHNSON**

REUTERS / THE BIGGER PICTURE

> "...if Africa disintegrates, there will be no South Africa."[1]
> (Jackie Selebi, former director in the Department of Foreign Affairs)

At the beginning of August 2009, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) was still eagerly awaiting the arrival of 3 000 additional United Nations Organisation Mission in the DRC (MONUC) peacekeepers under United Nations (UN) Resolution 1843. The UN estimated, in late 2008, that the current deployment in eastern DRC amounted to an average of 10 "blue helmets" for every 10 000 residents and was in urgent need of reinforcement.[2] This long-anticipated deployment into the conflict zone will augment MONUC, the largest peacekeeping mission in the history of the UN, to 20 000 peacekeepers. In 2008, the estimated civilian death toll was in excess of 5.5 million people, in a war that has ravaged the DRC since 1998.[3] The reasons for such a phenomenal peacekeeping contingent are cogent, yet the motivations for contributing to this force

Above: South Africa has long been regarded as the economic powerhouse and leader of the African continent.

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The peacekeeping mission in the DRC (MONUC) is the largest United Nations peacekeeping mission.

are not necessarily so ostensible. This article investigates the role that South Africa plays in MONUC and in reciprocation, the role that MONUC plays for South Africa.

This article presents three factors that have influenced South Africa's involvement in MONUC, before explaining how these factors contribute to the larger framework of the African Renaissance. First, the article explains how South Africa uses MONUC to promote and preserve its national interests in terms of security and economy. Second, it argues that the contribution is a tool of self-promotion up the ladder of international and continental recognition. And third, it presents the case that South Africa's contribution promotes its supposed moral ontology.

Context

MONUC was established in November 1999 under the UN Security Council Resolution 1279 following the signing of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in July of that year, in a bid to end what had come to be known as the second Congo War, or the Great War of Africa.[4] The function of MONUC is to monitor the peace efforts following this most recent conflict, to protect civilians and to ensure humanitarian access. Under the jurisdiction of Chapter VII of the UN Charter: "Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression" – but, more explicitly, Resolution 1493 - MONUC is a unique peacekeeping mission in that its mandate allows troops to use any means necessary to protect and promote peace. This unusual inclusion has led to the use of armed land and air vehicles, and has brandished MONUC with a questionable integrity in international circles.

As of March 2009, the entire MONUC contingent consisted of 18 402 individuals: 16 589 troops, 728 military observers, 1 085 police and 956 international civilian personnel. In addition there are 2 220 local civilian staff and 567 UN volunteers.[5]

National Interests: Security and Economy

South Africa has long been regarded as the economic powerhouse of the African continent. To understand the importance of this status, it is useful to consult the post-apartheid African National Congress's (ANC) governmental foreign policy document of 1997, the White Paper on South African Participation in International Peace Missions. This document sets the context for the argument that follows. It is no accident that the publication of this White Paper coincided with numerous deployments of peacekeeping troops throughout central Africa in the 1990s. Ten missions

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MONUC is a unique peacekeeping mission in that its mandate allows troops to use any means necessary to protect and promote peace.

took place during this decade, in response to seven different conflicts in Burundi (ONUB), Angola (MONUA), and Congo-Brazzaville (ONUC); two wars in Zaire-DRC; low-intensity conflict in Uganda; genocide in Rwanda (UNAMIR); and three coups d'etats in the Central African Republic (MINURCAT). In addition, in the horn of Africa in 2000, South Africa contributed vast numbers to the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), as well as troops to Burundi in 2001, with the intention of protecting 150 exiled Burundian politicians in their participation towards a power-sharing transitional government.[6]

The document sets forth three considerations that the government believes ought to be at the foundation of all decisions relating to foreign actions.[7] Obviously, the first states that, "South Africa is part of the African continent, and that its economic development is linked to what happens to the continent as a whole."[8] It is highly significant that this statement emerges so early in the document, immediately associating South Africa's economics with foreign politics. This observation becomes even more pertinent when one realises the extent to which South Africa and the DRC are economically intimate. The largest import partner to the DRC is South Africa, providing 22.5% of goods imported. The second largest importer to the DRC is Belgium, accounting for 10.3% of goods.[9]

The importance of economic relations was recognised at the second Session of the South Africa - DRC Binational Commission, hosted in Pretoria by Thabo Mbeki in 2005. When these statistics are considered against the backdrop of the White Paper, it becomes clear why South Africa is concerned with contributing peacekeeping forces to MONUC. Moreover, at this juncture we are introduced for the first time to evidence supporting the case that "if Africa disintegrates [for example through economic devolution], there will be no South Africa [the South African economy will be negatively affected and will decline]".[10] Thus, by regarding South Africa as *the* economic powerhouse of Africa, we can see how its economic status affects the rest of Africa and, more importantly, why South Africa is interested in preserving stability in Africa through MONUC.

The White Paper's second consideration states that, "South Africa has an important role to play in the economic and political revival of the continent".[11] The ANC believed that South Africa's involvement and interaction with the rest of the continent ought to be

rooted in this notion of South Africa spearheading the African Renaissance. Emerging from its apartheid era, South Africa gradually grew into the continental powerhouse that is is today. The lessons learned through apartheid posited South Africa in a place of privileged economic and political expertise: alongside which a duty of expertise-sharing is implied. With this responsibility comes a duty to share such expertise with the rest of Africa, for example through its foreign policies. Thus, South Africa's massive involvement in MONUC can be seen as a direct example of this responsibility being executed in a pragmatic and accountable way.

The third and final consideration of the paper states, "The economic development of the African continent as a whole will be a significant step in overcoming the North-South divide."[12] This notion illuminates an alternative perspective on the White Paper, endowing the foreign policy operations with a global responsibility in addition to its continental undertaking. South Africa is in the ideal position to realise this consideration, being physically a part of the African continent whilst also possessing a relatively developed and "Western" ontology. On the international stage, this is evidenced through South Africa's participation in the G20, alongside a cast of Western nations, and emerging powers.

These three considerations were cemented into South Africa's foreign policy at the end of the last millennium, asserting the importance of South Africa's role in contributing to wider regional stability:

> "South Africa cannot prosper in a sea of African insecurity and instability...Thus for South Africa, peacekeeping in Africa - especially in Southern Africa - may be considered as action in direct support of its own security and economic interests."[13]

The White Paper is explicit in its statement that these three considerations are to promote and to preserve South Africa's economy and security. After all, the country "...has an obvious interest in preserving regional peace and stability in order to promote trade and development, and to avoid the spill-over effects of conflicts in the neighbourhood."[14] And whilst the DRC may not immediately appear to be "in the neighbourhood", one only has to consult the economic ties and networks of bilateral relationships between it and South Africa to realise that, whilst they are not geographically neighbours, they are certainly economically friendly.

The Moral Dimension

That foreign policies reflect domestic concerns is not a revolutionary concept.[15] With this notion in mind, one can perceive South Africa's attempt at a moral legitimisation of its troop deployments in MONUC, as well as through its other missions, as being rooted in its lessons

REUTERS / THE BIGGER PICTURE

South Africa, represented by former President Kgalema Motlanthe (center), at a G20 summit in London in 2009.

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MONUC peacekeepers, from South Africa, establish a buffer zone to stop clashes between rival army factions near Kilalo in the Eastern Congo (2004).

learnt, specifically in the post-apartheid era.[16] Again, if one consults the White Paper as a palimpsest of evidence of South Africa's foreign actions and involvements, then the involvement in MONUC from this moral dimension is apparent too. The reader notices that the White Paper has been edited with an altruistic tone whereby South Africa's interests apparently concern those in need: those who have suffered from famine, political repression, natural disaster, violent conflict and so on.[17]

Investigating this moral dimension is relevant at this juncture because it implies that South Africa has a self-appointed position of authority over the rest of the continent, as if its apartheid history has appointed the nation with a paternal perspective over its 52 children. South Africa might believe itself to be more morally constructed and legitimised in its ability to promote peace and security. To understand South Africa's involvement in MONUC and other peacekeeping ventures, its actions should be seen with this ethical hue in mind. This idea is knotted with the notion that the country sees itself as a – if not *the* – leader in Africa. When one considers these points about South Africa and its economic position, alongside this notion of a moral dimension, it can be ascertained that the country has been propelled into a position of wider regional leadership. South Africa has been identified by many observers as the one state able to help ensure effective peacekeeping in Africa. After the political transformation of South Africa in 1994, there were growing expectations that South Africa would "take up its responsibilities as a potential regional leader and to exert its influence in creating a stable region".[18]

Thus, South Africa's deployments to MONUC can be seen as actions of a leader nation: actions grown from a base of moral responsibility. However, the legitimacy of this claim as a genuine leader ought to be weighed against the country's attempt to preserve its aforementioned national interests. Such research is necessary to construct a realistic picture of the relationship between South Africa and MONUC, but such a task is beyond the scope and the intention of this tentative article.

Conclusion

South Africa's involvement in MONUC's operations has been widely documented and appreciated by the international community.[19] Its actions are rooted in factors of promoting and preserving its national interests, promoting itself on continental and global

platforms, and promoting its moral ontology. In addition to these points, there are tributary factors that should be noted when considering South Africa's role within MONUC. Firstly, there is a prevalent notion within the African military community that, when the limitations of the UN are witnessed - as they were in both Somalia and Rwanda in the early 1990s - only then does the role of the African nation begin to surface. In this respect, one can understand the backdrop for South Africa's responses to protecting the Burundian politicians, but it does not tally with deploying troops to MONUC still bound by the UN mandate, rather than by that of South Africa. However, this observation does highlight one explanation for why South Africa was willing to generously contribute to the MONUC contingent.

Secondly, South Africa is highly suited to provide technical assistance in the form of "specialised military support" due to its high standards of technological advancement in the African field.[20] Thus, South Africa can be seen to have had technological and logistical responsibilities to provide to the operation. Its logistical capabilities have also been an asset to MONUC, for example, in printing and airlifting 1 800 tons of ballots from South Africa to the DRC for the 2006 elections.

Finally, South Africa's contribution to MONUC should be seen in terms of "catching up" with other African nations more experienced at peacekeeping, although South Africa has been responsible for large-scale police training within MONUC. This notion of "catching up" is associated with the country asserting its position as a continental leader once again. It is well known that several other African nations - namely Botswana, Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal and Zimbabwe - have in the past contributed generously to peacekeeping numbers, which, until the 1990s, South Africa had no experience with. Now, with a phenomenal military base, coupled with an ambition to succeed as a global leader, South Africa feels the need to contribute massively to MONUC, and to catch up and lead the way in terms of sheer size and contribution. This is South Africa's method of asserting itself as the leader of the continent.

This last point is highly significant, because it establishes the basis for the notion of the African Renaissance. This South African concept, popularised by Thabo Mbeki in the 1990s, forms a large component of the post-apartheid intellectual movement. It is largely this history that appropriates South Africa for such a significant role within MONUC. It is itself cited as a model "of transition from conflict to peace".[21] The movement is concerned with creating a new Africa, which will feature on the global stage and which stands for values of social cohesion, economic stability, democracy, and which has a significant voice in global geopolitics. South Africa's role in MONUC is a quintessential example of the emergence of the African Renaissance. By contributing so vastly - the fifth largest deployment after the UN, Uruguay, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh - South Africa has loudly declared its commitment to the establishment of an African Renaissance.

The importance of maintaining a MONUC presence in the DRC is underlined in the title of Oxfam's 2007 publication, *A Fragile Future: Why Scaling Down MONUC too Soon could Spell Disaster for the Congo.* It is widely understood and accepted that, if peacekeeping forces are diminished, it would result in negative consequences for the DRC - a claim echoed in 2009 by Special Representative to the Secretary General, Alan Doss.[22] This explains exactly why a scaling up of operations and troop numbers is important in 2009, not least since the withdrawal of both Ugandan and Sudanese troops under Operation Lightning Thunder in the northern provinces, and Rwandan troops in the eastern regions, has occurred. Thus, with South Africa's large troop contingent in this force, it would be prudent for the country to retain or even augment its troop numbers. Equally, as recently as February 2007, François Grignon, the director of the Africa Program at International Crisis Group, stated, at the Great Lakes Policy Forum, the importance that the international community has in encouraging peace in the region. In addition, he stated that, "The role of the international community… should stress engagement on promoting progress, good governance, anti-corruption, and much needed democracy, rather than only the profitable extraction of mineral resources."[23] Grignon subtly criticises foreign policies that seek to promote their own agenda as has been previously outlined. In an attempt to address this negative involvement, South Africa has been involved in these ideals of promoting progress, good governance and so on through various capacities.

Whilst the future of MONUC is unknown, and faces ongoing criticism and withdrawal threats from India, the future role of South Africa in MONUC remains somewhat

THE ANC BELIEVED THAT SOUTH AFRICA'S INVOLVEMENT AND INTERACTION WITH THE REST OF THE CONTINENT OUGHT TO BE ROOTED IN THIS NOTION OF SOUTH AFRICA SPEARHEADING THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

more apparent. In order to retain its image of the paternal leader of Africa, South Africa will continue to exist in its supportive, transparent and altruistic role. Equally, whilst MONUC is set to rely upon South Africa, so the country is set to continue to rely on MONUC to bolster its international reputation as the powerhouse of Africa.

Edward Johnson recently received his Masters in Humanitarian Action from Uppsala University, Sweden and now works as a Consultant for the United Nations World Food Programme.

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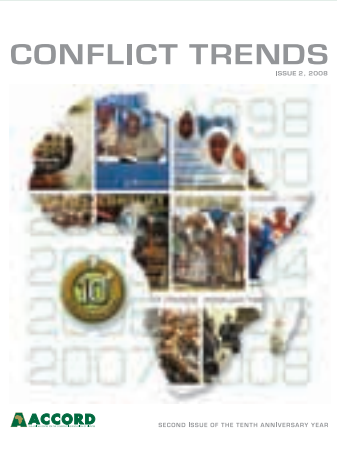

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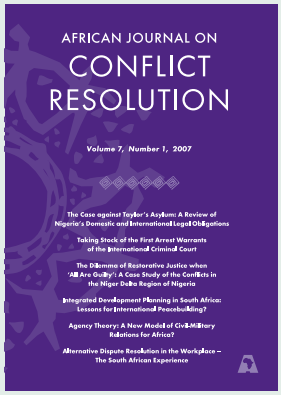

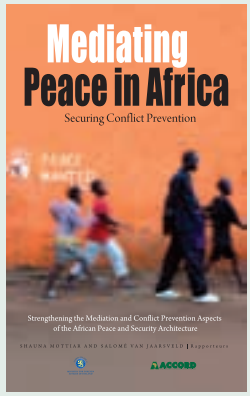

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