Challenges to Contemporary Peace Support Operations in Africa

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Africa is today the primary operational theatre for international peace support operations (PSOs). As of mid-2016, nine of the sixteen United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations were located in Africa (ten of sixteen if UNTSO is included, partially based in Egypt), accounting for 99,424 uniformed and civilian personnel out of a total 119,523 – in other words, 83 percent of all deployed UN peacekeepers.[1] PSOs constitute a critical element of Africa's security landscape, and conversely, peace operations in African states are shaping expectations about the legitimacy, roles, and capacities of multilateral organizations to manage armed conflict and contribute to a sustainable peace.

Much has changed in the past 20 years with regard to PSOs as instruments of international conflict management. Understanding these changes, and the complicated dynamics that now shape and constrain peace operations in Africa, requires examination of developments in at least three key dimensions. First, the paper considers the settings into which peace operations are being deployed. General conflict trends and shifts in types of armed violence in Africa are reviewed, highlighting the overall decline in armed conflict, particularly since the 1990s, but also the increasing prevalence of non-

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[1] UN, "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations", Fact Sheet, 30 June 2016.

state armed violence and the increasing risk to civilians. A necessary corollary for understanding the environment into which peace operations are deployed is the weak, fragmented, and hybrid nature of states and governance systems in many conflict-affected African states. Neopatrimonial systems pose challenges to consolidating peace and helping to rebuild functioning states and societies when conflict is terminated.

The second dimension concerns developments in UN peacekeeping. As the core multilateral institution engaged in conflict management in Africa, the UN over the past two decades has developed more far-reaching objectives and has transformed its operational approach to responding to societies riven by conflict. Critical elements that distinguish the UN's approach to peace operations today include the emergence of the Protection of Civilians (or POC) as a core mandate, the authorization of more robust action by peacekeepers, the emergence of partnership peacekeeping, and the multidimensional nature of the missions which support reform of core host state functions. At the same time, disagreement among members over how to interpret and execute these approaches are straining the "holy trinity" of norms on which peacekeeping has been based.

The third dimension necessary to understand contemporary conflict management in Africa is the regional level response, in which continental (i.e., African Union (AU)) and sub-regional organizations have become increasingly important partners to the UN and actors in their own right, including in peace support operations. While there is evidence of a growing sense of African ownership in conflict management and further institutionalization of its peace and security architecture, AU peace support operations for the time being remain limited by a lack of funding and continuing disagreement among member states concerning the organization's responsibility to intervene militarily for humanitarian reasons when lacking host state consent.

This paper contends that while contemporary peace operations have become more ambitious and complex than in the past, they are also more contested. Technical, operational, and financial problems continue to afflict both UN and AU PSOs, but the most critical challenges derive from political factors – diverging interpretation of key norms and principles among members of the authorizing institutions. The paper concludes by assessing the implications of these developments for troop- and police-

contributing countries and donors, including Canada, identifying several recommendations for effective engagement given the challenges and constraints of contemporary peace operations in Africa.

The Context: Conflict Trends and Governance Systems in Africa

Africa has experienced disproportionately high levels of violence in the modern period. During the Cold War, Africa was the site of one-third of all interstate and intra-state armed conflict.[2] Cold War competition for political influence and strategic resources in a number of new African states transformed local conflicts into proxy wars sustained by Soviet and Western backing for opposing African rebel groups and governments.[3] Since the end of the Cold War, the world has generally seen a substantial decline in armed conflicts. In Africa, however, the first decade of the post-Cold War era proved to be especially deadly. Based on data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), Africa was deemed "the world's most violent region by far" in the period 1989-2014.[4] Violence peaked in the immediate post-Cold War period in 1994 with the Rwandan genocide. From 1989 through 1999, Africa – containing over one billion of the planet's seven billion people – suffered the largest majority of deaths worldwide across all categories of conflict, that is, state-based conflict, non-state conflict, and one-sided conflict.[5] During that decade, Africa was the location of 76% of total global fatalities resulting from armed conflicts, and was home to 93% of global fatalities from "campaigns of one-sided violence", or deliberate use of organized violence against civilians and non-combatants.[6]

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[2] Johan Brosché and Kristine Höglund, "The diversity of peace and war in Africa," *SIPRI Yearbook 2015* (Oxford: OUP, 2015), p. 110.

[3] David T. Burbach and Christopher J. Fettweis, "The coming stability? The decline of warfare in Africa and implications for international security," *Contemporary Security Policy* 35, no. 3 (2014): p. 424.

[4] Erik Melander, "Organized violence in the world 2015," UCDP Paper No. 9, Uppsala Universitet and Uppsala Conflict Data Program, Sweden, p. 1. Available at: http://www.pcr.uu.se/digitalAssets/61/61335_1ucdp-paper-9.pdf.

[5] Melander, pp. 5-6.

[6] Paul D. Williams, based on data from the Uppsala Armed Conflict Database, presented at book launch of *War & Conflict in Africa, second edition*, Woodrow Wilson Center, 7 September 2016. Available at: https://soundcloud.com/the-wilson-center/book-launch-war-and-conflict-in-africa.

Beginning in 2000, the incidence of mass killings and the number of large African conflicts has declined.[7] This decline is visible across multiple measures, including the numbers of conflicts, conflict intensity, battle deaths, and risk to mortality from conflicts in Africa, leading some analysts to conclude that, while the continent is still far from peaceful, the threat posed to Africans by armed conflict is considerably lower than previously.[8] Nevertheless, analysts disagree whether conflict in Africa over the past five years has begun to increase again. Some sources identify a significant increase commencing in 2010 in non-state armed conflict in Africa.[9] Other analysts ascribe the perceived increase in violence to improved reporting of conflict events and better local data collection methods.[10]

Whether or not the number of conflicts has increased, there is agreement generally that (a) the levels of violence in Africa today are much lower than what had been experienced both during the Cold War and the 1990s; and that (b) the types of violence seen in Africa have changed in the recent past, with non-state armed conflict and violence against civilians now the predominant forms of conflict in Africa.

The nature of conflict in Africa shifted away from interstate wars in which professional armies confronted one another (which were still fairly rare during the Cold War), and civil wars aimed at control of the state or to subdue secessionary movements, towards small, intra-state wars consisting of factionalized insurgencies and other forms of political violence, such as election violence, or conflict over access to livelihood resources such as land and water. Intrastate conflicts are marked by a diversity of non-state actors such as rebel groups, separatist groups, militias, and warlords.[11] In such conflicts, distinctions between combatants and civilians may be difficult to make. Conflicts may arise from inter-ethnic or inter-communal tension, religion, competition between pastoralists and farmers and other land disputes, and governance-related

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[7] Scott Straus, "Wars do end! Changing patterns of political violence in sub-Saharan Africa," *African Affairs* 111, no. 443 (2012): pp. 179-201;

[8] David T. Burbach and Christopher J. Fettweis, "The coming stability? The decline of warfare in Africa and implications for international security," *Contemporary Security Policy* 35, no. 3 (2014): pp. 421-445. See also Meander, p. 7.

[9] *SIPRI Yearbook 2015* (Oxford: OUP, 2016).

[10] ACLED, "Trend 1: Rates of violence in 2015", Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (2016): http://www.acleddata.com/rates-of-violence-in-2015 (last accessed 16 September 2016).

[11] William Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

grievances relating to political and economic exclusion. The case of the Central African Republic (CAR) is a case in point, with its legacy of "historically oppressive processes of state construction, regional inequalities, and pernicious forms of external involvement."[12] State repression, political marginalization, and exclusion from the sharing of resources constitute some of the primary grievances driving conflict. Non-statutory armed actors challenge the authority and legitimacy of the state; in some instances the state has collapsed altogether. In contrast to traditional state security actors, which usually have a central authority and a unified command structure, armed non-state actors and irregular armed groups may lack these or may fragment, making the resolution of conflicts in which they are involved more challenging.[13]

Moreover, government may not necessarily be a unified actor in these contexts. In certain conflicts, pro-government militias or other informal violent groups may act on behalf of the government, or certain of its officials or representatives.[14] Conflict dynamics are more complex and fluid, often involving shifting alliances and overlapping insurgencies and multiple conflicts.[15] The tactics used in civil wars and insurgencies by both state and non-state actors are often characterized by extreme violence and have explicitly targeted civilians, resulting in mass killings, genocide, rape, enslavement, and mass forced displacement. Thus one political violence tracking mechanism covering all organized armed conflicts in Africa has established that in 2015 battles between armed groups constituted 46% of such events, 14% involved remote violence,[16] and 40% involved violence against civilians.[17]

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[12] Graham Harrison, "Onwards and sidewards? The curious case of the responsibility to protect and mass violence in Africa," *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 10, no. 2 (2016): p. 152.

[13] Isiaka A. Badmus, *The African Union's role in peacekeeping* (Springer, 2015), p. 2.

[14] Sabine C. Carey, Neil J. Mitchell, and Will Lowe, "States, the security sector, and the monopoly of violence: A new database on pro-government militias," *Journal of Peace Research* 50, no. 2 (2012): p. 254.

[15] Clionadh Raleigh, "Political hierarchies and landscapes of conflict across Africa," *Political Geography* 42 (2014).

[16] Remote violence is defined as "events in which the tool for engaging in conflict did not require the physical presence of the perpetrator", typically bombings, IED attacks, mortar and missile attacks, whether on armed agents or civilians. Clionadh Raleigh and Catriona Dowd, "Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook," 2015, p. 10.

[17] ACLED (2016).

Perhaps as a result of the increasing risk to civilians posed by armed conflict in Africa, it is widely perceived today that peace operations are more dangerous for mission personnel than in earlier times. The recent unilateral withdrawal of several British, German and Swedish UNPOL (police officers) from UNMISS (UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan) in a context of mounting violence perpetrated by government forces in Juba highlighted concerns common among Western troop- and police-contributing countries regarding the capacities of the UN to guarantee the safety and security of their personnel in dangerous mission environments such as northern Mali and South Sudan.[18] Indeed, MINUSMA (UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali), where peacekeeping personnel are deliberately targeted by Islamist militants, has become the UN's most dangerous peace operation.[19] Nevertheless, recent empirically-based research has established that the overall rate of fatalities of uniformed personnel in peacekeeping missions has witnessed a long-term decline in relative terms from the early 1990s until 2015.[20] Mali thus appears to be the exception to the trend that UN missions have become less deadly for peacekeepers.

Many African conflicts also have significant trans-border dimensions. Porous borders throughout Africa facilitate the spread of armed conflict to neighbouring states; conversely, porous borders facilitate rebellions and insurgencies by proxy that are sponsored by states or ethnic associations or other actors across the border.[21] Insurgent groups are increasingly mobile, moving across borders to launch attacks on civilian populations and security forces.[22] Networks of highly mobile armed combatants have emerged who combine local grievances with international ideologies and ambitions, and move from one conflict to another, as seen across the Sahel, the Sahara and Libya, and in Somalia and northern Kenya.[23]

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[18] "Two British police officers banned from South Sudan peacekeeping mission", *The Telegraph* (London), 22 July 2016.

[19] By mid-2016, 101 MINUSMA peacekeepers had been killed. See "Urging tougher stance, UN adds 2,500 peacekeepers to Mali mission," Reuters, 29 June 2016.

[20] Jäir van der Lijn and Timo Smit, "Peacekeepers under threat? Fatality trends in UN peace operations," SIPRI Policy Brief, September 2015.

[21] Damien Deltenre and Michel Liégeois, "Filling a leaking bathtub? Peacekeeping in Africa and the challenge of transnational armed rebellions," *African Security* 9, no. 1 (2016): pp. 6-7.

[22] Straus, "Wars do end!" p. 188.

[23] African Union, "Statement delivered on behalf of the African Union commissioner peace and security by the director of peace and security," 14 February 2015.

Funding for some insurgent armed groups may be generated by illicit economic activity such as smuggling and trafficking, and organized crime (see also the Aning & Amedzrator article in this edition of *JMSS*). It may also be the case that political institutions and actors themselves have criminal agendas.[24] In Mali, for example, members of the political and economic elite and government officials have been found to be more complicit in organized criminal activity than certain insurgent groups that are frequently accused of involvement in smuggling and trafficking by Western observers.[25] Similarly, the UN's efforts to counter criminal gangs in the slums of Port-au-Prince saw temporary tactical success, but strategic failure due to the "hidden power networks" linking Haiti's political and economic elite and such gangs, and MINUSTAH's (UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti) inability to confront those links due to the mission's dependence on host state consent to remain present in the country.[26]

In seeking to explain why Africa has been the site of so many armed conflicts, attention has focused on Africa's post-colonial governance systems as a key driver of conflict. These tend to comprise hybrid systems that combine formal state governance with informal neo-patrimonial systems, in which access to the state and state resources is used as the basis for client-patron relations. It is not clear whether the formal or informal neo-patrimonial system will predominate in a hybrid system, but such systems are generally considered unstable because they tend to factionalize populations – one either becomes part of a patronage system or is left outside – and because they establish order on the threat of repercussions or negative results if they are challenged.[27]

In a number of fragile African states where these parallel political structures have emerged, patronage-based political networks are sustained through access to resources and economic opportunities including illicit economic activities.[28] This is a political

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[24] Louise Bosetti, James Cockayne and John de Boer, "Crime-proofing conflict prevention, management and peacebuilding: A review of emerging good practice," United Nations University Centre for Policy Research, Occasional Paper 6, August 2016, p. 10.

[25] Sergei Boeke, "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism, insurgency, or organized crime," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 27, no. 5 (2016): p. 929.

[26] James Cockayne, "The futility of force? Strategic lessons for dealing with unconventional armed groups from the UN's war on Haiti's gangs," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 37, no. 5 (2014): pp. 765-766.

[27] Paul D. Williams, Wilson Center.

[28] William Reno, "The evolution of warfare in Africa," Annual Distinguished Lecture on Africa 2008, *Afrika Focus* 22, no. 1 (2009).

strategy for both members of state regimes and leaders of armed groups, enabling both to sustain patronage networks in ways that, in some cases, may confer legitimacy and political authority among supporters when they are provided with income and security.[29] The result of these changes in African domestic politics is that "African conflicts have become more local in their political dynamics, even as they continue to tap into global material networks," and the collapse of a centralized patronage system can open the political space for the emergence of ethnic strongmen with their own patronage systems.[30] The breakdown of significant local patronage networks can thus erode national stability.[31] As discussed below, the continued existence of neo-patrimonial systems based on patronage creates challenges for PSOs in view of their expanded role in helping to reconstruct state authority and sustainable peace.

The incidence and type of armed conflict, as well as its resolution, in Africa has obvious repercussions for peacekeeping operations. The negotiated termination of numerous African civil wars created high demand for peacekeeping on the continent. Beginning in the 1990s, negotiated peace settlements to end conflicts in Africa saw a marked increase: while only 3 out of 27 conflicts were ended by negotiated settlements during the 1980s, this grew to 19 out of 46 conflicts in the 1990s, and 17 peace agreements to end 45 conflicts between 2001 and 2012.[32] However, observers also noted an alarming trend in that no peace agreements were negotiated between 2009 and 2012, suggesting a preference to coerce termination through dominant power rather than forging peace through compromise solutions promising benefits to both/all the contending parties.[33]

The transformation of conflict means that contemporary peace operations in Africa tend to operate in highly complex environments in which there is a diffusion of power to various actors at state and sub-state level, and the legitimacy of the central state may be fractured or challenged by sub-state groups. The contestation and diffusion of power, authority, and legitimacy to various non-state actors makes it more

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[29] William Reno, "Understanding criminality in West African conflicts," *International Peacekeeping* 16, no. 1 (2009).

[30] Reno, "The evolution of warfare in Africa," pp. 16-17.

[31] Clionadh Raleigh, "Political hierarchies and landscapes of conflict across Africa," *Political Geography* 42 (2014), p. 101.

[32] Brosché and Höglund, p. 118.

[33] Brosché and Höglund, p. 120.

challenging to arrive at peace agreements. In contrast to traditional peacekeeping, contemporary peace operations are increasingly being deployed into fragile settings in which a negotiated settlement has not been agreed among the parties to the conflict. Moreover, while it remains the convention to refer to a conflict as occurring within a state, this can be misleading as actors may rely for support on regional states or other external powers, and armed groups may cross state boundaries; a conflict identified as occurring within a given state such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) may in reality constitute a multi-state, cross-border conflict.[34] Peace operations are similarly artificially delimited to the boundaries of a state whose authority, legitimacy, and sovereignty is challenged by multiple groups of actors who frequently operate across borders.

Given this transformation of conflict, with armed non-state actors, deliberate targeting of civilians, diffusion of power and contestation of central state authority in de facto hybrid governance systems, it is perhaps not surprising that today's peace operations differ significantly from peacekeeping missions of earlier eras. Although some peace operations implement ceasefires or peace agreements, recent experiences have seen them increasingly deployed into unstable contexts where, as a recent review on UN peacekeeping notes, "there is no peace to keep" and where "they are struggling to contain or manage conflict and to keep alive the prospects for a resumption of a peace process."[35]

Developments in UN peacekeeping

The UN is the primary body deploying peace operations to Africa. UN peacekeeping operations have been transformed over the past 15 years. They have gone from having less than 10,000 uniformed peacekeepers deployed worldwide in 1999 to well over 100,000 military, police, and civilians deployed by the end of 2015.[36] Further,

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[34] Harrison, "Onwards and sidewards?" p. 145.

[35] United Nations, *Uniting our strengths for peace – politics, partnership and people*, *Report of the high-level independent panel on United Nations peace operations* (henceforth HIPPO Report), 16 June 2015, p. x.

[36] "Surge in uniformed UN peacekeeping personnel from 1991- present," Chart, UN DPI 2444/Rev.53 – November 2015.

UN peace operations have become more ambitious in what they are mandated to do, more complex in structure, and more challenging for those who are deployed on the ground. This dramatic growth should be viewed and weighed through four key features, which follow the examination of the core purpose of peace operations.

Peace operations as a political undertaking

As set out most succinctly by Jean-Marie Guéhenno, former Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations (2000-2008), contemporary peacekeeping is fundamentally a political undertaking, whose essential question is how to support a political process between parties who have been at war with each other. Yet, the political essence of peacekeeping and the UN's critical contribution to finding a political solution in conflict situations and helping a country overcome its divisions through strong institutions is not well understood and is frequently ignored while attention tends to focus on the hardware of troops and equipment. Those fixating on military means while neglecting political strategy include the Security Council and UN member states, due to the sensitivity and controversial nature of the political underpinnings of conflict management efforts.[37] Similarly, the UN's high-level independent panel on UN peace operations (HIPPO) underscored the primacy of the political process in peacekeeping as the first of their four core recommendations, and the role that peace operations play as one tool among several that the United Nations can use to support the political process: "UN peace operations should be deployed as part of a broader strategy in support of a political process. Whenever a peace operation is deployed, the UN should lead or play a leading role in the political process."[38]

That role, however, has become extremely challenging. During the Cold War, when peacekeeping was intended to prevent local conflicts between states from escalating to the global level of bipolar confrontation, the main function of a traditional peacekeeping operation was to monitor a ceasefire agreement. In contrast, peace

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[37] Jean-Marie Guéhenno, *The Fog of Peace* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute, 2015); "Fog of peace: UN peacekeeping needs to focus more on political strategy and less on troops," *Global Peace Operations Review* (1 October 2015): http://peaceoperationsreview.org/interviews/fog-of-peace-un-peacekeeping-needs-to-focus-more-on-political-strategy-and-less-on-troops.

[38] HIPPO Report, p. 15.

operations today deploy to contexts where there is a dilution of power and where sub-state actors challenge the legitimacy of the state, making political processes more difficult and tenuous. The requirement to support the political process should guide UN action at each stage of its engagement, and the success of peacekeeping missions today is closely linked to the political commitment of the parties to the conflict to the peace process. Political transformation, institution-building, and the rebuilding of public trust in the state that should follow a peace agreement, will not take place when the primary parties to the conflict have weak political commitment to the peace process, as evidenced in contexts such as the DRC, Sudan, and South Sudan.[39]

Protection of Civilians (POC)

One of the distinct features of contemporary UN peace operations is the core obligation of POC. Following the failure of peacekeeping forces to prevent the Rwandan genocide and the Srebrenica massacre in the 1990s, the UN began to shift its position and link the credibility of missions in the eyes of the local population to the mission's perceived willingness to actively protect civilians.[40] Since 1999 when the first protection mandate was issued for the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), the Security Council has authorized most UN peacekeeping operations to "use all necessary means" for "the protection of civilians under imminent threat of physical violence," under a Chapter VII mandate, as one of their authorized tasks. The phrasing of the protection mandate is largely consistent across the missions, and serves not only to remind that the host state holds primary responsibility for protection, but that protection is to be carried out within the capabilities of and in the mission's areas of deployment. These are

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[39] Jean-Marie Guéhenno, "Leading UN peacekeeping and 'The Fog of Peace,'" Brookings Institution podcast (19 June 2015). Available at: https://www.brookings.edu/podcast-episode/jean-marie-guehenno-on-his-leadership-of-un-peacekeeping-and-the-fog-of-peace/. See also Ian D. Quick, *Follies in Fragile States: How International Stabilization Failed in the Congo* (London: Double Loop, 2015) and Richard Gowan, "When should blue helmets walk away from a conflict?", Global Peace Operations Review (Center on International Cooperation, 16 August 2016): http://peaceoperationsreview.org/thematic-essays/when-should-blue-helmets-walk-away-from-a-conflict.

[40] Jean-Marie Guéhenno, "The United Nations and the Protection of Civilians" in Haidi Willmot, Marc Weller, Ralph Mamiya, and Scott Sheeran, eds., *Protection of civilians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 259.

important caveats that serve to underscore that, as Guéhenno admits, "the UN cannot be expected to protect all people, at all times, in all locations."[41]

To implement POC, the UN developed an operational concept that is based on three inter-related tiers.[42] One tier concerns provision of physical protection by police and military components to civilians at imminent risk of physical harm, through the show or use of force. This is the narrowest understanding of protection, and the one that highlights the UN's operational limitations. The two other tiers are considerably broader. One concerns support to the political process and involves providing protection through dialogue and engagement, also including mediation, public information and reporting on protection of civilians. The third tier involves establishment of a "protective environment" by helping through longer-term programmatic activities to rebuild the host state's capacities, consolidate the rule of law, support the emergence of effective, accountable and responsive systems of governance, and enhance the provision of security and justice to the population. UN missions thus support a broad array of activities that are seen as intrinsic to state-building and extension of state authority, supporting the state to fulfill its primary responsibility for protecting civilians. Although the policy formally recognizes no hierarchy in the three tiers, the activities encompassed by the third tier of building a functioning state clearly require fundamental agreement on the foundations of the state, a product of the tier focused on political process. But the necessity of achieving and building on a political consensus is not always enacted. As noted by Guéhenno, the UN's focus on state-building in South Sudan was premature as the main stakeholders in the new state had not arrived at a consensus on its political foundation and a legitimate division of power.[43] Moreover, the strategy of building the host state's capacity to fulfill its primary responsibility for civilian protection has obvious limitations when the host state forces are themselves responsible for attacks on civilians.

A gap has arisen between the high expectations of host state and international publics with regard to protection mandates, and on the other, what peacekeepers have been able to visibly achieve in the protection of civilians. An internal UN review

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[41] Guéhenno, "The UN and the Protection of Civilians," p. 259.

[42] United Nations, "The protection of civilians in United Nations peacekeeping," DPKO/DFS Policy, Ref. 2015.07, 1 April 2015, para. 30.

[43] Guéhenno, "The UN and the Protection of Civilians," p. 269.

conducted in 2014 found that "peacekeeping missions with protection of civilians mandates focus on prevention and mitigation activities and force is almost never used to protect civilians under attack."[44] Moreover, the specific measures undertaken to protect civilians in the eastern DRC have been shown to raise local public expectations of a level of protection that is impossible for a peacekeeping mission to achieve in practice.[45] The gap between expectations and practice is in part explained by limited operational capabilities of UN missions: the size of the UN military and police components are simply inadequate to provide robust physical protection to all imperiled civilians in a territory, and moreover, UN missions frequently lack essential force enablers and multipliers, such as helicopters.

Further, highly trained, well-equipped military and police – usually those from developed, industrialized countries – are largely absent from UN peace operations. Instead, since the 1990s peacekeeping failures in Rwanda, Srebrenica, and the "Black Hawk Down" experience in Somalia, which prompted the withdrawal of Western states from peacekeeping, the vast majority of troops in UN peace operations have been provided by developing countries. Thus while UN peace operations have become increasingly complex and tasked with challenging mandates to protect civilians, they are implemented by insufficiently trained and under-equipped troops and police from some of the poorest countries, who are unable or unwilling to fulfill protection mandates at risk of their own safety.[46]

More fundamental challenges in implementing POC, according to an internal UN review, are that "different actors have had very different understandings" of POC

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[44] UN, "Evaluation of the implementation and results of protection of civilians mandates in United Nations peacekeeping operations," Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (henceforth OIOS), A/68/787, March 2014, p. 1.

[45] See Emily Paddon Rhoads, *Taking Sides in Peacekeeping: Impartiality and the Future of the United Nations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 185.

[46] Khusrav Gaibulloev, Justin George, Todd Sandler, and Hirofumi Shimizu, "Personnel Contributions to UN and Non-UN Peacekeeping Missions: A Public Goods Approach," *Journal of Peace Research* 52, no. 6 (2015): pp. 727-742, provide empirical evidence over time that "UN peacekeeper contributors are more motivated by money-making personnel deployments than by other contributor-specific gains, such as regional stability" (p. 740). This of course does not augur well for mission preparedness and effectiveness.

mandates, and approaches tend to be diverse and ad hoc.[47] Significant political divisions among UN member states on protection issues undermine the UN's capacities to pressure or otherwise convince host states to protect their civilian populations, as well as influencing the resources that member states are willing to provide for implementation of the broad concept of protection.[48] The political tensions undergirding POC were further reinforced by the fact that POC language was used to justify a non-consensual responsibility to protect intervention in Libya in 2011 that appeared to some critics, including Russia and the other BRICS countries[49], as unlawful military overreach of the UN mandate by NATO that served as a fig leaf for regime change.[50] The intervention in Libya, the ensuing chaos and civil war, and its repercussions across the region have given rise to cynicism in some quarters about when POC is invoked and for which purposes, deepening suspicions of the motives underlying western support for humanitarian intervention.[51]

The dilemmas of POC are illustrated in South Sudan, where it has proven physically impossible for the contingents comprising UNMISS' military component to provide physical protection to civilians in a country the size of France, with additional limitations posed by a strictly impartial mandate, slow force generation, significant logistical and accessibility challenges, requirements of troop rotation, and early warning mechanisms that are unable to predict everywhere that violence against civilians will occur.[52] UNMISS' POC strategy necessarily emphasized conflict prevention through political engagement, the work of its civil and political affairs units, and support to domestic actors involved in the peace process. Physical protection focused initially on deterring attacks on civilians through high-visibility patrols. Supporting a protective

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[47] UN, "Review of the reporting by United Nations peacekeeping missions on the protection of civilians," Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, A/67/795, 15 March 2013, para. 21.

[48] Guéhenno, "The UN and the Protection of Civilians," p. 257.

[49] Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.

[50] Geir Ulfstein and Hege Føsund Christiansen, "The legality of the NATO bombing in Libya," *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 62, no. 1 (2013): pp. 169-170.

[51] Kwesi Aning, Festus Aubyn, Nancy Annan, and Fiifi Edu-Afful, "Africa's resistance to peacekeeping's normative change," CSS at ETH Zurich and Geneva Centre for Security Policy, April 2013. http://www.css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/pdfs/Normative_Changes_in_Peacekeeping_Africa_s_Resistance.pdf

[52] Remarks of Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) Hilde Johnson, International Peace Institute, New York, 11 March 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hVg31d05cBU

environment was served by building host state capacity as well as alerting the host state army and police as the primary protection actors when potential threats to civilians arose. In December 2013, imminent threats to civilians led UNMISS to the unprecedented move of opening the gates to thousands who had gathered around the UN bases and compounds, resulting in the transformation of UN bases into de facto IDP camps ("protection of civilians sites"), protected by peacekeepers.[53] With the unraveling of the transitional unity government, obstruction of peacekeepers by the government of South Sudan, and deterioration of the security situation in 2015 including attacks on civilians by government forces, the Security Council strengthened UNMISS' mandate, authorizing it to "use all necessary means to carry out its tasks," increasing troop ceilings, and authorizing establishment of a regional protection force made up of IGAD[54] troops and reporting to the UNMISS force commander in order to secure the capital.[55]

Robust peacekeeping

The second and perhaps most controversial feature that distinguishes contemporary UN peace operations from their predecessors is their more robust character, that is, their greater authorized use of force, including offensive force, in defence of the mandate. A robust mandate authorized under Chapter VII of the UN Charter typically permits "all necessary means" to fulfill the mandate. Classical peacekeeping featured monitoring missions and limited mandates with minimum use of force except for self-defence. Robust peacekeeping, in the post-Cold War period[56],

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[53] See also presentation by former SRSG Hilde Johnson at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), 29 October 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swlBqmM1PyE

[54] Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

[55] Security Council Resolution 2304 (2016).

[56] In 1961, the UN mission in Congo (ONUC, 1960-64) had its mandate modified, and subsequently full-fledged combat operations against rebel, secessionist, and mercenary forces were conducted by ONUC. For a historical overview, see Katsumi Ishizuka, "The History of Robust Peacekeeping and Peace Enforcement in the DRC: The Limitations of the Pursuit of Negative Peace," Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS), 2016 Annual Meeting, Fordham University, New York (June 2016): http://acuns.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Ishizuka-ACUNS-2016-paper.pdf. The first UN Congo mission was ONUC, between 1999-2010 it was MONUC, and since 2010 it is MONUSCO, or the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC.

emerged with the operations led by MONUC's Dutch General Patrick Cammaert in the eastern DRC during 2005-7 against various "spoiler" insurgent groups (though the effort failed to disarm the *Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda* or FDLR, whose origins reached back to the retreating "Hutu power" soldiers and Interahamwe militias who fled to eastern DRC after their involvement in the Rwandan genocide), and was also seen in the joint police and military operations that MINUSTAH conducted against the gangs that controlled the slums of Port-au-Prince, Haiti.[57] However, robust peacekeeping is best known by the example of the "Force Intervention Brigade" (FIB), established in 2013 in eastern DRC. This was the first instance of an intervention force with a separate remit to the peacekeeping mission within which it was created. In a joint military offensive with government forces, the FIB defeated the rebel group "M23" in late 2013 (a small, mostly Tutsi armed splinter group aligned against the FDLR and the government in Kinshasa after an attempted integration with the national army or FARDC[58]). Nevertheless, the victory over M23 did not lead to effective action against other militias or wider stabilization, in part because the two main Southern African regional actors supporting the FIB, Tanzania and South Africa, have strong interests in DRC and sought only to help the Congolese government against M23.[59] Additionally, the FDLR inhabits more challenging terrain and is more integrated in civilian populations, making them a more difficult target than were the M23.

The precedent set by the FIB is controversial among UN member states and in the secretariat because, through its mandate to conduct targeted offensive operations against specified militias and rebel groups, the FIB visibly eroded one of the bedrock UN principles – that of impartiality. Indeed, through the joint operations undertaken by the FIB and Congolese FARDC against non-state armed groups, and by making the exit strategy of the FIB contingent on the creation of a DRC Rapid Reaction Force, the UN has explicitly sought to build the political will, ownership, and sense of responsibility of Congolese authorities, and hence strengthen the sovereign authority of the Congolese

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[57] Cockayne, "The futility of force".

[58] *Forces armées de la République Démocratique du Congo.*

[59] Denis M. Tull, "United Nations peacekeeping and the use of force," *SWP Comments,* No. 20 (April 2016), Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, pp. 1-2.

state.[60] One can question whether stabilization missions such as MONUSCO really are impartial, as they are clearly meant to support an existing government.

Some observers see the turn towards robust peacekeeping as linked to Western state experiences with stabilization missions conducted in Iraq and Afghanistan, with the concept of stabilization in turn having permeated the world of UN peace operations.[61] Indeed, mandates for the most robust peacekeeping missions have been written by Western "P3" Security Council member states which have been the "penholder" in the Security Council on resolutions concerning those states. France has been the penholder for Mali, DRC, Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi, and CAR; the UK is the penholder on Somalia; and the US on South Sudan.

In the view of some observers, robust missions have emerged to contain conflicts that ostensibly threaten interests of the P3 on the continent, or to counter threats posed by terrorist groups of regional contagion and migration flows.[62] Other robust missions include the UN authorization of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to conduct offensive operations against Al Shabaab strongholds.[63] The UN peace operation in Mali, MINUSMA, has recently been mandated by the Security Council to adopt a "more proactive and robust posture" to counter asymmetric attacks in active defence of MINUSMA's mandate, while the Security Council has authorized France, which is conducting the parallel anti-insurgent Operation Barkhane across the Sahel (successor to Operation Serval which ousted Islamic militants from northern Mali), to "use all necessary means" to support MINUSMA elements when under imminent and serious threat.[64] And recently, the UN Security Council reinforced the capacities of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to protect civilians through the creation of a 4000-

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[60] Touko Piiparinen, "Intervening to strengthen sovereignty: the lessons of the UN intervention brigade for global peacekeeping," *International Relations* 30, no. 2 (2015): pp. 155-156.

[61] David Curran and Paul Holtom, "Resonating, rejecting, reinterpreting: mapping the stabilization discourse in the United Nations Security Council, 2000-2014," *Stability Journal*, 29 October 2015. Available at: http://www.stabilityjournal.org/articles/10.5334/sta.gm.

[62] Simone Haysom and Jens Pederson, "Robust peacekeeping in Africa: the challenge for humanitarians," *Humanitarian Exchange*, No. 65, November 2015, p. 36.

[63] Security Council Resolution 2232 (2015). See para. 5(1).

[64] Security Council Resolution 2295 (2016). See paras 18, 19 (d), and 35.

person Regional Protection Force, drawn from the troops of member states of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).[65]

Although normative change is evident in the protection mandates of UN peace operations, many troop and police contributing countries from non-aligned countries do not support the accompanying expansion in the mandated use of force by UN missions. Countries of the Global North (developed, industrialized countries) tend to disagree with the Global South (developing and emerging powers such as the BRICS) about the interpretation of the foundational norms on which peacekeeping rests (i.e., host state consent, neutrality, and minimum use of force except in self-defence), as well as new norms such as democratization and human rights and responsibility to protect (R2P) that have emerged since the end of the Cold War and have been increasingly institutionalized within peace operations and peacebuilding practice. According to Aning et al, "the approaches to implementing these emerging norms have created suspicions, particularly among African countries, about UN peacekeeping as a regime change mechanism targeting mainly the Global South."[66] These authors point specifically to recent UN-sanctioned intervention in Libya and Cote d'Ivoire as lending credence to Western-backed regime change masquerading as humanitarian intervention, with the French role in Cote d'Ivoire, Mali [and recently Central African Republic] as particularly arousing suspicion.

Partnership peacekeeping and the AU

Most Western countries have continued to refrain from large-scale deployments of troops or police to UN peace operations. However the emergence of "partnership peacekeeping" demonstrates the new limited roles that have developed to support peace operations. The term "partnership peacekeeping" was coined by the UN to refer to collaboration in peace operations between two or more multilateral institutions and/or bilateral actors. France, for example, has re-engaged through supporting UN peace operations with limited military interventions, working in partnership with ECOWAS and the UN in Cote d'Ivoire, in Mali in the limited military intervention

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[65] Security Council Resolution 2304 (2016). See paras 8 -15.
[66] Aning, et al, "Africa's resistance to peacekeeping's normative change."

Serval, and across the Sahel in the counterterrorism mission Barkhane. The UK engaged in Sierra Leone with a limited military intervention in 2000, followed by sustained capacity-building assistance to the state security sector.[67] African institutions – the AU and Regional Economic Communities or RECs – have engaged in early interventions that are subsequently re-hatted into UN missions, and in an emerging trend, seen with MONUSCO's FIB in eastern Congo, and recently with UNMISS' regional protection force, contribute intervention forces that are inserted into the context of and under the command of a UN mission.

Insofar as limited interventions or contingency operations mounted by P3 and other Western states in support of UN peace operations are concerned, a key lesson is that these may provide needed resources and robustness in the tactical and operational context, but unless they are embedded in a longer-term political strategy, are unlikely to have a significant strategic impact.[68]

In view of the turn towards robust mandates from the Security Council, and reluctance of the main troop- and police-contributing countries from South Asian nations who have few interests or stakes in African conflicts to risk the lives of their personnel in performing robust peacekeeping, the burden has fallen on African troops and police in both the UN and AU/REC context of peace operations to take a more active role, particularly in robust peacekeeping. This will be examined further below.

Multidimensional missions

The final feature that characterizes contemporary United Nations peace operations is their multidimensionality. Current peace operations tend to be much larger than before, with the largest missions in DRC and Darfur each comprising over 20,000 personnel.[69] While peacekeeping missions incorporate a large military dimension, they are not only a military undertaking but also comprise significant

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[67] Between late 2000 and 2013, Canada supported the UK-led military advisory and training team. Up to ten Canadian Armed Forces personnel were deployed at any one time.

[68] Mats Berdal and David Ucko, "The use of force in UN peacekeeping operations: problems and prospects", *The RUSI Journal* 16, no. 1 (2015): p. 9.

[69] "United Nations peacekeeping operations," Fact Sheet, 30 June 2016.

civilian and police dimensions. Multidimensional missions support the consolidation of peace and development through reconstruction of the state in the aftermath of conflict. Their activities reflect the ambitious mandates to consolidate peace and restore and extend state authority, which often has collapsed as a result of prolonged conflict. Peace operations encompass such tasks as demobilizing, disarming, and reintegrating former combatants, monitoring elections, strengthening governance both at the central and local levels, strengthening the rule of law, promoting the respect for human rights, and assisting in reforming and developing the capacity of the security and justice sector to achieve more accountable, effective, and inclusive institutions that are responsive to the needs of citizens.

Statebuilding is a complex undertaking that requires intensive and sustained effort. Typically such tasks will take decades to be achieved successfully; even the fastest reforming states during the 20th century took on average 27 years to control corruption, 36 years to achieve effective government, and 41 years to establish the rule of law.[70] The Security Council thus sets out extremely ambitious tasks for peacekeeping operations in mandates to restore and extend state authority, support rule of law, etc, which are unlikely to be achieved within the lifespan of most missions.

Further, there are several challenges with peace operations involvement in statebuilding, especially in the security and justice fields, that need to be highlighted. Technical solutions and capacity-building of security institutions are often prioritized, and concurrently a failure to recognize and address questions of security governance, rule of law and human rights in efforts to restructure the security apparatus.[71] More fundamentally, in practice UN peace operations, multilateral and bilateral donors, and other members of the international community tend to assume that fragile, post-conflict African countries can implement security and justice reforms based on the wholesale transfer of Western models. However African formal security and justice institutions are often "hybridized": internally divided, politicized, penetrated by patronage

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[70] See Table 2.1, "Fastest progress in institutional transformation – an estimate of realistic ranges" in World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development* (Washington, DC: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank, 2011), p. 11.

[71] Louise R. Andersen, "Something's gotta give: security sector reform and United Nations peace operations," *African Affairs* 5 (2012): p. 229.

networks, and host to informal social hierarchies and networks, and operating within contexts where non-state security actors commonly exist.[72]

A second set of problems relates to the loading of state-building tasks onto the mandate of a peace operation, likened by some to a "Christmas tree", with the result that there is no sense of priorities or sequencing. The third problem concerns the challenge of coordination. Security sector reform (SSR) has become a component of virtually every peace operation; however, the success of these endeavours is far from apparent. Problems stem from dysfunctions within the UN itself, linked to the persistence of institutional silos that impede the sharing of information and collaboration between the mission and the different UN departments and agencies that play a role in building capacity over the long-term.

Of the uniformed components, the police are directly involved in statebuilding functions of UN peace operations. The role of the police has changed with the evolution in statebuilding mandates of peacekeeping missions. Capacity-building of host state police and supporting the reform and restructuring of police institutions are the predominant activities of UN individual police officers (IPOs).[73] A recent independent review of the UN Police Division found that the current model for the police component to be flawed, and called for reforms.[74]

The Holy Trinity: peacekeeping's norms

The four significant developments in UN peace operations outlined above are testing the normative basis on which peacekeeping has traditionally rested – impartiality, consent of the host state, and minimum use of force except in self-defence. The minimum use of force is the most clearly overtaken and no longer reflects UN peacekeeping practice, as shown in repeated Chapter VII mandates authorizing use of

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[72] Niagale Bagayoko, Eboe Hutchful, and Robin Luckham, "Hybrid security governance in Africa: rethinking the foundations of security, justice, and legitimate public authority," *Conflict, Security & Development* 16, no. 1 (2016): pp. 9-11.

[73] Besides IPOs, UN police include formed police units (FPUs) and a recent addition, specialized police teams (SPTs).

[74] "External review of the functions, structure and capacity of the UN police division," 31 May 2016.

force beyond self-defence and particularly for the protection of civilians. Nevertheless, continued disagreement among UN member states, especially from those in the non-aligned movement, over the use of force in a peacekeeping context accounts for its inconsistent implementation in the field.

A challenge to the principle of impartiality is also engendered by the erosion of the principle of minimum use of force except in self-defence, particularly through the mandating of robust use of force by the FIB in eastern Congo against specific armed groups. For some observers, impartiality has also been sullied by the invocation of protection of civilians to justify intervention and support regime change. Impartiality may further be said to be tested when statebuilding (support to the extension of state authority, SSR, and rule of law) mandates are authorized and implemented before there is agreement among parties in a civil war or internal conflict as to the fundamental nature and division of power within the state.

The most resilient norm has proven to be that of host state consent: both the UN and AU have experienced deep resistance from some member states to impinging on state sovereignty by overriding a state's opposition to the introduction of a peace operation on its territory.

Regional response: developments of the African Union's conflict management capacities and operations

While the UN is the organization most engaged with peace support operations in Africa, there have been significant developments in the strengthening of African capacities to play a stronger role in continental peace and security, and since 2003 over half of African PSOs have been undertaken by regional organizations.[75] The AU and/or RECs such as ECOWAS have largely taken on enforcement and stabilization roles in missions that are often subsequently re-hatted as a UN peace operation. The AU – in terms of its centrality as the primary political institution in Africa, its legitimacy in addressing conflicts across Africa, and as the main operational partner for the UN in Africa – will be considered here.

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[75] Brosig, *Cooperative Peacekeeping*, p. 12.

Until 2002, the Organization for African Unity (OAU) was the predominant regional organization in Africa, underpinned by strong commitment of member states to the principles of respect for state sovereignty and non-intervention. Following various peacekeeping failures in the 1990s, but most particularly the failure of the UN and international community to act to prevent the genocide in Rwanda, and the trend towards increased targeting of civilians in Africa's internal conflicts, an emerging norm in support of intervention gained impetus. This norm, also referred to as the doctrine of "non-indifference", is reflected in Article 4(h) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, which replaced the OAU in 2002, establishing "the right of the Union to intervene in a Member State… in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity."[76] The Constitutive Act also notably asserts "the right of Member States to request intervention from the Union in order to restore peace and security,"[77] and condemns and rejects "unconstitutional changes of government."[78] Subsequent AU declarations that it would seek authorization from the UN Security Council for such enforcement actions seemed to allay questions about the legality of humanitarian-based military intervention without host state consent.[79] With the promise of the Constitutive Act, the AU appeared an appropriate vehicle for finding and implementing "African solutions to African problems".

The AU set out an ambitious agenda for conflict management in Africa, encapsulated in the institutionalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The architecture is comprised of several elements, among which include the Commission, the secretariat of the AU, which was endowed with more staff and resources than the OAU secretariat. Nevertheless, the Commission has been limited in its development by continuing severe financial constraints posed by very low levels of contributions towards the AU's regular budget by member states. These constraints have limited its capacities for planning and overseeing conflict management mechanism and particularly peace support operations.

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[76] African Union, "The Constitutive Act of the African Union," Lomé, 11 July 2000, Article 4(h).

[77] AU Constitutive Act, Article 4 (j).

[78] AU Constitutive Act, Article 4 (p). See also Pacifique Manirakiza's contribution to this special edition.

[79] Williams, *War & Conflict in Africa,* p. 197.

The Peace and Security Department is the leading department of the Commission in matters of peace and security, including support operations, but faces similar staffing constraints due to financial considerations. Donors have assisted by funding various positions within the department, but this is not a sustainable solution and the AU and its member states will ultimately need to resolve their budgetary constraints with their own means. A further problem is the dominance of the military component within the AU; while there have been recent efforts to develop headquarters support for the police and civilian components, these remain eclipsed in practice both at the AU and REC levels; consequently AU peace support operations are far less multidimensional in capacity than their UN counterparts.

Other components of the APSA include the Peace and Security Council, a body composed of members elected for a certain term from among the AU member states, which is responsible for collective security and early warning in response to conflict in Africa. The APSA also includes a Continental Early Warning System that was aimed at providing timely advice on potential African conflicts to key AU institutions, and the Panel of the Wise, composed of respected individuals who are elected to 3-year terms and serve in preventive diplomacy and peacemaking capacities. Finally, the APSA includes the African Standby Force (ASF), to be composed of five multidimensional regional forces that should encompass the capacity to respond to the spectrum of six crisis management scenarios. The most ambitious scenario envisions a 14-day response to deploy a robust military force in situations of genocide where the international community does not act promptly.

However, the ASF has experienced repeated delays in its operationalization. As a result of its failure to deploy troops rapidly to Mali during the crisis in 2012, the AU announced the establishment of the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC), composed of military battle groups of 1500 soldiers, sustainable for 30 days. The ACIRC was a temporary measure until the ASF was consolidated. The ASF was declared operational at the Amani Africa II training exercise in South Africa in 2015. Nevertheless, the ASF faces challenges of interoperability, as member states have different doctrines, training, equipment, and procedures; absence of an operational level of command; inadequate logistical capabilities including strategic lift; and financial resources committed by member states. The AU's limited capabilities means

the AU would necessarily play a supporting role to the UN in peace operations on the continent, while the predominantly military profile of the ASF framework appears insufficiently diversified to respond to the range of challenges to African security.[80]

The APSA as a whole has been limited in its development and operationalization in particular by funding constraints, but also a certain rivalry between the AU Headquarters and the various RECs with which it must coordinate, as the RECs are essential building blocks of the AU's institutional structure. The AU relationship with the five sub-regions has often been sensitive, and tensions also exist within the RECs, which have seen uneven progress in harmonization of approaches and challenges in joint planning.[81]

Notwithstanding the interventionist norm expressed in the Constitutive Act, it has proven challenging to implement Article 4(h). Despite clear evidence of atrocities in Darfur, member states of the AU Assembly were unwilling to support the deployment of military force without the consent of the Sudanese government. Again illustrated during the Libyan crisis, the AU PSC failed to invoke Article 4(h) despite the overwhelming evidence of widespread and systematic attacks by the Gaddafi regime against civilians, and despite the support of several African states for UN Security Council Resolution 1973, which identified an imminent threat to the civilians of Benghazi and authorized a military intervention to protect civilians without the consent of the Libyan government. The problem comes down to lack of political will of AU member states to intervene without the consent of a state, even when that state is attacking its own civilians.[82]

The resolve of the AU was tested again recently with regard to Burundi, where government and rebel forces have perpetrated abuses against civilians in a deepening political crisis triggered by the decision of President Pierre Nkurunziza to run for a third term in office. For the first time, the AU PSC invoked Article 4(h) and pledged in

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[80] Williams, *War & Conflict in Africa*, pp. 208-209.

[81] Susan J. Megy, "The protection of civilians in African regional and sub-regional peace operations" in David Curran, Trudy Fraser, Larry Roeder, Robert Zuder, eds., *Perspectives on peacekeeping and atrocity prevention: expanding stakeholders and regional arrangements* (Switzerland: Springer, 2015), p. 140.

[82] Dan Kuwali, "From stopping to preventing atrocities," *African Security Review* 24, no. 3 (2015): p. 261. Also Aning et al, p. 4.

December 2015 to deploy a peacekeeping force of 5000 to Burundi. In response to the AU's announcement, President Nkurunziza rejected the peace operation and warned the AU that the peacekeeping force would be treated as an invasion and occupation, and would be met by force. Following its summit of heads of state in January 2016, given the lack of consent by the Burundian government, the AU decided not to send troops to Burundi, but to negotiate with President Nkurunziza, who eventually agreed only to the deployment of 100 human rights observers and 100 military monitors.[83] These observers, deployed in late July 2015, were unable to prevent the continuing violence.[84]

Beyond the absence of political will to impose a peace support operation on Bujumbura, the AU's leverage vis-à-vis Nkurunziza was weak given Burundi's significant troop contributions to the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), considered the AU's key PSO. A subsequent effort to deploy up to 228 UN police officers to monitor human rights abuses, authorized on 29 July 2016 by a UN Security Council Resolution drafted by France, was similarly rejected as a violation of the country's sovereignty, and the Burundi government stated that it would accept only 50 unarmed UN police.[85]

Africa's sub-regional organizations had conducted some peace operations due to the OAU's lack of capabilities, and at times the UN's and its member states' failure to respond to African conflict management needs – if not near disengagement from Africa – after the disastrous "Black Hawk down" experience in Somalia.[86] There is now increasing coordination and cooperation between the UN and AU, both at HQ and mission level, including joint field assessment missions, strengthening of AU capacities to plan and manage peace operations, and joint mission planning in Somalia, CAR, and Mali. The UN has re-hatted several AU missions in Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, and CAR over the years. Hopes are that the UN will eventually fund AU-led peace operations through its assessed peacekeeping budget (a recommendation from the 2015 HIPPO report). Moreover, the initial, "bottom-up" conceptualization of the idea of the

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[83] Linda-Ann Akanvou, "Burundi and the responsibilities of the African Union," *Huffington Post* (online), 22 March 2016.

[84] Simon Allison, "Why the crisis in Burundi is tying the African Union in knots," *Guardian*, 6 August 2015.

[85] "Burundi rejects UN police deployment amid violence," *Aljazeera* (online), 3 August 2016.

[86] Williams, *War & Conflict in Africa*, p. 234, 236.

FIB by the Congolese government in discussion with its regional sub-regional partners,[87] and similarly the development of the regional protection force idea for South Sudan by East African member states of IGAD,[88] indicates the growing contribution of Africa's regional and sub-regional organizations within the broader framework of UN peacekeeping.

Despite the impetus to intervene, the AU, RECs and African states face serious resource constraints, lack essential equipment such as helicopters, and rely on external partners such as the European Union (EU) and individual donors to fund their involvement in peace operations and to provide assistance through military training. For example, the allowances for the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)'s 22,126 troops are paid for entirely by the EU's African Peace Facility.[89] As noted above, there have been calls for the UN to fund AU missions more systematically.

Another evolving pattern is the AU's willingness to act as first responder to establish a PSO if necessary, followed up and replaced ultimately by a UN peace operation. In a process driven by the AU's resource constraints, a "division of labour" takes place in which "the AU deploys peacekeepers early and the UN takes over at a later point in time, fulfilling more comprehensive tasks."[90] AU operational roles have been limited in duration and scope by the resources it can marshal from external funders and donors, and has tended increasingly to be operationally focused on peace enforcement (Somalia, Comoros) and stabilization (Mali, CAR) roles.

The strengthening role of African states and organizations in conflict management across the continent is widely acknowledged to be a welcome development. African states are closer to the conflict, and as such have a more direct stake in preventing conflicts from spreading. By virtue of their proximity, African states and organizations are more likely to understand the local cultures, norms and languages, and conflict dynamics in an African setting better than those not from the region. African conflict management benefits from these issues of ownership and responsibility. However, proximity can also be a drawback, as when states become

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[87] Piiparinen, "Intervening to strengthen sovereignty," p. 164.

[88] "East Africa leaders to press for regional force in S. Sudan," Agence France-Presse, 4 August 2016.

[89] Amisom-au.org (accessed 31 August 2016).

[90] Brosig, *Cooperative Peacekeeping*, p. 81.

involved in a peace operation in a neighbouring state in which they have their own interests and pursue their own agenda, including intervening or providing assistance for one of the combatant parties. The involvement of regional actors with direct interests in the host state conflict has been seen with certain peace operations, namely in Mali, CAR, DRC, and the AU mission in Somalia. The partnerships involved in these missions highlight their potential risk to a key principle of peacekeeping, impartiality.

The landscape of African regional and the sub-regional mechanisms for managing conflict in Africa are mixed. While there has been movement towards the norm of non-indifference and sanctioning unconstitutional changes of government, these mechanisms have not yet overcome the norm of non-interference in the domestic affairs of sovereign states sufficiently to enable intervention in an African state that is unable or unwilling to protect its own civilians. The AU and APSA are still evolving and their capacities to mount peace operations, and particularly enforcement and stabilization operations, are improving, yet are still constrained by heavy dependence on external funding. AU capacities to mount missions are limited, and AU missions have been replaced by UN missions that have the resources and capacities to undertake the more comprehensive array of activities associated with peacebuilding. Although there has been progress towards further institutionalization of the APSA, the AU remains limited by political will and resources of its member states.

Conclusions

On a number of dimensions, PSOs are encountering significant challenges. The contemporary conflict environment in Africa is more complex, with the increased involvement of non-state actors in conflict and the fragmentation of sites of power and authority. This renders peace processes more difficult to achieve and sustain. It has also created a more dangerous environment for civilian populations, and in Mali particularly, for peacekeeping personnel as well.

The protection of civilians has emerged as a core mandate in response to the increasing incidence of attacks on civilian populations, raising expectations among host state populations and international public opinion. Yet UN operations feature limited military capabilities and disagreement among troop-contributing countries concerning

the implementation of protection at the tactical and operational levels. While limited contingency operations have provided added support for UN peace operations, such support is short-term and often has not been linked to a broader political strategy. It also tends to be viewed as serving the particular interests of the major intervening powers. Western intervention in Libya, as with French military operations in Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, and CAR, have provoked deep suspicion among some African observers that the linked norms of R2P and POC are increasingly being used by Western states as a pretext for regime change. The authorized use of robust force by peace operations is similarly criticized for its failure to link to a broader political strategy. The AU has increasingly seen itself in the role of "first responder" and is developing the institutional and operational infrastructure to respond to conflicts in Africa. Yet here too, disagreement among member states has limited the AU's "responsibility to intervene".

Contemporary UN peace operations are being deployed with ambitious yet vague mandates that set out to support political processes that will result in the development of a sustainable peace, through the protection of civilians, stabilization of conflict-affected areas, restoration of state authority and rule of law, and the reform of basic institutions and systems of governance. Yet, here too the political nature of the undertaking is underappreciated: attention focuses on troop levels without understanding the military component is one instrument among many that the UN should be using to implement a strategy in support of a political agreement and for the consolidation of peace in a country. Further, the statebuilding project is inherently political, and developing states remain reluctant if not suspicious of interventions that would alter core institutions of the state and the informal relationships and neopatrimonial systems that permeate both state and social spheres. The provision of technical expertise, most clearly represented by train and equip programmes without engagement in political dimension of statebuilding, is inadequate to achieve transformation of state institutions and wider governance systems.

Recommendations

The primary purpose of this article is to provide a brief overview of contemporary peacekeeping, including some of the more significant insights from academic and policy discourse. Written at a time when the one-year old Trudeau government has declared its intention to re-engage with peacekeeping, its wider purpose is to help inform the policy establishment and perhaps the wider interested public about an area from which Canada has been missing for almost 20 years, but about which memories relating to its historical commitment continue to influence public discourse.

1. Since the late 1990s, Canada and other Northern developed countries have contributed few peacekeeping troops and modest numbers of police to UN peacekeeping operations. A serious re-engagement with peacekeeping must incorporate the modernization of training on peace operations for the military component to reflect evolution in the doctrine and practice of UN peace operations, and must seek to shape expectations, since peace operations are distinct from the coalition operations in which Canada has been involved for the past decade;

2. Increased Canadian police deployments to peace operations should be encouraged through the development in police-contributing organizations of formal career incentive structures for police to attain international policing experience;

3. As a donor, Canada should seek opportunities to better support developments in the UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding spheres. By comparison, the like-minded donor Norway has actively supported important initiatives such as the multi-year process to develop a doctrinal framework for the UN police component in peace operations (it has been the sole donor supporting the development of a doctrinal framework for UN policing). Although a small country (population 5 million), Norway punches far above its weight in the support it has provided to international conflict management, and consequently in its influence on policy discourse and practice. If Canada seeks an eventual seat

on the Security Council (for which it will be in competition with Norway), it would do well to emulate Norway's sustained support for strategic initiatives aimed at building or improving UN and African Union capacities to conduct effective peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

4. Canada's prolonged absence, and the drying up of funds for applied research and policy support on peacekeeping (including the loss of accumulated expertise and reputational capital in peacekeeping through the closing of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre), has contributed to an impoverished public and policy discourse on peacekeeping in Canada. Policies of the previous government have eroded Canada's academic and policy expertise on peace operations, restricted access to Canada's (muzzled) bureaucrats, government scientists and diplomats. While it will likely take years to repair the damage in this sphere, a serious re-engagement with peacekeeping must include adequate allocation of resources for support of applied research on peace operations and peacebuilding and support of an epistemic community in Canada that brings policy makers, military, police and civilian practitioners, and academics together to further knowledge and understanding of the practice of peace operations.