

Forum: Security Council

Issue: Improving the Impact and Effectiveness of Peacekeeping in Central Africa

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Introduction

The United Nations Peacekeeping currently operates in two nations within the region of Central Africa, including the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The operation in the DRC began in July 2010, while the one in the Central African Republic began in 2014. However, peacekeeping operations in the DRC itself began initially in 1999 with MONUC, or the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The current operation is in succession of MONUC and has a slightly different focus. The original mandate of MONUC was to “help bring peace and stability in the DRC”. While the current operation, known as MONUSCO, has a mandate of “protecting civilians and consolidating peace in the DRC”. Although the mandates seem to be similar, the UN states that the name of the operation was changed in order to “reflect the new phase reached in the country”.

Early in 2013, the rebel group Seleka took control over Bangui, the capital of the Central African Republic. Forcing out the former president Francois Bozize. At this time a transitional government, with Michel Djotodia at its head, was established. To respond to the continued attacks by rebels, Djotodia created the anti-balaka, an anti-terrorist force. The violence only worsened, however, and the government was unable to regain complete control. Seleka’s attacks continued and human rights abuses were common throughout the country. At this time, the security council was faced with the decision of creating a peacekeeping operation in the CAR.

Eventually in April of 2014 MINUSCA was created with the goal of protecting civilians, facilitating humanitarian access, and monitoring/investigating human rights abuses. However, claims of Human Rights Abuses by MINUSCA has undermined the purpose of the entire operation and brought into question the true effectiveness of peacekeepers in resolving issues like these.

Definition of Key Terms

Peacekeeping (by the United Nations)

The active maintenance of a truce between nations or communities by forces sanctioned by the United Nations.

Mandate

Mandates are given by the United Nations Security Council and are the basis for the deployment of any peacekeeping troops. Mandates dictate what the peacekeeping force is required to do, essentially the “assignment” of the force.

Host Country

The host country is the country in which the peacekeeping force will operate. ex. Central African Republic for MINUSCA. UN peacekeeping operations can only be conducted once the host country has given consent. However, often times host countries are unwilling to give genuine consent for a peacekeeping operation. This could be due to the problems within the country to be caused by the host country’s own government.

Human Rights Abuse/Violation

Human rights are basic rights inherent to all human beings regardless of gender, age, nationality ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. All human beings are entitled to these rights without discrimination, a human rights violation/abuse would be a violation of such rights.

Internally Displaced Persons

An internally displaced person is an individual who is forced to flee from their home, yet remains within the borders of their home nation. They are often referred to as refugees but do not fit the legal criteria of a refugee.

MONUC

United Nations peacekeeping operation in the DR Congo. Succeeded by MONUSCO.

MUNISCA

United Nations peacekeeping operation in the Central African Republic. Some of the main parts of its mandate are:

1. Protecting civilians
2. Good offices and support to the peace process, including national reconciliation, social cohesion and transitional justice,

3. Support for the extension of State authority, the deployment of security forces, and the preservation of territorial integrity
4. Promotion and protection of human rights

MONUSCO

The successor operation to MONUC, its mandate mainly relates to the protection of civilians, humanitarian personnel and human rights defenders under imminent threat of physical violence and to support the Government of the DRC in its stabilization and peace consolidation efforts.

Background Information

Sexual abuse, impunity within MINUSCA

There have been several allegations of United Nations peacekeepers sexually abusing and violating the basic human rights of the civilians they should be protecting. This not only has tainted the reputation of the operation, it also makes it harder for peacekeepers to operate as public dissention spreads. There have been multiple allegations since the operation began, with one publicized example being the sexual abuse of a 14 year old girl between 2015 and 2016. The girl became pregnant and gave birth to a child as a result. MINUSCA has put the girl in touch with relevant organizations that can provide help for both her and her child. It also released a statement saying that MINUSCA is fully devoted to stopping any kind of sexual assault or abuse within the operation. However, events like these have a serious impact on the credibility of the operation and peacekeepers as a whole.

Reasons for peacekeeping being ineffective

Currently one of the issues with certain peacekeeping forces is that the contributing country is unwilling to allow their forces to engage in actual combat, as many countries believe the risk to their troops is too high. The U.N. Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support has stated that the use of force by peacekeepers to protect civilians should be considered a last resort and that UN peacekeepers have “so many other tools at their disposal... the use of force... will be a rare occurrence”.

Another issue with peacekeeping forces is that, especially during human rights related missions, peacekeeping forces end up abusing the people they should be protecting. Situations such as the one in the Central African Republic where 5 minors were sexually abused not only show the ineffectiveness of peacekeeping, but also bring into question the need for peacekeepers at all if they aren't protecting civilians but instead are exploiting them.

The best role of peacekeepers, statistically

Research results compiled by researchers at Oxford University suggest that peacekeepers seem to be the most effective when serving as a supportive part of the government and working to strengthen the government's capacity and its ability to control the situation. On the other hand, when peacekeepers are deployed to deal with human rights crises, there is a tendency for this to elicit negative behavior. There is usually also less governmental backing in the event of a human rights crises, which in most cases is caused by the government itself. While the government would be in full support and cooperate better with peacekeeping forces there to bolster its army's strength.

The Research

Peacekeeping has been established by the UN for over 70 years now, yet there isn't much data to be had on its effectiveness besides the usual "number of troops, number of civilians protected, top troop and monetary contributors, total budget, etc." These are metrics commonly seen on the websites of peacekeeping operations and are the main metrics used to determine the "effectiveness" of a peacekeeping operation. These numbers cannot tell the whole story and thus cannot give UN officials a proper image of what is happening on the ground and how well an operation is actually doing. However, in recent years, there has been an increase in the types of data collected on peacekeeping and its effectiveness.

Empirical Data Collection and Research Designs

Recent work has shown promising new research designs and methods in the empirical study of the effectiveness of peace operations. The use of surveys to understand the effects of peacekeeping on attitudes towards peace and other aspects of conflicts has also provided useful information. In addition, field experiments in the study of peace operations have been used to increase the internal validity of empirical tests of theoretical mechanisms. Finally, a recent wave of research is providing advanced and sophisticated methods based on empirical estimates to simulate and predict the effectiveness of peace operations.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

Central African Republic (CAR)

Currently the Central African Republic is still facing internal instability. Rebel groups still hold key towns, instability and violence are still major problems across major parts of the country. Civilians are still the targets of most of the attacks by groups such as the Muslim Seleka and predominantly-Christian anti-balaka militias. Despite of a peacekeeping presence, there hasn't been a reduction in violence against

civilians. In fact, based on UN figures, the number of internally displaced peoples (IDPs) was at 601,600, and the total number of refugees at 538,400, the highest the number has been since mid-2014.

MINUSCA has around 10,050 military peacekeepers deployed, yet hasn't been able to establish control over key areas or properly protect civilians from attacks.

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Throughout 2018, Joseph Kabila's government carried out widespread repression and serious human rights violations against those who opposed him. Much of the violence is linked to the DRC's broader political crisis. More than 4.5 million people were displaced and 13 million require humanitarian assistance. There were protests for the Congolese government to respect the "New Year's Eve agreement", which was signed in 2016 and called for presidential elections in 2017. However, elections did not happen until the very end of 2018 as president Joseph Kabila held on to power through repression and violence. MONUSCO's presence is an attempt to secure a peaceful transition of power after said elections took place.

MINUSCA

MINUSCA was established in 2014 after serious instability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo involving rebel groups which controlled several key areas in the nation. The main priority of the current operation is supporting the Transitional Government to exercise basic State functions, supporting peace and reconciliation efforts, protecting basic human rights and facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The objective of the operation will change overtime as the conflict evolves and changes. Currently the operation is focused on helping the government regain control, eradicate human rights abuses, and provide humanitarian assistance to those in need. The Secretary-General was of the view that many of the issues facing the Central African Republic exceeded the capacities of a single UN peacekeeping operation, and required broader assistance from the international community as a whole if it is to be solved.

MONUSCO

A successor operation from a previous UN peacekeeping operation. The new mission in the DRC has been authorized to use all necessary means to carry out its mandate, which includes: the protection of civilians, humanitarian personnel and human rights defenders under imminent threat of physical violence and to support the Government of the DRC in its stabilization and peace consolidation efforts.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
July 1999	MONUC is established in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
July 2010	MONUC is succeeded by MONUSCA after the UNSC resolution 1925
April 10th, 2014	MINUSCA is authorized by the UNSA
September 15th, 2014	MISCA's authority is transferred to MINUSCA
February 19th, 2018	MINUSCA releases official press release regarding sexual abuse allegations
December 30th, 2018	DRC holds a general election to determine the successor to Joseph Kabila
January 10th, 2019	DRC's election committee declared Felix Tshisekedi to be president

Relevant UN Resolutions and Treaties

- Resolution 1925, 28 May 2010 **(S/RES/1925)**
- Resolution 2149, 10 April 2014 **(S/RES/2149)**
- Resolution 2272, 11 March 2016 **(S/RES/2272)**
- Resolution 2389, 8 December 2017 **(S/RES/2389)**

Possible Solutions

Writing clearer/reforming/further extending mandates for missions perhaps the fastest and easiest way to improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping forces is to write clearer mandates for them. The mandate dictates the goals the the peacekeeping force and what the force should be doing, can be doing, and will be doing in the region. Poorly written or unclear mandates will severely hinder a force's ability to be effective. If a force's orders are unclear, it execution of those orders cannot possibly be effective. Thus, through improving the writing of mandates, the effectiveness of the forces operating under those mandates will also be improved.

Providing a better flow of communication and the sharing of information between the host nation and the peacekeepers improving communication between peacekeepers and their host nation helps the host nation and the peacekeeping force understand each other's relative strength and how to best use the peacekeeping force in the assistance of the government. As previously mentioned, peacekeepers have been most effective when serving as essentially an extension of the government, working to increase stability in the region. Thus it is vital for a peacekeeping force to fully understand the situation and the goal of the government in order to become more effective at their job.

Reducing the potential for human rights violations during human rights related peacekeeping missions one of the biggest problems that United Nations peacekeeping missions face is the violating of human rights during human rights based missions. Even though the UN has mentioned that this is an issue and is currently working to solve it, there are still human rights abuses being committed by peacekeepers. Short term solutions such as handing out immediate and severe punishments to the troops and long term solutions such as improving overall troop discipline and improving troop tracking capabilities will both be required to solve such an issue.

Reducing corruption in peacekeeping missions guaranteeing that the monetary funds actually reach where they need to be in a peacekeeping mission can be vital to keeping it effective. Reducing "middle men" in these situations could also help reduce the amount of funds that eventually become "unaccounted for" as they end up in the pockets of officials. Providing better transparency is very important to the finances of operations. However, there is also opposition to such an idea as certain parties, maybe even the host nations themselves, could be unwilling to comply with such a request. This is a more complex solution as corruption has always been an issue within peacekeeping operations and is a much larger problem than just increasing transparency. However, any method of increasing the effectiveness of a peace operation is a step in the right direction.

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