

United Nations' Operations in Congo

A Historical "Reading" of UN Security Council Resolutions

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Introduction and Research Design

THIS ARTICLE focuses on violent armed conflicts in the Congo and examines the United Nations' forms of military intervention in different historical periods, from the Cold War (and the crisis breaking out immediately after Congo gained independence), through the armed conflict in the former Zaire in the 1990s (marking the ousting of Mobutu Sese Seko), to the recent violence in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The selection of case studies is correlated to United Nations' military operations. The armed conflicts briefly described here correspond to three major forms of intervention: peacekeeping, peace enforcement, and robust peacekeeping. The chief purpose in this article is the assessment of UN operations in Congo (discussed in terms of success, limited success, pitfalls, domestic and international complexities) and the methodology employed is based on historical description and interpretation. The main methodological instrument employed is document analysis, since a "reading" of UN Security Council Resolutions is meant to clarify the scopes and limits of UN operations.

Conceptual Clarifications: UN Peace Operations

THE UNITED Nations' involvement in various crises aims at protecting international peace and security. UN peace operations entail different forms of intervention, ranging from conflict prevention and mediation, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, peacemaking, and (post-conflict) peace building.

According to the United Nations, conflict prevention "involves diplomatic measures to keep intra-state or inter-state tensions and disputes from escalating into violent conflict" (United Nations, *Peace and Security*).¹ When former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali issued his *Agenda for Peace*, in 1992, he indicated the changing international context (stressing new threats and new dimensions of insecurity) while also showing that "preventive diplomacy is action to prevent disputes from arising between

parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur” (Boutros-Ghali, 1992).² The making of peace refers to the use of various diplomatic means in order to bring the conflict parties to negotiate a settlement. As such, it is a key instrument for conflict transformation, conflict management and conflict resolution. The UN describes peacemaking as “measures to address conflicts in progress and usually involves diplomatic action to bring hostile parties to a negotiated agreement” (United Nations, *Peace and Security*)³, since, as emphasized by Boutros-Ghali, “between the tasks of seeking to prevent conflict and keeping the peace lies the responsibility to try to bring hostile parties to agreement by peaceful means” (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). According to Roderick von Lipsey, “peace making activities require substantial commitment by the parties to the conflict under the facilitating good offices of international organizations” because this form of intervention “entails the employment of resolution mechanisms that seek to redress the wrongs, the establishment of mutually accepted boundaries, and restoration of political and governmental infrastructures” (von Lipsey, 1997, 9-10). Post conflict peace-building refers to UN involvement throughout “long-term processes of creating the necessary conditions for sustainable peace” and its major objective is “to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management [...]” (United Nations, *Peace and Security*). As emphasized by Boutros-Ghali, activities included in peace-building efforts range from “disarming the previously warring parties and the restoration of order, the custody and possible destruction of weapons, repatriating refugees, advisory and training support for security personnel, monitoring elections, advancing efforts to protect human rights” to “reforming or strengthening governmental institutions and promoting formal and informal processes of political participation” (Boutros-Ghali, 1992).

Prevention is usually efficient before crises escalate into violent armed conflicts while peace-building marks the end of civil wars. In between these phases, UN intervention entails either peacekeeping operations or peace enforcement ones. The two differ essentially in terms of military engagement. A third type emerged over the years because of the complexities and features of intra-state strife.

Peacekeeping refers to the deployment of UN military troops with the intent of monitoring the ceasefire agreement and supervising the implementation of peace agreements. Basically, keeping the peace means assisting the parties to a conflict (which had already consented to end hostilities) transition to a post-conflict phase. There are three key basic principles embedded herein: the impartiality of UN troops, the consent of former belligerents regarding the UN presence, and the limited authorization with respect to use of force.

As indicated by Roderick von Lipsey, “peacekeeping is the use of neutral forces between, and with the consent of, previously warring parties for the maintenance of an existing cease-fire or cessation of hostilities,” it usually requires “the interposition of neutral forces to maintain law and order,” and entails the fact that “contending forces have been disarmed or physically separated prior to the deployment of peacekeeping operation” (von Lipsey, 1997, 9). According to the International Peace Academy, the chief role of peacekeeping operations (PKOs) is “the prevention, containment, moderation and termination of hostilities between or within states, through the medium of a peaceful

third-party intervention organized and directed internationally, using a multinational force of soldiers, police, and civilians to restore and maintain peace” (Jett, 1999, 14). Peacekeeping operations are deployed on the basis of mandates from the UN Security Council and are authorized under Chapter VI provisions of the UN Charter, which deal with “Pacific Settlement of Disputes” (United Nations, *Peace and Security*).⁴ Usually, peacekeeping operations combine lightly armed military troops with police forces (who are visible due to the blue helmets) and employ force only in self-defense and when there is a need to defend the mandate of the operation.

A UN peacekeeping operation should only use force as a measure of last resort. It should always be calibrated in a precise, proportional and appropriate manner, within the principle of the minimum force necessary to achieve the desired effect, while sustaining consent for the mission and its mandate. The use of force by a UN peacekeeping operation always has political implications and can often give rise to unforeseen circumstances (United Nations, *Peace and Security*).⁵

As stressed by Roderick von Lipsey, “in skills, equipment, professional orientation, keeping the peace requires persons trained in the maintenance of law and order” and, since such operations function under “the mutual consent of all parties to the conflict, the peacekeepers have a mandate to support the will of the political elites or governmental leaders who are party to the conflict” (von Lipsey, 1997, 15).

Peace enforcement operations are authorized under Chapter VII provisions of the UN Charter, do not “require the consent of the main parties and may involve the use of military force at the strategic or international level, which is normally prohibited for Member States under Article 2(4) of the Charter, unless authorized by the Security Council” (United Nations, *Peace and Security*).⁶ The nature of peace enforcement operations differs from peace-keeping because “it involves the forcible interposition of parties external to the conflict between the warring factions in order to facilitate the cessation of hostilities, deter renewed aggression, and create an environment conducive to the declaration of a cease-fire and beginning of the resolution measures” (von Lipsey, 1997, 9). In fact, peace enforcement entails a range of coercive measures and activities, including the use of military force, and, as specified by the United Nations, “it requires the explicit authorization of the Security Council” (United Nations, *Peace and Security*).⁷ In contrast to the mandate and training of peacekeepers, peace enforcement “requires the skills, equipment, professional orientation of warriors,” since it deploys “armed troops between members of warring factions by directly exposing them to combat conditions” (von Lipsey, 1997, 11).

Peace enforcement operations are rare because they are contingent on Security Council members’ will to authorize use of military force against states’ political authorities. The latter is controversial because it impinges upon state sovereignty and states’ right to non-intervention in their internal affairs, but also because the UN Charter limits the use of force against member states of the organization, as stipulated in article 2 (paragraphs 4 and 7). A historical overview of UN operations reveals the fact that peace enforcement is supported by states only in situations where international peace and security are threat-

ened or in cases where internal conflicts, due to spillover effects, were linked to regional instability and ultimately to threats posed to international peace and security. Also, an analysis of past peacekeeping operations reveals the limits and shortcomings of such operations in the context of violent civil wars. Several case-studies (such as Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina) are illustrative for the failure of peacekeeping, since lightly armed troops were deployed in the midst of on-going armed conflicts and exposed to dangers and attacks from insurgent groups.

Robust peacekeeping or “muscular peacekeeping” emerged out of the limitations of peacekeeping and peace enforcement and is set in between Chapter VI and Chapter VII provisions of the UN Charter. Therefore, they are sometimes referred to as “UN Chapter Six-an-a-half operations” (von Lipsey, 1997, 15). According to the United Nations, “robust peacekeeping involves the use of force at the tactical level with the authorization of the Security Council and consent of the host nation and/or the main parties to the conflict” (United Nations, *Peace and Security*).⁸

ONUC, 1960-1964: From *de jure* Peacekeeping to *de facto* Peace Enforcement

THE FIRST UN operation in Congo represented a complex and ambitious effort, and yet it was caught among Cold War geopolitical interests. Immediately after Congo gained independence from Belgian colonial rule, on 30 June 1960, the country plunged into turmoil. Piling up as resentment against Belgian colonial administration, a mutiny broke out within members of the Force Publique, because of low wages, and Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba tried to cope with the situation by “deciding to Africanize the Force Publique, [renaming] it the Congolese National Army (ANC), and dismissing the Belgian officers” (Haskin, 2005, 23). Despite this, the crisis escalated and Congolese soldiers started fighting the Belgian ones, especially in Katanga, the copper-rich southern province. Belgium was immediately alarmed by such threats to its citizens and “sent troops and flew in planes for evacuation,” which was perceived by the Congolese government “as an affront to its very sovereignty” (Haskin, 2005, 23-24). Rebellion extended in Katanga and on 11 July 1960 the province proclaimed its independence from the central government. A similar separatist movement followed suit in the province of Kasai. The secession of Katanga was led by Moïse Tshombé and was “supported by the Belgians whose extensive investments in the Katangese copper mining industry were threatened by Lumumba’s intended nationalization policy” (Blommaert, 1990, 100–101). Confronted with nationwide unrest and disintegration of territory, the Congolese government “initially appealed to the United States for help to expel the Belgians” and, as explained by analysts, “although Eisenhower was unwilling to see the newly independent Congo fall into the lap of the Soviets, he was equally unwilling to intervene directly for fear of instigating some form of retaliation from the Soviet Union. He therefore advised the Congolese to seek the help of the United Nations”

(Haskin, 2005, 24). Prime Minister Lumumba requested assistance from the United Nations, “claiming that the Katanga secession was an international conflict opposing Belgians and Congolese” (Blommaert, 1990, 101).

UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld reacted swiftly and a UN operation was set in motion.⁹ The United Nations Operation in the Congo (*Opération des Nations Unies au Congo*, or ONUC) was adopted under Security Council Resolution 143/1960 of 14 July 1960 (*The Blue Helmets*, 1996, 177). The resolution called “upon the Government of Belgium to withdraw its troops from the territory of the Republic of the Congo” and decided “to authorize the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps, in consultation with the government of the Republic of the Congo, to provide the Government with such military assistance as may be necessary until, through the Government’s efforts with United Nations technical assistance, the national security forces might be able [...] to meet fully their tasks” (UNSCR 143/1960).¹⁰ The UN military involvement in Congo was correlated to an existing threat towards international security. This idea was enshrined in Security Council Resolution 145 of 1960, which considered that “the complete restoration of law and order in the Republic of the Congo would effectively contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security” (UNSCR 145/1960).¹¹ Belgium questioned the dynamic of the “international conflict” and claimed the crisis in Katanga was “an internal conflict opposing Congolese to Congolese” (Blommaert, 1990, 101). Dag Hammarskjöld tried to distance the UN operation from interpretations of great power influences as follows:

The Organization must further and support policies aiming at independence, not only in a constitutional sense but in every sense of the word, protecting the possibilities of the African people to choose their own way without undue influences being exercised and without attempts to abuse the situation. This must be true in all fields, the political, the economic, as well as the ideological—if independence is to have a real meaning. Working for these purposes, the United Nations can build on the confidence of the best and most responsible elements of all the countries of the continent (Hobbs, 2014, 4).¹²

The crisis in Congo spread and intensified. The provinces Katanga and Kasai were still fighting for independence while local Baluba tribes resisted the breakaway movements. Hammarskjöld described the massacre of the Baluba and labeled it as genocide, since “approximately 3,000 Baluba were killed during this time” (Haskin, 2005, 26). The episode revealed the weaknesses of peacekeepers and the limitation pertaining to the use of force. As indicated by Jeanne Haskin, “since the mandate of the UN forces strictly proscribed the use of force for other than self-defense, they could not intervene to end the fighting (Haskin, 2005, 26). Also, relations between the Congolese Central Government and the United Nations deteriorated, because Patrice Lumumba was dissatisfied with the limited role of the UN in averting secession and hence ordered his troops to start an invasion in Katanga (Blommaert, 1990, 101–102). The invasion of Katanga benefited from Soviet support, which triggered the strong reaction of the USA, with “President Eisenhower responding that this was in flagrant violation of the UN resolu-

tions and that it revealed Russia's 'political designs in Africa'" (Ernest W. Lefever, *apud* Haskin, 2005, 26). Other complexities followed suit: Lumumba was assassinated, the Congolese Parliament was in deadlock, Joseph Mobutu emerged and proclaimed army rule, while Belgium was still supporting the secession of Katanga (Haskin, 2005, 26).

The role of the United Nations' operation became much more complicated, because the UN was confronted with a violent situation and had to deal with different rival factions. Confronted with collapse into violent civil war, the UN adopted a new resolution in 1961 which extended the mandate of the operation and broadened its tasks so as to make it efficient in preventing civil wars. The text of the UN resolution 161/1961 of 21 February 1961

[urged] that the United Nations take immediately all appropriate measures to prevent the occurrence of civil war in the Congo, including arrangements for cease-fires, the halting of all military operations, the prevention of clashes, and the use of force, if necessary, in the last resort;

[urged] that measures be taken for the immediate withdrawal and evacuation from the Congo of all Belgian and other foreign military and paramilitary personnel and political advisers not under the United Nations Command, and mercenaries (UNSCR 161/1961).¹³

As emphasized by Thomas Mockaitis, ONUC (*Opération des Nations Unies au Congo*), originally a peacekeeping operation, was transformed into *de facto* peace enforcement without actually receiving explicit authorization under Chapter VII provisions. At its peak, the operation numbered 19,828 troops and involved 30 countries which contributed to the mission (Mockaitis, 1998, 25). The UN operation initially protected European residents in the Congo, safeguarded humanitarian aid, separated the warring parties but ended up fighting "European mercenaries working for the secessionist government" in Katanga and mining firms (Mockaitis, 1998, 25). Although the UN operation did manage to end Katanga's secession, thus preserving Congolese territorial integrity, the costs of the operation were very high. In September 1961, Dag Hammarskjöld was killed in a plane crash and, as indicated by others, "to this day, conspiracy theories questioning whether complications with the Congo crisis were responsible for the plane crash surround the circumstances of his death" (Hobbs, 2014, 4). Moreover, the UN involvement in this crisis revealed Cold War rival geopolitical interests and diverging views among states, some favoring secession, others opposing it, and almost bankrupted the UN (Mockaitis, 1998, 25). All these complexities were presented as follows:

The [UN] operation was threatened with insolvency. On October 16, the UN revealed that there were only enough funds to continue ONUC for another two weeks. Out of more than a hundred UN members, only sixteen had contributed anything during 1961. Most of the expenses of the Organization were borne by the United States which, in addition to its share of \$32.2 million, paid in 1961 more than 50 percent of the assessments of the small powers. The Communist

countries, most of the Arab states, France, Belgium, Portugal, and South Africa refused to contribute on political grounds, while a number of Afro-Asian and Latin American countries pleaded poverty. In October imminent disaster was averted only when the General Assembly Budgetary Committee, overriding Russian opposition, voted \$10 million a month for November and December, 1961 (Arthur Lee Burns; Nina Heathcote, *Peace-Keeping by UN Forces, from Suez to the Congo*, *apud* Haskin, 2005, 34).

The aftermath of this UN intervention in Congo witnessed the rise of Mobutu Sese Seko who ruled the country until 1997 when he was overthrown by internal rebellion. The “32 years of dictatorship and what later came to be called state kleptocracy under Mobutu” (Arnold, 2008, 124) were symptomatic for the violent crises in Zaire/Democratic Republic of the Congo after 1994. Due to his anti-communist stand, Mobutu received support from the United States and France (Arnold, 2008, 235) and the widespread Congolese conflict in the post-Cold War period can also “be seen as a direct casualty of the demise of protection provided by the superpowers” (Okowa, 2007, 27).

MONUC, 1999–2010: Robust Peacekeeping in the Congo

THE GENOCIDE occurring in Rwanda in 1994 had tragic consequences upon Zaire/DR of the Congo.¹⁴ When the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) defeated the Hutu government in July 1994, a huge refugee flow of approximately one million Hutu arrived in eastern Zaire. Amongst the refugee camps were also the perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide, the *génocidaires*, members of FAR (*Forces Armées Rwandaises/Rwandan Armed Forces*) and Interahamwe (Hutu extremists). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) set up refugee camps in eastern Zaire, but could not prevent or dissuade “the reestablishment [...] of the political and military structures and leadership that were responsible for the genocide in Rwanda” (Carayannis; Weiss, 2003, 257). The huge exodus was soon followed by a cholera epidemic which received ample media coverage and produced major human losses (between 20,000 and 50,000) among the camp residents (Carayannis; Weiss, 2003, 257). These events led to the destabilization of eastern Zaire and the crisis had two major dimensions.

On the one hand, it indicated how refugees become “resources of war” and how the Rwandan “genocide organizers and killers blended into the refugee camps” and exploited the crisis in order to attract humanitarian aid (John Stedman; Fred Tanner, 2003, 2–3). Also, it showed how in this case the refugee crisis was intertwined with refugee manipulation and “refugee militarization.” On the other hand, the crisis had negative repercussions on ethnic Tutsis (Banyamulenge) living in eastern Zaire. The Banyamulenge had been living in the eastern part of Congo for a long time,¹⁵ but they had become dissatisfied with Mobutu’s policy of divide and rule and with the government’s decision in 1981 to deprive them of Zairean citizenship (Arnold, 2008, 414). Hence, they rebelled in 1996. Because the post-genocide Rwandan leaders perceived the refugee camps as major threat, there was soon a convergence of interests between them and the Banyamulenge.

A major armed conflict broke out and other complexities ensued. Zaire accused Rwanda of arming and backing up the rebels in the Kivus, while Rwanda accused Mobutu of sheltering the Hutu extremists. Local authorities in north Kivu have been resorting to a “quasi-ethnic cleansing campaign” (Carayannis; Weiss, 2003, 258) ever since 1993 and in 1996 the situation deteriorated even more: the Banyamulenge were on the verge of being expelled from the region (Arnold, 2008, 414). Another exodus of people was triggered, but one armed group among them (trained and armed by the RPF) started to fight the FAZ (*Forces Armées Zairoises/Zairean Armed Forces*) and the Hutu militia. Uganda invoked reasons similar to Rwanda’s and joined the latter in the military effort. The FAZ soldiers started to act in disarray and withdraw (Arnold, 2008, 414) while the anti-Zairean government rebellion gradually seized control and started moving towards the capital city Kinshasa. The locally ignited rebellion turned into an extended anti-Mobutu revolution. Laurent-Désiré Kabila, a long-time opponent of Mobutu, soon became the leader of the rebels and four dissident groups comprised the AFDL (*Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo/Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire*). The rebels gained control over Shaba (formerly known as Katanga) and later moved closer and closer to the capital Kinshasa. The last phase of this violent armed conflict occurred in May 1997 when Mobutu’s regime collapsed (Arnold, 2008, 414), only to be followed by equally violent conflicts in eastern Congo.

Kabila’s takeover of power was in fact due to the Banyamulenge/Congolese Tutsis’ support and to the assistance of Rwandan and Ugandan armies (Arnold, 2008, 98). It also benefited from tacit approval of the international community, since it was the anti-Mobutu struggle that prevailed in international perception, and not Laurent-Désiré Kabila legitimacy *per se*. Very soon, though, he came to have strenuous relations with the UN, on the one hand, but also with Rwanda and Uganda, on the other hand. According to Human Rights Watch, Kabila’s AFDL “carried out massive killings of civilian refugees and other violations of basic principles of international humanitarian law during attacks on refugee camps in the former Zaire.”¹⁶ Since Kabila’s rebellion was dependent on the Banyamulenge and the armies of Rwanda and Uganda, “there was a reaction against these allies in Kinshasa and, in particular, resentment at the Tutsi” (Arnold, 2008, 98) and consequently things escalated. Rwanda understood the misachievements of Kabila, perceiving his fostering of anti-Tutsi feelings and his inability to end “the problem of border insecurity by neutralizing the insurgency groups threatening Uganda, Rwanda, and Angola from the Congo” (Carayannis; Weiss, 2003, 270). A mutiny within the AFDL followed suit and the break-away RCD forces (*Rassemblement Congolaise pour la Démocratie/Rally for Congolese Democracy*) started fighting against the Kabila government. The second violent conflict in post-Cold War Congolese history revealed the fragmentation of the military troops. Some former supporters of Mobutu and some former FAZ troops joined the rebels while others joined Namibia and Zimbabwe in their support for Kabila. Another rebel group (*MLC/Movement for the Liberation of the Congo*) emerged while the Mai Mai resistance fighters¹⁷ received the support of Kabila’s government. By 1999 there was intense fighting in eastern Congo and “anti-Kabila rebels who were caught were massacred [...] and a real pogrom against all Tutsi took hold” (Carayannis; Weiss, 2003, 271). The dynamic of the civil war showed further complexities.

The RCD split into two factions due to divergent views: the RCD-ML (*Mouvement de Libération*) was backed by Uganda and the RCD-Goma was supported by Rwanda (Carayannis; Weiss, 2003, 271). By 2000 the Rwandan and Ugandan forces were fighting among themselves and Kabila's government almost lost control over Congolese territory (Arnold, 2008, 100).

Urged by the international community and backed by UN resolutions, the Lusaka process was undertaken by the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The Lusaka process "involved the three major Congolese groups in the conflict, namely the government, the RCD and the [...] MLC, as well as their respective supporters, namely Namibia, Zimbabwe and Angola (governments) and Rwanda and Uganda (rebel groups)" (Koko, 2011, 32) and resulted in the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. Also, it "called for the deployment of a Chapter VII UN peacekeeping operation in the DRC" (Koko, 2011, 32).

Following the signing of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in July 1999 between the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and five regional states involved in the conflict (Angola, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe), the Security Council established the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).¹⁸ On 30 November 1999, the United Nations Security Council issued Resolution 1279, which "reaffirmed [...] that the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement represents the most viable basis for a resolution of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo" and "noted the role it requests the United Nations to play in the implementation of the ceasefire" (UNSCR 1279/1999).¹⁹ The peacekeeping nature of this UN operation is consistent with the basic principles of peacekeeping (namely, the UN troops deployed in order to monitor the implementation of the ceasefire agreement) and is stipulated in the text of the Resolution as follows:

The Security Council

1. Calls upon all parties to the conflict to cease hostilities, to implement fully the provisions of the Ceasefire Agreement [...];
2. Stresses the need for a continuing process of genuine national reconciliation, encourages all Congolese to participate in the national dialogue to be organized in coordination with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and calls upon all Congolese parties and the OAU to finalize agreement on the facilitator for the national dialogue;
3. Welcomes the appointment by the Secretary-General of his Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo to serve as the head of the United Nations presence in the subregion relating to the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to provide assistance in the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement (UNSCR 1279/1999).²⁰

According to Security Council Resolution 1291/2000 of 24 February 2000, the mandate of the MONUC entails, *inter alia*, monitoring "the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement and investigate violations of the ceasefire" (UNSCR 1291/2000).²¹ However, the robust peacekeeping operation is clearly stipulated:

Acting under chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council also decided that MONUC may take the necessary action, in the areas of deployment of its infantry battalions and as it deems it within its capabilities, to protect United Nations and co-located JMC personnel, facilities, installations and equipment, ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel, and protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence.²²

Contrary to the UN experience in the Congo, when peace enforcement became the actual form of intervention, even though such activities were never authorized under Chapter VII provisions, MONUC was sanctioned to carry out tasks under such provisions, with the consent of the Congolese government which could no longer protect its civilians in the east or control its eastern territory.

DR Congo plunged into further violence and several dramatic events precipitated. In January 2001 Laurent Kabila was assassinated by a member of his presidential guard and his son, Joseph Kabila, took over. In 2002 and 2003 fighting between tribal groups in the northeast area broke out. The Ugandans supported the local Lundu agriculturalists and backed their militias while Rwanda provided support for the cattle-herding Hema (Arnold, 2008, 106). Clashes between the local militias led to immense human losses. According to Human Rights Watch reports the massacres in Ituri caused 50,000 deaths and 500,000 refugees in 2003, and according to International Rescue Committee most of the deaths were a result of generalized violence, lack of medical facilities, food insecurity, due to “the disruption of the country’s health services and food supplies.”²³ Consequently, under UN Resolution 1565/2004 of 1 October 2004, the Security Council “revised the mandate of MONUC and authorized the increase of MONUC’s strength by 5,900 personnel” in order to “ensure the protection of civilians, including humanitarian personnel, under imminent threat of physical violence” (UNSCR 1565/2004).²⁴

MONUSCO: Robust Peacekeeping and the Protection of Civilians

WHILE THE United Nations pursued its engagement in the eastern Congo, the local violence continued and human suffering was mounting. Consequently, on 1 July 2010, the Security Council, under resolution 1925, renamed MONUC the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in an attempt to reflect accommodating strategies to local realities.²⁵ According to the UN’s mandate, “the new mission has been authorized to use all necessary means to carry out its mandate relating, among other things, 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.”²⁶

In 2012–2013, civilians in the eastern part of DR Congo were caught between violent attacks from various local brutal insurgent groups, such as 23 March Movement

(M23) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). On 28 March 2013, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2098/2013, "by which it extended until 31 March 2014 the mandate of MONUSCO and created a specialized 'intervention brigade' to strengthen the peacekeeping operation."²⁷

The resolution strongly condemned 23 March Movement (M23), the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) "and all other armed groups and their continuing violence and abuses of human rights." It tasked the new brigade with carrying out offensive operations, either unilaterally or jointly with the Congolese armed forces, "in a robust, highly mobile and versatile manner" to disrupt the activities of those groups.²⁸

The text of Resolution 2098/2013 strengthens the role of the United Nations and focuses, *inter alia*, on the need to protect civilians by strongly condemning "the M23, the FDLR, the ADF, the APCLS, the LRA, the National Force of Liberation (FNL), the various Mayi Mayi groups and all other armed groups and their continuing violence and abuses of human rights, including summary executions, sexual and gender based violence and large scale recruitment and use of children" by demanding "that all armed groups cease immediately all forms of violence and destabilizing activities and that their members immediately and permanently disband and lay down their arms" and by reiterating "that those responsible for human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law will be [...] held accountable" (UNSCR 2098/2013).

According to some views, UN peacekeeping in Congo is still fraught with inefficiency, due to the "failure to properly demobilize some militias and integrate them into the national army as part of the political transition" or because Congo was labeled prematurely "as a post-conflict situation."²⁹ However, other views considered the wording of Resolution 2098 of 2013 as a milestone for the international community's stance towards the responsibility to protect civilians affected by violence.

Conclusion

IN THIS article, we tried to emphasize the UN engagement in different wars or phases of wars in Congo, by analyzing the shift from a complicated operation in the 1960s, which had been authorized for peacekeeping but ended up closer to the activities associated with peace enforcement, to the robust peacekeeping operations authorized under Chapter VII provisions of the UN Charter and which marked the increasing preoccupation for the protection of civilians.



Notes

1. United Nations, *Peace and Security*, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/peace.shtml>, accessed 30 March 2017.
2. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace*, Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to the statement adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992, <http://www.un-documents.net/a47-277.htm>, accessed 30 March 2017.
3. United Nations, *Peace and Security*, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/peace.shtml>, accessed 30 March 2017.
4. United Nations, *Peace and Security*, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/pkmandates.shtml>, accessed 30 March 2017.
5. United Nations, *Peace and Security*, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/principles.shtml>, accessed 30 March 2017.
6. United Nations, *Peace and Security*, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/principles.shtml>, accessed 30 March 2017.
7. United Nations, *Peace and Security*, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/peace.shtml>, accessed 30 March 2017.
8. United Nations, *Peace and Security*, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/principles.shtml>, accessed 30 March 2017.
9. The UN operation was a multinational force entailing “British transport planes [which] had flown in 700 Ghanaians and 593 Tunisians [...] 3,250 from Morocco; 2,547 from Ethiopia; 2,247 from Tunisia; 2,389 from Ghana; 1,317 from Ireland; 744 from Guinea; 628 from Sweden; 574 from Mali; 390 from Sudan; 225 from Liberia; 164 from Canada; and 73 from India [...]” Cf. Ernest W. Lefever, *Crisis in the Congo: A United Nations Force in Action*, *apud* Jeanne M. Haskin, *The Tragic State of the Congo: From Decolonization to Dictatorship*, New York, Algora Publishing, 2005, pp. 24-25.
10. United Nations Security Council Resolution 143/1960 of 14 July 1960, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/143\(1960\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/143(1960)), accessed 1 April 2017.
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Abstract

United Nations' Operations in Congo A Historical "Reading" of UN Security Council Resolutions

This article focuses on violent armed conflicts in the Congo and examines the United Nations' forms of military intervention. The article is organized in three main parts, in an attempt to first provide conceptual clarifications regarding the types and dynamics of UN interventions, and then to analyze the Cold War period (marked by UN's peacekeeping operation ONUC) and, finally, the post-Cold War robust peacekeeping operations (MONUC and MONUSCO). The chief purpose in this article is the assessment of UN operations in Congo (discussed in terms of success, limited success, pitfalls, domestic and international complexities) and the methodology employed is based on historical description and interpretation. The main methodological instrument employed is document analysis, since a "reading" of UN Security Council Resolutions is meant to clarify the scopes and limits of UN operations.

Keywords

United Nations, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, Congo, Security Council Resolutions