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United Nations Peacekeeping in Africa

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Introduction

United Nations (UN) peacekeeping in Africa have been pivotal in international efforts to stabilize conflict-ridden regions since the late 1990s.¹ These missions, authorized by the UN Security Council, have aimed to address civil wars, support peace processes, and rebuild governance. Major successes include Côte

d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Missions to DR Congo and Sudan and South Sudan are credited with stabilizing or easing the horrors of deadly civil wars.



Figure 1. *UN peacekeeping mission in Liberia handing over security responsibility to national forces | Africa Renewal*

On a continent of weak states and ethnically divided countries, peacekeeping emerged in the 1990s and 2000s as the international community's most effective solution for strengthening peace, stability and democratization.

By the year 2010, UN peacekeeping in Africa had reached unprecedented levels, with over 70,000 military and police personnel deployed across the continent. Despite notable successes, such as the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the United Nations

¹ Klobucista, Claire, and Mariel Ferragamo, 'The Role of Peacekeeping in Africa', *Council on Foreign*

Relations, 12 December 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/role-peacekeeping-africa>

Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), recent years have seen a shift in the landscape of peacekeeping operations.²

Largest UN peacekeeping missions in Africa

- MONUSCO: A UN mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that began in 2010. The mission aims to stabilize the country after the Rwandan genocide and the wars from 1998 to 2003.
- MINUSCA: A UN mission in the Central African Republic, responding to the instability of Islamist civil war.
- UNMISS: A UN mission in South Sudan, beset by ethnic rivalries.
- UNISFA: A UN mission in the Abyei area, disputed between South Sudan and Sudan.
- MINURSO: A UN mission in Western Sahara, claimed by Morocco and an independence movement supported by Algeria and others.

Other peacekeeping missions in Africa include

- ONUB in Burundi
- UNOCI in Côte d'Ivoire
- UNMIL in Liberia
- MONUC in D.R. Congo
- NMEE in Ethiopia and Eritrea

But more recent attitudes have shifted. Military governments, coming to power through coup d'états, often have nationalist agendas and seek free use of force against their enemies. They want nothing so much as the end of all foreign forces, including peacekeepers.

The withdrawal of the UN Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), forced by the new military government in 2023, was the first of a series of challenges.³ Even supporters of peacekeeping bemoan its inability to end conflict in many situations. Peacekeeping often seems to be a Band-Aid, not a panacea. This evolving context necessitates a critical reassessment of UN peacekeeping strategies and the exploration of alternative approaches to ensure sustainable peace and security in Africa.⁴

Can peacekeeping be salvaged, through reforms or funding? Are there alternatives a majority of UN Member States can agree upon? These are the questions facing First Committee at ODUMUNC 48.

Background to Peacekeeping in Africa

Since the late 1990s, United Nations peacekeeping missions in Africa have been central to international efforts to stabilize conflict-ridden regions. These missions, authorized by the UN Security Council, aimed to address civil wars, support peace processes, and rebuild governance structures in countries such as Sierra Leone, Sudan, Liberia, and Côte d'Ivoire.

² Economist. 'The era of multilateral peacekeeping draws to an unhappy close', The Economist, 2 January 2025, <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2025/01/02/the-era-of-multilateral-peacekeeping-draws-to-an-unhappy-close>

³ Ahmed, Baba, 'The UN peacekeeping mission in Mali ends after 10 years, following the junta's pressure to go'. Associated Press, 11 December 2023,

<https://apnews.com/article/mali-un-peacekeeping-extremism-ffd9c0ebe51e8db820ddc41a101c8d98>

⁴ Pinto, Teresa Nogueira, 'Peacekeeping in Africa without the UN, Geopolitical Intelligence Services, 12 February 2024, <https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/un-peacekeeping-africa/>



By 2010, UN peacekeeping in Africa had reached unprecedented levels, with over 70,000 UN-sponsored military and police personnel from over 40 countries deployed across the continent. The deployments marked a period of relative success compared to earlier failures, such as the 1994 Rwandan Genocide and the 1993-1995 Somalia intervention.⁵

These missions represented a shift toward multidimensional peacekeeping, which extended beyond ceasefire monitoring to encompass disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs, as well as support for democratic governance and the protection of human rights. For example, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) successfully facilitated the disarmament of combatants and supported the restoration of state authority, while the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) oversaw one of the most comprehensive post-conflict recovery efforts in Africa.⁶

Despite these successes, the landscape of UN peacekeeping in Africa has changed significantly in recent years. The Malian government's decision to request the withdrawal of the UN Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) by 2023 reflects a broader trend of diminishing large-scale peacekeeping operations across the continent. This decision stems from deepening distrust in the UN's ability to deliver security and stability, compounded by frustration over perceived inefficiency and external political agendas. Mali's pivot toward alternative security arrangements, such as its controversial partnership with the Russian private military company Wagner, underscores the waning influence of the UN in certain African contexts.⁷

Mali is not an isolated case. Other major UN peacekeeping missions in Africa face similar

challenges. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), for instance, has struggled to protect civilians amidst ongoing violence perpetrated by armed groups. In the Central African Republic (CAR), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission (MINUSCA) faces difficulties maintaining impartiality while managing strained relations with the host government. Similarly, in South Sudan, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) grapples with political deadlock and persistent violence, limiting its capacity to support a durable peace process.⁸

The withdrawal of MINUSMA and the challenges faced by other missions raise critical questions about the future of UN peacekeeping in Africa. While the traditional model of large-scale, multidimensional missions appears to be on the decline, alternative approaches are being discussed. For instance, the African Union (AU) has sought to assert greater leadership in peace and security efforts through initiatives like the African Standby Force (ASF). However, financial and logistical constraints continue to hinder the AU's ability to independently lead large-scale operations.⁹

Additionally, hybrid models of peacekeeping that integrate UN and AU forces, as seen in the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), may offer a viable path forward. Such partnerships allow for the pooling of resources and local expertise while benefiting from the legitimacy and funding mechanisms of the UN. At the same time, private military companies, like Wagner and Executive Outcomes, are increasingly being contracted by governments for rapid-response interventions,

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Williams, P. D. (2021). *The Peacekeeping Myth: Success and Failure in UN Operations*. Oxford University Press.

⁹ Powell, K. (2005). *The African Union's Emerging Peace and Security Regime: Opportunities and Challenges for Delivering on the Responsibility to Protect*. The North-South Institute.

although their involvement raises concerns over accountability and long-term sustainability.¹⁰



Figure 2. *UN chief advocates for a strengthening of peacekeeping in Africa | United Nations Peacekeeping*

Peacekeeping without the UN

The shortcomings and failures of UN peacekeeping have reignited debates on the continent's security future, prompting many to reconsider the effectiveness of traditional models. The Malian government's declaration that UN peacekeeping forces had failed to stabilize its security environment, coupled with its demand for the withdrawal of troops by the end of 2023, illustrates the growing dissatisfaction with these missions.¹¹ This disillusionment is mirrored in several African states where ineffective operations and unmet expectations have eroded trust in the United Nations' capacity to address complex security challenges. Instead, governments are increasingly turning to private military companies, regional coalitions, and homegrown initiatives as more reliable alternatives.

Since its inception in 1948, the modern concept of peacekeeping has been a cornerstone of the

international liberal order, designed to mediate and stabilize post-conflict environments. Following the Cold War, peacekeeping evolved beyond traditional mandates, embracing a human security framework that sought to address underlying socio-economic and political grievances contributing to conflict.¹²

Multidimensional missions were implemented to not only maintain peace but also to rebuild state institutions, support development, and foster reconciliation. However, despite this broadened scope, such missions have often failed to achieve their objectives in Africa, where localized complexities, resource constraints, and a lack of local buy-in have stymied success.¹³

UN peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), South Sudan (UNMISS), and Mali (MINUSMA) exemplify these challenges. In many cases, they have struggled with inefficiency, inadequate resources, and perceived bias, leading to mounting criticism from host governments and local populations.¹⁴

For example, in Mali, MINUSMA has been criticized for its limited capacity to counter violent extremist groups effectively, leaving significant portions of the country unstable. Similarly, MONUSCO has faced protests from Congolese citizens who perceive the mission as ineffective despite its long-standing presence in the region.

As a result, there has been a shift toward exploring regional and sub-regional mechanisms to address Africa's security challenges. Organizations like the African Union (AU) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have undertaken increasingly active roles in peacekeeping and conflict resolution.

¹⁰ Abrahamsen, R., & Williams, M. C. (2011). *Security Beyond the State: Private Security in International Politics*. Cambridge University Press.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Paris, R. (2004). *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict*. Cambridge University Press.

¹³ Fortna, V. P. (2008). *Does Peacekeeping Work? Shaping Belligerents' Choices after Civil War*. Princeton University Press.

¹⁴ Williams, P. D. (2021). *The Peacekeeping Myth: Success and Failure in UN Operations*. Oxford University Press.

The AU's African Standby Force (ASF), although not yet fully operational, demonstrates a move toward creating a self-reliant security architecture. ECOWAS interventions in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Gambia also illustrate the potential of regional cooperation, even if these efforts face significant logistical and financial obstacles.¹⁵

expertise, and fostering stronger partnerships between the AU, sub-regional organizations, and local governments are pivotal for future peacekeeping efforts. Moreover, ensuring that such frameworks address the root causes of conflict, rather than merely treating symptoms, will be essential for long-term stability and sustainable peace.¹⁷



Figure 3. [UN sacks South Sudan peacekeeping chief over damning report - BBC News](#)

Additionally, the rise of private security companies such as the Wagner Group and Executive Outcomes has further complicated Africa's security landscape. These entities have been contracted by several governments to provide immediate responses to insurgencies and stabilize volatile regions. While these actors can offer quick results, their operations raise ethical and accountability concerns, as they often operate outside the purview of international humanitarian law.¹⁶

The failures of UN missions underscore the need for Africa to rethink its security architecture. Developing autonomous and accountable security frameworks, leveraging regional

Changing Security Landscape

The security environment across Africa has transformed significantly over the past 15 years, characterized by shifting geopolitical dynamics, internal governance crises, and an evolving array of external influences. These changes have fostered a more volatile and fragmented security architecture, compelling a reassessment of traditional approaches to peacekeeping and conflict resolution.

The fall of Muammar Qaddafi in Libya in 2011 marked a critical turning point, with profound implications for the region. Qaddafi's removal destabilized Libya, unleashing a cascade of repercussions throughout the Sahel. The collapse of Libya's centralized governance structure created a vacuum that allowed arms to flow unchecked into neighbouring countries, further empowering non-state actors, including jihadist groups and criminal networks. This influx of weaponry exacerbated security vulnerabilities in Mali, Niger, Chad, and Burkina Faso, contributing to the rise of extremist movements. The Sahel region became a hotbed of instability as these groups exploited porous borders and weak state institutions to establish their operational bases.¹⁸

¹⁵ Powell, K. (2005). *The African Union's Emerging Peace and Security Regime: Opportunities and Challenges for Delivering on the Responsibility to Protect*. The North-South Institute.

¹⁶ Williams, P. D. (2021). *The Peacekeeping Myth: Success and Failure in UN Operations*. Oxford University Press.

¹⁷ Abrahamsen, R., & Williams, M. C. (2011). *Security Beyond the State: Private Security in International Politics*. Cambridge University Press.

¹⁸ Geopolitical Intelligence Services. (2025). The end of UN peacekeeping in Africa. Retrieved from <https://www.gisreportsonline.com>

The rise of jihadist insurgencies in Africa is particularly pronounced in the Sahel, which has emerged as one of the most dangerous regions globally for terrorist activity. According to the 2023 Global Terrorism Index, fatalities resulting from terrorist attacks in the Sahel have surged by over 2,000 percent since 2008. Extremist groups, including al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Boko Haram, and affiliates of the Islamic State, have become increasingly emboldened, targeting civilians, security forces, and international peacekeepers.

These organizations have not been confined to the Sahel; they have expanded their influence across West and East Africa. For example, al-Shabaab continues to dominate Somalia while launching attacks in Kenya and Uganda, while Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) remain active in Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin.¹⁹

In addition to the surge in terrorism, West Africa and the Sahel have witnessed a resurgence of military coups. Between 2020 and 2023, Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea, and Niger experienced abrupt regime changes. These coups often reflect widespread dissatisfaction with civilian governance, particularly in addressing security concerns. Military juntas in these countries have frequently justified their actions by accusing civilian administrations of corruption and incompetence in managing the security challenges posed by terrorism and insurgency. However, these regime changes have often exacerbated instability by creating power vacuums and weakening regional governance frameworks, thereby compounding existing security challenges.²⁰

Civil wars and localized conflicts further illustrate the fragility of Africa's security landscape. The civil war in Ethiopia's Tigray region, which erupted in 2020, caused widespread devastation before a fragile peace agreement was reached in 2022. Although the fighting has subsided, underlying ethnic tensions persist, threatening the country's long-term stability. Similarly, the outbreak of conflict in Sudan in 2023, stemming from a power struggle between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), has led to significant humanitarian crises, displacing millions and plunging the nation into chaos.²¹

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) remains one of the most enduring examples of conflict in Africa. Since 1999, the country has been plagued by violence, particularly in its eastern provinces, where armed groups such as the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the M23 rebel movement continue to terrorize local populations. The inability of the Congolese government and international peacekeeping forces to neutralize these threats has further eroded public trust in the United Nations' capacity to address complex security challenges.²²

These developments have intensified scrutiny of the UN's peacekeeping role in Africa. Initially designed to oversee ceasefires and support post-conflict reconstruction, UN missions have struggled to adapt to the complexities of modern asymmetric warfare and transnational terrorism. In Mali, for example, the UN Stabilization Mission (MINUSMA) faced criticism for failing to protect civilians and for allegedly exacerbating local tensions. The government's decision to terminate MINUSMA's mandate in

¹⁹ Geopolitical Intelligence Services. (2025). The end of UN peacekeeping in Africa. Retrieved from <https://www.gisreportsonline.com>

²⁰ Geopolitical Intelligence Services. (2025). The end of UN peacekeeping in Africa. Retrieved from <https://www.gisreportsonline.com>

²¹ Geopolitical Intelligence Services. (2025). The end of UN peacekeeping in Africa. Retrieved from <https://www.gisreportsonline.com>

²² Pinto, Teresa Nogueira, Peacekeeping in Africa without the UN, Geopolitical Intelligence Services, 12 February 2024, <https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/un-peacekeeping-africa/>

2023 exemplifies the growing disillusionment with traditional peacekeeping frameworks. Similarly, the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) has faced violent protests over its perceived ineffectiveness in protecting civilians and addressing the persistent threat posed by armed groups. The evolving security landscape in Africa underscores the need for innovative approaches to peace and stability. The interplay of terrorism, political instability, and local discontent with international interventions presents a multifaceted challenge that necessitates both regional and international cooperation. Efforts must focus on building resilient institutions, addressing the root causes of insecurity, and enhancing the legitimacy and effectiveness of peacekeeping initiatives.²³



Figure 4. [UN ends peacekeeping mission in Liberia](#) – DW – 03/22/2018

UN Peacekeeping Disappointments and Failures

The post-Cold War era has seen the United Nations undertake numerous peacekeeping missions in Africa, with mixed outcomes. While some operations have achieved partial successes, others have revealed critical shortcomings in the UN's ability to address the complexities of modern conflicts. These failures have often had devastating consequences, undermining the

credibility of international peacekeeping as a mechanism for conflict resolution and civilian protection.

One of the most harrowing examples of UN failure occurred in Rwanda in 1994. During the Rwandan Genocide, UN peacekeeping forces, operating under the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), were largely ineffective in preventing the systematic massacre of approximately 800,000 ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus. Despite early warnings and clear signs of impending violence, the mission was hamstrung by a limited mandate, inadequate resources, and a lack of political will from the international community to intervene decisively. The tragedy in Rwanda has since become emblematic of the UN's inability to act decisively in the face of mass atrocities, highlighting the limitations of peacekeeping when robust action is required.

In Mali, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission (MINUSMA) was established in 2013 to support peace efforts following a military coup and the rise of jihadist insurgencies. However, the mission quickly became mired in a challenging security environment characterized by ongoing clashes between government forces, separatist groups, and jihadist factions. MINUSMA failed to protect civilians effectively, as violence has continued unabated in many parts of the country. Additionally, the ruling military junta in Mali has openly criticized the mission, claiming that it exacerbated local tensions and failed to address the root causes of instability. In 2023, the Malian government terminated MINUSMA's mandate, further underscoring the disillusionment with the UN's approach to peacekeeping in complex conflict zones.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) offers another stark example of prolonged UN involvement with limited success. The UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC, operational since 1999, was tasked with

²³ Ibid.

stabilizing the eastern region of the country, which has been plagued by violent armed groups. Despite decades of intervention and significant financial investment, the region remains embroiled in conflict. In 2022, violent protests erupted against MONUSCO, fuelled by public frustration over its perceived ineffectiveness in protecting civilians from attacks by groups like the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the M23 rebels. These protests resulted in casualties among both civilians and UN personnel, further tarnishing the mission's reputation and raising questions about the viability of long-term peacekeeping operations in deeply entrenched conflicts.

In the Central African Republic (CAR), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission (MINUSCA) was deployed in 2014 to address the country's escalating violence and political instability. Although the mission initially achieved some progress in reducing violence, the situation began to deteriorate again by 2017 due to rising insecurity and political fragmentation.

The involvement of external actors, such as Russia, further complicated the security dynamics in the CAR. President Faustin-Archange Touadera has increasingly relied on Russian support, particularly through the Wagner Group, a private military company, which has played a significant role in securing his regime. This reliance on external paramilitary forces has undermined the UN's efforts to foster a sustainable peace process and raised concerns about the influence of competing global powers in Africa's security architecture.²⁴

These cases illustrate the multifaceted challenges facing UN peacekeeping operations in Africa. Structural issues, including limited mandates, insufficient resources, and inadequate coordination with host governments, have often

hampered the effectiveness of these missions. Furthermore, the emergence of new actors and regional organizations, has added layers of complexity to the international security landscape.

UN Resolutions on Africa Peacekeeping

The role of the United Nations in peacekeeping across Africa has been crucial in addressing post-conflict recovery, stabilizing fragile states, and maintaining international peace and security. Several resolutions have established peacekeeping missions in Africa, each designed to address unique political, security, and humanitarian challenges. Below is an elaboration of key UN Resolutions on peacekeeping in Africa:

Resolution 1509 (2003) – United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

Resolution 1509, adopted in 2003, established the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. This resolution followed the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which aimed to end Liberia's devastating civil war. UNMIL's mandate was to support the implementation of this peace agreement and assist in rebuilding Liberia's institutions. The mission's key tasks included disarming combatants, supporting the country's transitional government, and ensuring the safe return of refugees and internally displaced persons. The mission also played a role in fostering national reconciliation and helping Liberia establish democratic governance.²⁵

Resolution 2100 (2013) – United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)

²⁵ [United Nations Security Council. \(2003\). Resolution 1509 \(2003\) on the United](#)

[Nations Mission in Liberia \(UNMIL\). S/RES/1509 \(2003\).](#)



In 2013, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2100 to establish the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), which was authorized under Chapter VII. The resolution was adopted in response to the political and security crisis in Mali, which included a coup, an armed rebellion by Tuareg separatists, and the rise of extremist groups in the northern regions of the country. MINUSMA's mandate was to stabilize the situation, assist in the restoration of constitutional order, and protect human rights. The mission also aimed to support the Malian government in conducting free and fair elections and ensuring the return of displaced populations. MINUSMA was tasked with securing key infrastructure, promoting the rule of law, and facilitating humanitarian access.²⁶

Resolution 1925 (2010) – United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)

Resolution 1925, passed in 2010, transformed the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) into the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). Under the new mandate, MONUSCO was given a robust Chapter VII mandate to protect civilians in the eastern DRC, a region suffering from violent armed groups. MONUSCO's responsibilities included disarming and neutralizing militias, assisting in the restoration of state authority, and contributing to the implementation of peace agreements. The mission also focused on human rights monitoring and supporting the Congolese government in managing the country's vast

natural resources and improving security sector reform. This transformation was driven by the deteriorating security situation in the east and the mission's need to adopt a more proactive and forceful stance.²⁷

Resolution 2149 (2014) – United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)

The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2149 in 2014, which established the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) under Chapter VII. The mission was created in response to the violent conflict that erupted between Muslim and Christian militias in the Central African Republic (CAR) following the overthrow of President François Bozizé. MINUSCA's mandate included protecting civilians, supporting the transitional government, facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid, and ensuring the safe return of refugees and displaced persons. MINUSCA was also tasked with supporting political dialogue and the establishment of democratic governance in the CAR. The mission's deployment was crucial in preventing further escalation of the conflict and stabilizing the country.²⁸

Resolution 690 (1991) – United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO)

Resolution 690, adopted in 1991, created the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), one of the

²⁶ [United Nations Security Council. \(2013\). Resolution 2100 \(2013\) on the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali \(MINUSMA\). S/RES/2100 \(2013\).](#)

²⁷ [United Nations Security Council. \(2010\). Resolution 1925 \(2010\) on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the](#)

[Democratic Republic of the Congo \(MONUSCO\). S/RES/1925 \(2010\).](#)

²⁸ [United Nations Security Council. \(2014\). Resolution 2149 \(2014\) on the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic \(MINUSCA\). S/RES/2149 \(2014\).](#)

longest-standing peacekeeping operations in Africa. The mission was established to monitor the ceasefire between Morocco and the Polisario Front, which had been engaged in a long-standing conflict over the status of Western Sahara. The key task of MINURSO was to oversee a referendum on self-determination for the people of Western Sahara, allowing them to choose between independence or integration with Morocco. However, the referendum has been delayed repeatedly due to disagreements over voter eligibility and other political challenges. The mission continues to provide critical peacekeeping and monitoring services, although the political resolution of the Western Sahara dispute remains elusive.²⁹

Resolution 1769 (2007) – African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)

Resolution 1769, adopted in 2007, authorized the joint African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), a unique peacekeeping mission combining both UN and African Union resources. The mission was established to address the humanitarian and security crisis in Darfur, Sudan, where a violent conflict had caused significant displacement and loss of life. UNAMID's mandate was to protect civilians, support the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and promote the political process toward peace and reconciliation. The mission's efforts included monitoring and reporting on violations of international humanitarian law, promoting the rights of women and children, and supporting the peace talks between the Sudanese government and rebel groups. Although UNAMID faced significant challenges due to limited resources and a difficult operating environment, it played a pivotal role in

managing the conflict and providing protection to vulnerable populations.³⁰

Country and Bloc Positions

Central African Republic: The Central African Republic (CAR) continues to rely on the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) due to the mission's vital role in protecting civilians and stabilizing areas affected by armed conflict. Since the outbreak of violence in CAR, the mission has been instrumental in rebuilding state institutions, maintaining peace, and preventing the escalation of violence, particularly in areas dominated by armed groups. The CAR government has consistently acknowledged MINUSCA's crucial role in addressing the country's security challenges and facilitating the return of peace and stability.

CAR's dependence on UN peacekeeping reflects the country's weak state capacity and the ongoing prevalence of armed groups that continue to destabilize the region. Given the government's limited ability to enforce peace and maintain security across the country, MINUSCA's presence is seen as essential to creating the conditions necessary for sustainable governance and the restoration of law and order. The CAR government strongly supports the continued presence of MINUSCA, viewing it as a necessary intervention to achieve long-term stability, rebuild state institutions, and protect vulnerable populations from violence.

China: With a wide variety of investments in Africa, especially for infrastructure investment and raw materials extraction, China has a strong interest in ensuring the political stability of the countries where it is engaged. As a leader in the Non-Aligned Movements, a revolutionary state

²⁹ [United Nations Security Council, \(1991\). Resolution 690 \(1991\) on the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara \(MINURSO\). S/RES/690 \(1991\).](#)

³⁰ [United Nations Security Council, \(2013\). Resolution 2100 \(2013\) on the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali \(MINUSMA\). S/RES/2100 \(2013\).](#) n

with no colonial history in Africa, China is widely viewed in Africa as a benign or harmless presence.

Lacking much concern about democratic norms or minority rights, China has greater freedom of action than most outsiders. It generally will act pragmatically, guided by a sense of which alternative best ensures political stability and protects its financial interests. It is equally willing to work with democratic governments or military dictatorships, for example, and uses discretionary payments (bribes) to local officials to cultivate the decisions it needs.

Peacekeeping missions are generally supported by China. A peaceful environment is good for business. But if alternatives work better, it is likely to combine its support for peacekeeping with parallel outreach to government officials, ethnic leaders, powerful business leaders, warlords and other actors to promote Chinese priorities for extraction.

Côte d'Ivoire: like Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire has a strong record of supporting UN peacekeeping, particularly in the case of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). The mission was instrumental in helping the country recover from its civil war, facilitating peace agreements, and assisting in key post-conflict processes such as disarmament and reintegration. UNOCI's success in stabilizing the country and supporting the political transition in Ivory Coast has made the country a strong proponent of continued international peacekeeping efforts.

Côte d'Ivoire's advocacy for peacekeeping stems from its own success story with UNOCI, and the country continues to view international intervention as crucial for managing post-conflict recovery. Given the challenges in rebuilding state institutions and ensuring long-

term peace, Ivory Coast sees peacekeeping as an essential tool in supporting fragile governments that lack the capacity to independently address the complexities of post-conflict reconstruction. This reflects a broader tendency among states that have benefited from UN peacekeeping to view international intervention as necessary for long-term stability and peace.³¹

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has expressed dissatisfaction with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC due to its inability to address persistent insecurity, particularly in the eastern regions. Despite operating for nearly 25 years, MONUSCO failed to neutralize armed groups like the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and M23 rebels, leading to widespread public frustration. Violent protests in 2023, reflecting dissatisfaction with the mission's inefficacy, prompted President Félix Tshisekedi to call for an accelerated withdrawal of MONUSCO. This move was driven by a desire to assert national sovereignty and prioritize self-reliance in addressing security challenges.

The DRC's position aligns with broader African critiques of long-term external interventions, which are often seen as undermining sovereignty and hindering local capacity-building. The government emphasizes strengthening national security institutions instead of relying on foreign peacekeepers. This reflects a growing trend in Africa of seeking "African solutions to African problems" through regional frameworks, aiming to build sustainable peace without continued external military presence. Ultimately, the DRC's call for MONUSCO's withdrawal is a push for greater control over its security and a rejection of perceived neocolonial interference.³²

Mali's decision to call for the withdrawal of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated

³¹ UN News. (2017). *Ivory Coast: UN peacekeeping's role in post-conflict recovery*. <https://news.un.org>.

³² Africa News. (2023). *DR Congo calls for swift withdrawal of UN peacekeepers*. <https://www.africanews.com>.

Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) was driven by frustrations over the mission's inability to adapt to the evolving security situation, particularly the rise of jihadist violence. By 2023, MINUSMA had failed to effectively address these growing threats, leading to public dissatisfaction and the government's decision to end the mission's mandate. The Malian transitional government also framed this move as a step toward reclaiming national sovereignty, emphasizing the need for more aligned and effective security measures.

Ethiopia: Ethiopia's government rejected calls for United Nations involvement during the Tigray conflict, primarily due to concerns over national sovereignty and a preference for resolving internal issues without external intervention. The Ethiopian government framed international peacekeeping efforts as an infringement on its ability to manage domestic conflicts independently, particularly during a sensitive period of internal unrest. This decision was influenced by Ethiopia's long-standing position on resisting external interference in its internal affairs, which is rooted in a broader regional trend of maintaining sovereignty and self-reliance.

Ethiopia's resistance to UN peacekeeping reflects its historical stance as a dominant regional power in the Horn of Africa. The government views international involvement as potentially undermining its authority and regional leadership, particularly as it navigates complex political and security challenges. Ethiopia's reluctance to allow UN peacekeepers into the Tigray region is indicative of its broader scepticism toward external interventions, particularly when such actions are perceived as threatening national autonomy or regional influence.³³

European Union: The 27 Member States of the EU generally agree on the importance of support for international peacekeeping everywhere,

Africa included. Some member States are former colonial powers, with extensive economic and personal connections to Africa. They and others also are committed to promotion of universal forms of democracy, peaceful conflict resolution and rule of law. The EU is the leading financial backers of UN peacekeeping in Africa. It has furnished troops, military leadership and political advocacy for peacekeeping. More than any other UN voting bloc, the EU countries are willing to put their money where their mouth is.

The 27 EU Member States can be expected to strongly advocate for reform to make African peacekeeping more effective and more efficient. But their resources are not eliminated. Reforms that make peacekeeping more efficient will be welcomed by the bloc.

Liberia: Liberia's experience with the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), which operated from 2003 to 2018, has had a profound impact on the country's post-conflict recovery and democratic transition. The mission played a key role in stabilizing the country after two devastating civil wars and in supporting the peace process by assisting with disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration efforts. UNMIL's efforts in rebuilding state institutions and maintaining security in the aftermath of the civil wars were crucial to Liberia's recovery. Despite the mission's withdrawal, Liberia continues to champion the role of UN peacekeeping, attributing much of its successful transition to democracy to the international intervention it received.

Liberia's positive experience with UNMIL has made it one of the most vocal advocates for peacekeeping missions. The country emphasizes the importance of international cooperation in fragile states, particularly in situations where local governments may struggle to manage the complexities of post-conflict recovery. Liberia's endorsement of peacekeeping is driven by its belief that such interventions are essential for

³³ Al Jazeera. (2021). *Ethiopia rejects call for UN intervention in Tigray*. <https://www.aljazeera.com>.

ensuring long-term stability, particularly in countries transitioning from civil conflict. This reflects the broader tendency of nations that have benefitted from peacekeeping to view international interventions as crucial to the rebuilding process.³⁴

Mali: Mali's shift away from MINUSMA reflects a broader scepticism toward Western-led interventions, with the government increasingly turning to alternative security partners. Notably, Mali has engaged the Russian Wagner Group to address its security needs. This move underscores a growing trend in Africa toward seeking non-traditional security arrangements, often driven by disillusionment with the perceived ineffectiveness of international peacekeeping missions and the desire for greater control over national security matters. The shift away from UN peacekeepers marks a significant reorientation of Mali's security policy, highlighting the growing influence of non-Western security partners in the region.³⁵

South Sudan: South Sudan continues to rely on the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to address ongoing ethnic violence, implement peace agreements, and protect civilians. Since its independence in 2011, South Sudan has faced severe internal conflicts, and the presence of UNMISS has been crucial in stabilizing the fragile security situation. The mission has played an essential role in providing humanitarian assistance and supporting peace efforts amidst the country's complex challenges. In particular, UNMISS has focused on protecting civilians in areas affected by ethnic clashes and maintaining a secure environment for peacebuilding initiatives.

The South Sudanese leadership views the UN peacekeeping mission as a stabilizing force that is indispensable for the country's nation-building process. Given the country's limited capacity to

handle such complex internal conflicts independently, South Sudan remains dependent on international support. This reliance on UNMISS reflects the broader tendency of countries with fragile post-conflict transitions to seek international assistance to help manage security and governance challenges. The presence of UN peacekeepers is seen as vital for creating the conditions necessary for political reconciliation and long-term stability.³⁶

South Africa: Like most African states, South Africa strongly supports peacekeeping to maintain peace and stability throughout the continent. Although its current government has a strong revolutionary background and commitment to fight colonialism, it also is committed to democracy and rule of law. Although its financial commitment is limited, South Africa has supplied troops and police to peacekeeping missions. At ODUMUNC, South Africa can be expected to support measures to enhance international commitment to peacekeeping missions, as well as to improve their performance through greater efficiency.

Sudan: Sudan's opposition to the continuation of the United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), which ended in 2020, was based on the argument that the mission's mandate was outdated, as the conflict in Darfur had significantly subsided by that time. The Sudanese government viewed UNAMID's presence as an infringement on the country's sovereignty, especially as it was undergoing a transition from autocratic rule. This decision was part of a broader trend where Sudan sought to regain control over its internal affairs, particularly in the context of political reforms following the ousting of former President Omar al-Bashir.

The Sudanese government's stance on ending UNAMID's mission reflects its preference for

³⁴ USAID. (2023). Liberia: The legacy of UNMIL and the road to recovery, <https://www.usaid.gov>

³⁵ AP News. (2023). *Mali calls for withdrawal of UN peacekeepers*. Associated Press, <https://www.apnews.com>.

³⁶ UN Peacekeeping. (2023). *Central African Republic: MINUSCA's critical role in peace and stability*, <https://peacekeeping.un.org>

resolving domestic conflicts without external interference. This approach is consistent with a wider regional trend in Africa, where many countries emphasize the importance of sovereignty and self-reliance, particularly when dealing with internal issues. Sudan's decision to reject continued international oversight and to focus on managing its own peacebuilding processes signals a desire to assert its autonomy during a period of political transition and rebuilding.³⁷

United States: While the US was instrumental in the establishment of most African peacekeeping missions, it has been less engaged in maintaining them. The US rarely supplies troops or police to peacekeeping forces. The major exception in Africa is the mission to South Sudan, where the US is heavily involved.

Unlike China, which uses peacekeeping to support its economic agenda, the United States shares the EU's commitment to regional peace and stability, democratization and rule of law. The approach of the incoming Trump Administration is unknown, but likely to be preoccupied with the costs of peacekeeping, supportive of efforts to make other countries pay more of the costs of peacekeeping, and supportive of measures to improve the efficiency of peacekeeping missions.

Some possible proposals for action

First Committee at ODUMUNC faces difficult problems as it works to restore the credibility, efficiency and effectiveness of UN peacekeeping in Africa. With host countries growing sceptical, the Member States of the UN are under pressure to make peacekeeping work. There is a wide variety of possibilities for action. Some of the most prominent as outlined before. But as

sovereign countries, the Member States are free to develop the best ideas they find fit.

Withdrawal of long-standing or least effective UN Peacekeeping Missions: This option might be appealing, seemingly cheap and easy, this option is fraught and dangerous. Withdrawal could lead host countries back into the chaos peacekeeping helped to rescue them from. Complete withdrawal of all UN peacekeeping missions from Africa, arguing that these missions undermine national sovereignty and are ineffective. It also leaves host governments in dangerous and delicate situations.

Will the end of peacekeeping lead to military take-overs, to ever greater reliance on private mercenaries from Russia and Iran to fragmentation and civil war? These are serious possibilities. Much depends on the attitudes of the host countries, those most dependent on UN peacekeeping support, and neighbouring states, vulnerable to instability on their borders.

Hybrid Peacekeeping Models: Supporting the development of hybrid peacekeeping models that integrate UN and regional forces, similar to the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). Rather than accept all the expense, risk and responsibility itself, the UN can work more systematically with regional organizations, in this case the African Union (AU), Arab League (AL) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), or Southern Africa Development Community (SADC).

Issues to be resolved include control; with a joint operation, who is in command? There also are problems of funding; with the entire international community fund operations controlled and staffed exclusively by African states, missions in which they have little direct stake? Similarly, are joint peacekeepers accountable only to their own governments, or

³⁷ UN News. (2020). *Sudan to end UN peacekeeping mission in Darfur*, <https://news.un.org>



also to their regional organization, and to the UN as well? All this has to be determined.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the landscape of UN peacekeeping in Africa is at a critical juncture, marked by both significant achievements and profound challenges. While missions like UNAMSIL and UNMIL have demonstrated the potential for successful intervention, the recent withdrawal of MINUSMA and ongoing difficulties in regions such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan underscore the limitations of traditional peacekeeping models. As we move forward, it is

imperative to reassess and adapt our strategies to better address the complex and evolving security dynamics on the continent.

Exploring hybrid models that integrate UN and African Union forces, enhancing support for multidimensional missions, and fostering greater regional autonomy are potential pathways to more effective peacekeeping. Additionally, addressing the root causes of conflict, such as governance issues and socio-economic disparities, will be crucial for achieving long-term stability. By embracing innovative approaches and strengthening international and regional cooperation, we can work towards a more resilient and sustainable peacekeeping framework that truly meets the needs of African nations and their people.

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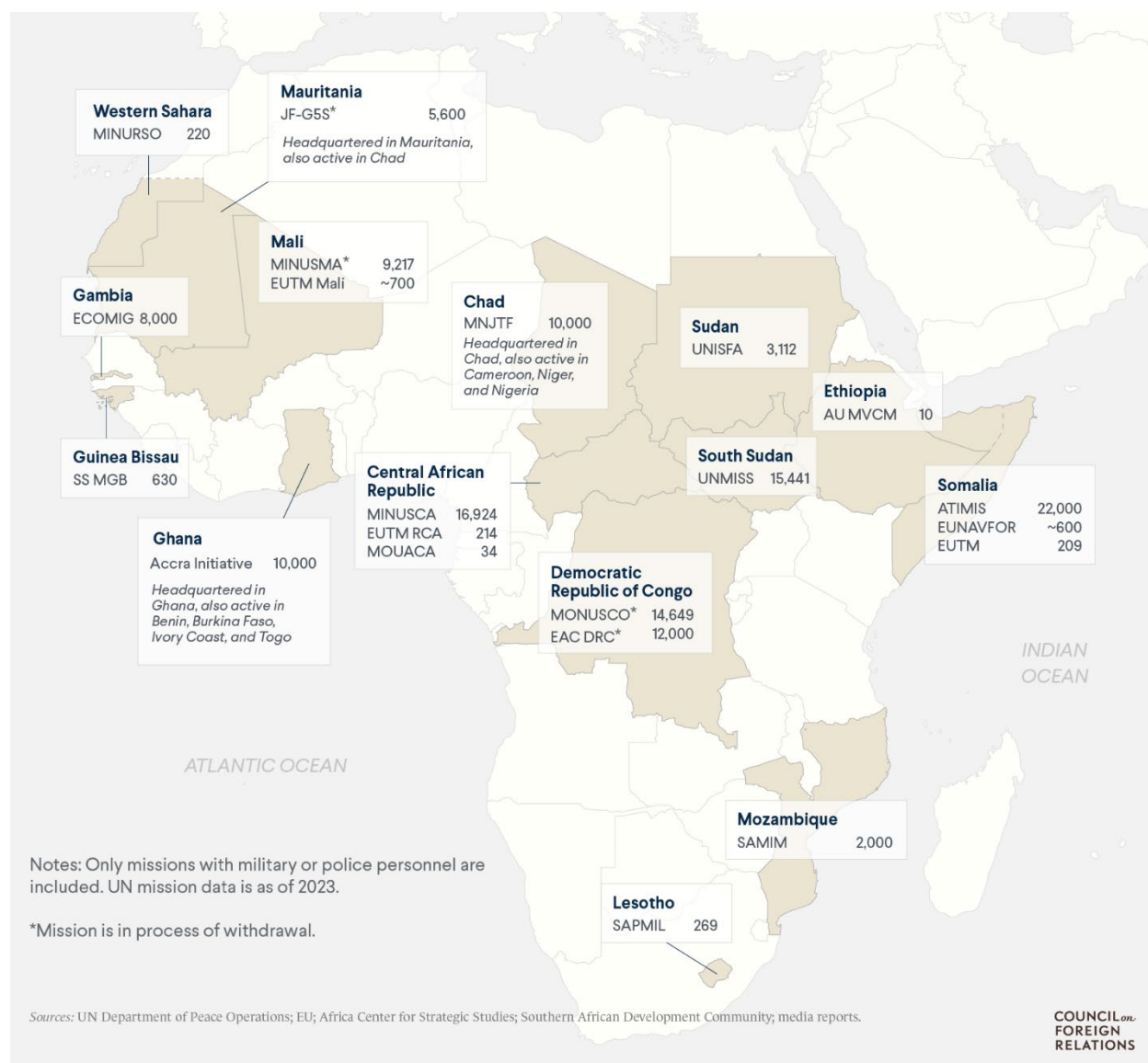


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Appendix: UN Peacekeeping Missions in Africa

Major Multilateral Peace and Security Operations in Africa

Numbers of uniformed personnel for UN and non-UN missions



Source: Claire Klobucista and Mariel Ferragamo, 'The Role of Peacekeeping in Africa', *Council on Foreign Relations*, 12 December 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/background/role-peacekeeping-africa>