

Univerzita Karlova
Fakulta sociálních věd
Institut politologických studií

Diploma Thesis

Effectiveness of UN Peace Operations in Africa:
An Analysis of MONUSCO and UNISFA



Name: Anndrea delas Alas

Academic advisor: Doc. PhDr. Jan Karlas, Ph.D., MA

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Effectiveness of UN Peace Operations in Africa: An Analysis of MONUSCO and UNISFA

Keywords

United Nations, Security Council, MONUSCO, UNISFA, peace operations, international peace and security, Africa

Abstract

With the evolving security environment globally combined with the enduring presence of threats to international peace and security, the presence of the UN peace operations remains crucial. However, these peace operations have not always been successful. In line with this, this thesis seeks to understand why some peace operations are more effective than others by examining the criteria for effectiveness and the factors that explain this. This thesis utilises the qualitative case study approach, meticulously examining the established criteria and factors against the cases of MONUSCO and UNISFA while capturing the contemporary multi-faceted nature of UN peace operations. The comprehensive and systematic analysis conducted, with five hypotheses being tested, offers nuanced insights that can aid policymaking and future peace operations. It reveals that MONUSCO and UNISFA were both ineffective in their operations in the DRC and Abyei respectively. Additionally, it reveals that conflict intensity and external military and political support to the belligerents have a direct correlation to the effectiveness of a UN peace operation, with both factors decreasing its effectiveness. On the other hand, consent and cooperation from local parties and commitment from the UN are partially correlated to effectiveness, which means that these factors play a partial role and could not fully account for the increased effectiveness of a UN peace operation on their own. Conversely, the execution of activities that address the causes of the conflict does not affect its effectiveness.

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Abbreviations

ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
DDR	Disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration
DRC	The Democratic Republic of the Congo
FARDC	Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo
FDLR	Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda
FIB	Force intervention Brigade
FNL	Forces nationales de libération / National Liberation Forces
JBVMM	Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism
JPSM	Joint Political and Security Mechanism
MONUC	United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
MINURSO	United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
NCP	National Congress Party
P-DDRCS	Demobilization, Disarmament, Community Recovery and Stabilization Program
PNC	Police Nationale Congolaise
SAF	Sudan Armed Forces
SDBZ	Safe Demilitarized Border Zone
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SSPDF	South Sudan People's Defence Forces
SSR	Security Sector Reform
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
UN	United Nations
UNAMIR	UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda
UNISFA	United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei
UNISOM I	United Nations Operations in Somalia I
UNITAF	Unified Task Force
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan
UNOCI	United Nations Operation in Côte D'Ivoire

Introduction

The enduring presence of threats to international peace and security in the present time highlights the important role played by the United Nations. As the world we live in today continues to evolve in various areas such as social, economic, political and security, the issues associated with these areas also evolve along with it. With this, it is crucial to have an international organization that puts at its core the maintenance of international peace and security. One of the ways in which the UN performs this function is through its peace operations. Its presence spans across the globe, particularly in vulnerable countries facing serious security issues. These operations are often identified with the presence of peacekeepers or “blue helmets”. With a total of 71 peace operations since it started in 1948, it has been able to establish its credibility and legitimacy in the area of peace and security. In fact, in 1988, UN peacekeepers were recognized for their significant contribution in the functioning of the UN and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. However, these peace operations were not always successful. There were periods wherein they faced scrutiny and criticisms. A notable example was the case of the UN peace operation in Rwanda which demonstrated a failure to protect civilians and seal peace agreements.¹

UN peace operations encounter various obstacles that affect their performance on the ground which then raise concerns about their effectiveness and subsequently, their reputation and legitimacy. This led to a great amount of existing research about UN peace operations, both qualitative and quantitative in nature. However, there are limited research conducting an in-depth study on specific active peace operations. With this part being less explored, the aim of this thesis is to focus on two active UN peace operations in Africa. At the same time, the effectiveness of UN peace operations remains as a big debate among scholars, garnering diverse views on how to assess the effectiveness of UN peace operations. As acknowledged by Di Salvatore and Ruggeri (2007), there still hasn't been “a consensus on the gold standard for assessing peacekeeping effectiveness”.² Thus, this thesis utilises a combination of explanatory factors that currently exist in peacekeeping literature.

With this, this thesis aims to answer the research question, what explains when the UN peace operation is effective? This study is a qualitative case study, employing the

¹ United Nations Peacekeeping, "Our History," <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/our-history>.

² Jessica Di Salvatore and Andrea Ruggeri, "Effectiveness of Peacekeeping Operations." *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Empirical International Relations Theories*, (2017).

explanatory and comparative approach. Two UN peace operations in Africa are selected and studied in-depth through the collection of relevant primary and secondary data, and the analysis is performed by examining criteria and explanatory factors drawn from existing peacekeeping literature. By doing so, this thesis explores the underlying link between the explanatory factors and the effectiveness of UN peace operations.

Specifically, employing the framework from the study conducted by Pushkina (2006), this study first establishes the criteria for effectiveness to facilitate a more systematic and comprehensive analysis of UN peace operations' performance and allow for a more complete picture of factors that contribute to the effectiveness of peace operations.³ These criteria are applied to the selected cases and subsequently classified using Bratt's categorization: complete success, moderate success, or failure.⁴ Afterwards, the explanatory factors, incorporated into the five hypotheses of this study, are also applied to the selected cases. These factors are then categorized as low, moderate, or high. The two selected cases for this study are the UN peace operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Abyei, United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) and United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) respectively.

This thesis selected UN peace operations in Africa because this region has a long history of UN peace operations dating back to 1960, with more than 30 peacekeeping operations since the beginning. The United Nations work actively in the region to aid in different aspects spanning from social, economic, humanitarian, and security issues. Additionally, MONUSCO and UNISFA were carefully selected as the cases for this study given that they have distinct differences in terms of the nature of their operations as well as the domestic and international factors that influence them. By conducting a study on the selected cases, it offers an opportunity for a more nuanced understanding of how the explanatory factors affect the effectiveness of UN peace operations.

Given that these are active peace operations, this thesis also aims to contribute to existing scholarly literature on UN peace operations by providing a more up-to-date understanding on UN peace operations that can aid future peace operations. Furthermore, UN peacekeeping is characterized as highly dynamic as it continues to evolve in the face

³ Darya Pushkina, "A Recipe for Success? Ingredients of a Successful Peacekeeping Mission," *International Peacekeeping* 13, no. 2 (2006): 189.

⁴ Duane Bratt, "Assessing the Success of UN Peacekeeping Operations," *International Peacekeeping* 3, no. 4 (1996): 64-81.

of present challenges. Despite its constantly evolving nature, the United Nations recognizes that the demand for its peace operations is projected to remain high, and its multidimensional nature will continue.⁵ With this, this topic remains highly relevant at present and in the foreseeable future.

The structure of this thesis is as follows: Chapter 1 presents the introduction to UN peace operations. It tackles descriptive information regarding UN peace operations and its presence in Africa. It is followed by Chapter 2 which consists of the literature review where existing literature relevant to the study are presented as well as the research gaps that this thesis attempts to fill in. This chapter also explores existing theories regarding the criteria for measuring the effectiveness of UN peace operations and the explanatory factors that affect it. Chapter 3 focuses on the theoretical and methodological framework. In this chapter, a better understanding of relevant concepts and conceptualization of the criteria and independent variables are presented. Additionally, this chapter presents the hypotheses, case selection, and methodology employed in this thesis. Chapter 4 focuses on the comprehensive analysis wherein the criteria for measuring the effectiveness of UN peace operations and explanatory factors are examined on the selected cases, MONUSCO and UNISFA, and the hypotheses are tested. This will be followed by the conclusion wherein a brief summary of the findings will be presented, as well as the limitations of the analysis, implications for policy practice and recommendations for future research.

⁵ United Nations Peacekeeping, "Our History," <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/our-history>.

Chapter 1: United Nations Peace Operations

1.1 General Overview

Maintaining international peace and security is one of the core functions of the United Nations, alongside protecting human rights, delivering humanitarian aid, supporting sustainable development and climate action, and upholding international law. The tools used by the UN to perform this function include preventive diplomacy and mediation, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, counterterrorism, and disarmament. Particularly, peacekeeping proves highly effective in aiding countries with transitioning from conflict to peace.⁶

United Nations Peacekeeping commenced in 1948, amidst the Cold War. The deployment of UN military observers to the Middle East, as approved by the Security Council, marked the beginning of the peacekeeping operations that, as we witness today, has evolved not only in numbers but also in nature and mandate.⁷ Since then, 71 UN peacekeeping operations have been deployed globally, with 11 of them currently active. Every UN peace operation starts off with a rigorous process which spans from initial consultation, technical field assessment, adoption of Security Council resolution, appointment of senior officials, and up to the planning and deployment stage. The resolution sets out the features of the peace operation which include the mandate, size, detailed tasks, required resources and financial requirements.⁸ Since the beginning, over two million peacekeepers have served under the flag of the UN. As of January 2024, there are 76,293 peacekeepers serving in currently active peace operations. They are composed of a diverse set of personnel. Although they are mostly identified as the “blue helmets” or military personnel on the ground, they also consist of police officers and civilian staff members, with the latter covering various areas of the operation including general administration, human resources, finance, logistics and communication and technology.⁹

UN peacekeeping has traditionally been created for the purpose of maintaining peace and security by observing and monitoring ceasefires, stabilizing situations on the

⁶ United Nations, “Our Work,” <https://www.un.org/en/our-work>.

⁷ United Nations Peacekeeping, “Our History,” <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/our-history>.

⁸ United Nations Peacekeeping, “Forming a New Operation,” <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/forming-new-operation>.

⁹ United Nations Peacekeeping, “Our Peacekeepers,” <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/our-peacekeepers>.

ground, and aiding in resolving conflicts through peaceful means. Its operations are guided by three principles namely consent of the parties, impartiality, and non-use of force with an exception in self-defence and mandate defence. However, as the nature of conflicts globally evolved from solely inter-state conflicts to civil wars and intra-state conflicts, the role of UN peacekeepers has also evolved along with it. Since the post-cold war period, the UN started to gradually expand its peace operations from performing traditional peacekeeping tasks to complex multidimensional tasks. The latter involves extended mandated tasks for the peacekeepers such as human rights monitoring, security reforms, disarmament and reintegration, demobilization of former combatants, and aiding to build sustainable governance institutions. This presents more security risks for the peacekeepers on the ground. Since the beginning, there has been 4,356 total fatalities of peacekeepers.¹⁰ This also reflects the trend from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, to peace enforcement, wherein the use of all necessary means is employed, particularly coercive measures and use of military force. All of these are evident in the establishment of large and complex operations predominantly in African countries.¹¹

1.2 Security Environment and UN Peace Operations in Africa

In Africa, the security condition demanded an unprecedented need for UN peace operations. It does not only involve the traditional security issue revolving around conflicts or wars in African countries. It also encompasses threats from other areas including social, environmental, economic, and political. Embedded in African security are various issues including corruption, economic weakness vis-à-vis global economy, famine, drought, poverty, malnutrition, gender and ethnic inequality, poor healthcare system, HIV/AIDS, and limited access to education.¹² In fact, in 2005, the Security Council recognized that the humanitarian crisis specifically the food crisis in Africa is a threat to international peace and security.¹³ With this, oftentimes, the assistance of the UN through its peace operations stretches from humanitarian aid to limiting conflict and violence. This demonstrates the complexity of the role played by the UN in maintaining peace and security.

¹⁰ United Nations Peacekeeping, "Data," <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/data>.

¹¹ United Nations Peacekeeping, "Our History," <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/our-history>.

¹² Edmond Keller, "Rethinking African Regional Security," in *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World*, ed. David A. Lake and Patrick M. Morgan (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 296-299.

¹³ United Nations Security Council, "Africa's food crisis as a threat to peace and security," *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council, 2004-2007, Thematic Issues*, 362.

In the past decades, Africa has witnessed numerous conflicts in the region which include state-based, non-state, and one-sided violence. State-based conflicts pertain to conflicts wherein at least one of the actors involved is the state government while non-state conflicts involve two organized groups that are not associated with the state government. On the other hand, one-sided violence refers to violence performed by organized groups who are targeting civilians.¹⁴ The end of the Cold War, specifically the 1990s, is characterized by increased conflicts in many African countries, leading to unsurmountable violence and casualties which subsequently evolved into a humanitarian crisis with massive amount of displaced people and deaths caused by starvation and health diseases. This involved the proliferation of internal conflicts, characterized by ethnic and political tensions which are caused by deteriorating socio-economic conditions and rivalry over resources.¹⁵ Some of the most violent conflicts in history include the Congo Wars from 1996 to 2003, Rwandan genocide in 1994, and Eritrean-Ethiopian war in 1998. Moreover, a study conducted by the Peace Research Institute Oslo in 2018 highlights the increasing trend of conflicts in the region and reveals that in 2017, Africa has the highest number of non-state conflicts globally, with 50 recorded conflicts and an estimated 4,307 conflict-related deaths.¹⁶ By 2000, more than half of the countries in the region and estimated 20 percent of its population were affected by the conflicts.¹⁷ At present, the region is still faced with growing security threats brought by the proliferation of non-state armed groups and terrorist groups.

It was in 1960 when the very first peacekeeping operation in the region was deployed in the Republic of Congo. It was originally set up to aid a region faced with civil wars and establish peace processes. Eventually, the Security Council recognized the need for complex peacekeeping operations in the region. This is particularly notable during the 1990s when the intensity of violence in the region became profoundly alarming, characterized by interstate and internal conflicts.¹⁸ The security condition in the region

¹⁴ Anna Marie Obermeier, "Conflict Trends in Africa, 1989–2022," PRIO Policy Brief, no. 5 (Oslo: Peace Research Institute Oslo, 2023).

¹⁵ Ifeoma Ezeabasili, "The Nature of Conflict in Africa and its Impact on African International Relations: The Case of Darfur," *World Affairs: The Journal of International Issues* 15, no. 3 (2011): 88–112.

¹⁶ Obermeier, "Conflict Trends in Africa, 1989–2022".

¹⁷ Mark Bowden, "Responding to Conflict in Africa," February 2001, www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/events-documents/3778.pdf.

¹⁸ Richard Gowan and Daniel Forti, "What Future for UN Peacekeeping in Africa after Mali Shuttters Its Mission?" International Crisis Group, July 10, 2023, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/global-mali/what-future-un-peacekeeping-africa-after-mali-shuttters-its-mission>.

combined with serious socio-economic and political issues makes the presence of peacekeepers indisputably crucial.¹⁹

Africa holds the highest number of UN peace operations in history, and home to the four largest UN peace operations namely MINUSCA, MONUSCO, UNMISS and MINUSMA. In the past, there have been 26 UN peace operations in Africa, representing more than one-third of the total number of UN peace operations. Out of the 11 UN peace operations currently active globally, 5 of them are situated in Africa. These are: United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), and United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS).²⁰ These peace operations differ in many aspects such as their mandate and size, and face distinctive operational challenges that influence their capabilities to effectively perform their duties.

UN peace operations in Africa faced unprecedented challenges that are incomparable with other regions. UN stated that peacekeepers in Africa were particularly faced with challenges related to complexity of the conflicts, involvement of non-state actors and deeply rooted historical grievances.²¹ Looking at some of the previous UN peace operations in Africa, in 1992, the United Nations Operations in Somalia I (UNOSOM I) was established as a peacekeeping operation primarily tasked to provide humanitarian assistance and restore the national government. However, the complex security and political situation in the country made it difficult for the peace operation to perform its mandate, specifically the lack of government, non-cooperation of factions, extortion, robbery and blackmail towards relief efforts, and attacks on UN personnel.²² Despite attempts to restore order in the country by transitioning into United Nations' Unified Task Force (UNITAF) and subsequently to UNISOM II, the peace operation withdrew from Somalia in 1995 after two of the United States' Black Hawk helicopters were shot down by warlord forces.²³

¹⁹ United States Institute of Peace, "Peacekeeping in Africa," February 13, 2001, <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/sr66.pdf>.

²⁰ United Nations Peacekeeping, "Where We Operate," <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/where-we-operate>.

²¹ United Nations, "Africa," <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/africa>.

²² United Nations, "Somalia – UNOSOM I Background," <https://peacekeeping.un.org/mission/past/unosom1backgr2.html>.

²³ United States Department of State, "Somalia, 1992-1994," <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1993-2000/somalia>.

Another example is the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) which was initially formed to assist in the implementation of the Arusha Peace Agreement signed by the Rwandese parties in 1993. Its mandate was adjusted a few times to enable it to perform more effectively. Despite this, it still failed to stop the acts of genocide that led to more than half a million fatalities. The mission eventually withdrew in 1996. In 1999, the Secretary General accepted the findings of the independent inquiry that revealed that the failure was due to the lack of political will, errors in judgment regarding the nature of events in Rwanda and lack of resources.²⁴ This case did not only raise a major reputational concern for UN peace operations but also controversies involving the actions of countries specifically the Western governments in terms of their lack of assistance when it did not benefit their own economic and political interests.²⁵

The most recent peace operation to withdraw after an unsuccessful operation is the UN peace operation in Mali, MINUSMA in December 2023. It operated in the country for 10 years and was established to support the political process in the country and aid in stabilisation. It is considered by the UN as its “most challenging peacekeeping operation” with 310 total peacekeepers fatalities and more than 700 personnel injured.²⁶ It was also characterized by extremist violence and widespread insecurity across the northern and central areas. Its withdrawal was initiated by Mali government’s request for the withdrawal of the peace operation in the country without delay. The country’s foreign ministry stated that the peace operation failed given that it turned into a problem that fuelled further tensions and its mandate was no longer addressing the country’s security challenges.²⁷

On the other hand, there were also peace operations that have successfully fulfilled their mandates before leaving the country they were deployed to. This includes the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), a multidimensional peacekeeping operation which has successfully completed its mandate in 2018, aiding the country’s transition to democracy and peace by helping disarm combatants, rebuild institutions, protect millions of civilians, facilitate provision of humanitarian aid, and develop national capacity to uphold human rights.²⁸ Another example is the United Nations Operation in Côte D'Ivoire (UNOCI),

²⁴ United Nations, "Rwanda-UNAMIR Background," <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/past/unamirS.htm>.

²⁵ John A. Berry and Carol Pott Berry, *Genocide in Rwanda: A Collective Memory* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1999), 6.

²⁶ United Nations, “Mali: ‘MINUSMA is leaving, but the UN is staying’, Mission chief says,” August 8, 2023. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/08/1140142>.

²⁷ United Nations News, “UN Mission backs constitutional referendum in Mali,” June 16, 2023. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/06/1137812>.

²⁸ United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), "United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Liberia

completing its mandate in 2017 after successfully assisting the country with restoration of peace and stability after the 2010 election crisis in the country. The country witnessed an improvement in the security situation, strengthened democratic institutions, development in the security sector reform, stable economic development, and deployment of public services.²⁹

These cases demonstrate the challenging security landscape embedded in Africa, resulting in mixed outcomes of past UN peace operations in the region, with some being successful while others were not. This subsequently raises questions on the effectiveness and reputation of UN peace operations and the possible need to consider alternatives. UN Secretary-General António Guterres, during the launch of the new agenda for peace policy brief in 2023 stated that “there is no continent in greater need of this new generation of peace-enforcement missions than Africa”.³⁰ For some scholars, this indicates the uncertainty of UN peace operations, especially in more challenging security dynamics that our world is currently facing.³¹

Completes Its Mandate," <https://unmil.unmissions.org/united-nations-peacekeeping-mission-liberia-completes-its-mandate>.

²⁹ United Nations, “FEATURE: Mission Accomplished – UN Operation in Côte d’Ivoire,” May 1, 2017. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/05/556382-feature-mission-accomplished-un-operation-cote-divoire>.

³⁰ United Nations Secretary-General, "Launching New Agenda for Peace Policy Brief, Secretary-General Urges States to 'Preserve Our Universal Institution' amid Highest Level of Geopolitical Tension in Decades," Press Release, SG/SM/21885, July 20, 2023. <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sgsm21885.doc.htm>

³¹ International Institute for Strategic Studies, “The Outlook for UN Peacekeeping Operations,” *Strategic Comments* 29, no. 8 (2023): xi–xiv.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

As the nature of UN peace operations expanded because of the evolving nature of conflicts in different parts of the world, scholarly debates followed through by presenting diverse arguments regarding their implications and effectiveness. With this, the purpose of this literature review is to analyse existing scholarly literature surrounding UN peace operations, particularly studies that are related to their effectiveness and in the context of Africa. It will also explore existing theories, from where the hypotheses of this study will be drawn from.

Scholars such as Bellamy and Hunt (2015) highlight the constantly evolving nature of UN peace operations and their mandates, along with the challenges brought by the broadening gap between what is being demanded from the UN peace operations today and what they are capable to deliver. This leads to various implications such as the failure of some peace operations to protect civilians and vulnerability of peacekeepers resulting to casualties.³² On the other hand, Di Salvatore and Ruggeri (2017) review quantitative studies on the effectiveness of peace operations and finds that most of these studies employ the rationalist approach on explaining conflict, from where theoretical arguments on the effectiveness of peace operations are rooted on. This is the idea that “peace operations can modify parties’ incentives by increasing costs of fighting, mitigating commitment problems, and facilitating information flows among belligerents”.³³

2.1 Measurement of effectiveness

What constitutes as an effective UN peace operation garnered different views from various scholars. For Bratt (1996), the success of UN peace operations can be measured in terms of limitation of casualties, mandate performance, conflict containment, and facilitation of conflict resolution.³⁴ This resembles Pushkina’s (2006) argument that the success of UN peace operations is defined in terms of limiting violence, reducing human suffering, fulfilling the mission’s mandate, and preventing

³² Alex J. Bellamy and Charles T. Hunt, "Twenty-first Century UN Peace Operations: Protection, Force and the Changing Security Environment," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944)* 91, no. 6 (2015): 1277-1298.

³³ Di Salvatore and Ruggeri, "Effectiveness of Peacekeeping Operations," 20.

³⁴ Bratt, "Assessing the Success of UN Peacekeeping Operations," 65-71.

the spread of conflict beyond state borders.³⁵ Additionally, Brown (1993) presents three specific criteria that support the arguments of the aforementioned authors. These include fulfilment of the mandate as specified in the Security Council resolution, conflict resolution and contributing to maintaining international peace and security by reducing or eliminating conflict.³⁶ Beardsley (2011) shares the same view as he discusses the concept of conflict contagion and how peacekeepers contribute to preventing the spread of conflict. He addresses the gap on existing studies which mostly focus on the ability of peace operations to enhance the duration of peace and have limited emphasis on their effectiveness to reduce the spillover effect. He finds that the effectiveness of peace operations is determined by its ability to secure the borders of host countries and its neighbouring countries.³⁷

Similarly, for Diehl (1993), prominent for his book, *International Peacekeeping*, that focuses on the evaluation of success of UN peace operations, two important criteria for evaluating peacekeeping operations are conflict resolution and limitation of armed conflict. He also argued that a peace operation is mostly successful in achieving the latter criterion than the former.³⁸ In contrast, Johansen (1994) disagrees with the method used by Diehl and argues that peacekeeping should no longer be measured using these criteria. Instead, it should be done by assessing the effect of peacekeeping efforts to local people and making a comparison between the degree of violence in the presence of UN peacekeepers and without their presence.³⁹ Nystrom (2015) supports this as he argues that civilian protection is an important criterion for evaluating UN peace operations, even though its actions deviate from the traditional principles of peacekeeping. The author conducts a study on the UN peace operations in the DRC and argues that the move of the Security Council in 2013 to authorize MONUSCO to use force against rebel groups drifted from the traditional principles of peacekeeping namely impartiality, consent, and non-use of force except when it is for self-defence or defending the mandate. This does not completely imply, however, that the mission has failed. This is only one aspect to consider, but the author argues in the end that, despite this, authorizing peace enforcement led to increased

³⁵ Pushkina, "A Recipe for Success?", 133-135.

³⁶ Marjorie Ann Brown, "United Nations Peacekeeping: Historical Overview and Current Issues," *Report for Congress*, Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, (1993): 7.

³⁷ Kyle Beardsley, "Peacekeeping and the Contagion of Armed Conflict," *The Journal of Politics* 73, no. 4 (2011): 1051-1064.

³⁸ Paul F. Diehl, *International Peacekeeping*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

³⁹ Robert C. Johansen, "U.N. Peacekeeping: How Should We Measure Success?" *Mershon International Studies Review* 38, no. 2 (1994): 307-310.

legitimacy for the UN peace operations and to UN in general, given the fact that it protected civilians.⁴⁰

On the other hand, Gilligan and Sergenti (2008) argue that peacekeeping operations are more effective at keeping peace rather than making peace.⁴¹ For Gizelis, Dorussen and Petrova (2016), an effective UN peace operation entail providing both positive and negative peace, specifically its capability to stop the conflict while also protecting civilians from violence, building state capacity, security reforms, and supporting economic development and democratization.⁴² In line with this, Di Salvatore and Ruggeri (2017) presents similar findings linking peace operations and non-conflict related outcomes such as economic development, social development, democratization, human rights, sexual exploitation and abuse incidents, and attacks targeted to peacekeeping personnel. They argue that outcomes of peace operations are not limited to security and conflict. They also have beneficial effects in the political development of the country, specifically the promotion of democratic processes. However, they stress that in other aspects such as economic development and human rights, it depends on specific domestic conditions. The authors also argue that existing peacekeeping literatures with qualitative nature reflect a shift of focus from stopping conflict and violence to the improvement of quality of peace.⁴³ Furthermore, Doyle and Sambanis (2000) agrees with the previous arguments as they stress that steering the country towards democratic transition is an important criterion of a successful peace operation.⁴⁴

These literatures share a mix of short-term and long-term perspectives. Studies that establish links between peace operations and non-conflict related outcomes adopt longer-term perspective while those studies that are related to conflict and violence outcomes adopt limited time perspective by focusing on the monthly or yearly outcome of peace operations.⁴⁵ In addition, Diehl and Druckman (2010) stress the need to look at a wider perspective and account for more criteria, rather than just one, when assessing the success of peace operations to avoid the risk of policymakers adopting

⁴⁰ Dag Nystrom, "The UN Mission in Congo and the Basic Principles of Peacekeeping" (Thesis in Public International Law, Stockholm University, 2015).

⁴¹ Michael J. Gilligan and Ernest J. Sergenti, "Do UN Interventions Cause Peace? Using Matching to Improve Causal Inference," *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 3, no. 2 (2008): 89-122.

⁴² Theodora-Ismene Gizelis, Han Dorussen, and Marina Petrova, "Research Findings on the Evolution of Peacekeeping," *University of Essex Research Repository*, (2014): 17.

⁴³ Di Salvatore and Ruggeri, "Effectiveness of Peacekeeping Operations," 36.

⁴⁴ Michael Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, "International Peacebuilding: A Theoretical and Quantitative Analysis," *American Political Science Review* 94, no. 4 (2000): 779-801.

⁴⁵ Di Salvatore and Ruggeri, "Effectiveness of Peacekeeping Operations," 17-19.

policies that pose unintended consequences to peace operations.⁴⁶

2.2 Factors correlated to effectiveness

In terms of explanatory factors that affect the effectiveness of UN peace operations, scholars also present diverse views. For example, Pushkina (2006) argues that it is essential to consider a wide array of factors in measuring success. She also argues for the importance of taking into account both domestic and international levels when determining factors that shape the outcomes of peace operations, as previous related studies only utilised either domestic or international level. With this, her study involves an analysis of 17 peacekeeping operations from the period 1945 to 1998. She identifies determinants for the success of peacekeeping operations namely “commitment of the United Nations, absence of external support for the belligerents, successful diplomatic efforts, and low degree of mutual antagonism”. On the other hand, she also highlights factors that are not correlated to their success. These are the “involvement of great powers or regional organizations, the presence of military stalemate, and absence of an ethnic component”. Additionally, she argues that the duration and size of the mission do not have an effect on success.⁴⁷ On the other hand, Di Salvatore and Ruggeri (2017) argue that the phase of the conflict is worth considering as a criterion for effectiveness.⁴⁸ Heldt (2001) agrees with this, as he argues that the success of a peace operation depends not on its characteristics but rather the characteristics of the conflict it is faced with.⁴⁹

In contrast to this, for some authors, the characteristics of a peace operation such as the composition and presence of peacekeeping personnel are crucial factors that influence the effectiveness of UN peace operations. Bove and Ruggeri (2015) argue that the composition of peacekeeping personnel influences the effectiveness of peace operations, specifically that more diverse composition is more likely to be successful than homogenous ones.⁵⁰ On the other hand, Hultman, Kathman, and

⁴⁶ Paul F. Diehl and Daniel Druckman. *Evaluating Peace Operations*. Lynne Rienner Publishers eBooks, 2010.

⁴⁷ Pushkina, "A Recipe for Success?", 133.

⁴⁸ Di Salvatore and Ruggeri, "Effectiveness of Peacekeeping Operations," 38-40.

⁴⁹ Birger Heldt, "Conditions for Successful Intrastate Peacekeeping Missions," *The Cornwallis Group VI: Analysis for Assessment, Evaluation and Crisis Management*, (2001): 109-136.

⁵⁰ Vincenzo Bove and Andrea Ruggeri, "Kinds of Blue. Diversity in U.N. Peacekeeping Missions and Civilian Protection," *British Journal of Political Science* 46, no. 3 (2015): 681.

Shannon (2014), in their study involving UN peace operations that dealt with civil wars in Africa from the period 1992 to 2011, argue that a peace operation's capacity particularly the number of peacekeepers has a short-term positive effect on the number of civilian deaths. A larger number of armed military troops increases the effectiveness of UN peace operations in limiting violence by guaranteeing security and increasing the cost of conflict. This, however, does not apply to UN police and observers, with the latter associated to an increase in hostilities.⁵¹ Similarly, Beardsley and Gleditsch (2015) argue that peace operations are more effective in containing the conflict when they have robust composition of troops. However, they also highlight that the number of observers and police numbers do not have sufficient capabilities to contain the conflict. In fact, police likely increase the spillover of violence rather than contain it. Asserting Hultman's (2010) argument, they claim that peace operations tend to increase the violence of rebel groups given that they have the ability to restrict government hostilities from targeting rebel groups. This then gives the rebel groups an opportunity to maximize the security afforded to them and strengthen their capabilities while being immersed in civilian populations.⁵²

For Bratt (1996), although he only mentioned towards the conclusion of his study, possible factors that affect the success of peacekeeping include "nature of the conflict, size of peacekeeping force, the type of mandate; the existence of a prior UN-authorized military intervention, the involvement of the permanent members of the Security Council, the geographical conditions of the conflict, and the importance of consent, impartiality, and minimum use of force by the peacekeepers."⁵³ Similar to Bratt, a few other scholars also identify mandate as an essential factor for the effectiveness of peace operations. Doyle and Sambanis (2000) highlight specifically that mandates with multidimensional and enforcement character are more successful than observer and traditional peace operations.⁵⁴ Hultman (2010) also argues that robust mandates are crucial for peace operations to achieve conflict containment and protect civilians from rebel groups' violence.⁵⁵ With a resemblance to the previous authors, Bariagaber (2006) also presents an argument about mandate, arguing that the

⁵¹ Lisa Hultman, Jacob Kathman, and Megan Shannon, "Beyond Keeping Peace: United Nations Effectiveness in the Midst of Fighting," *The American Political Science Review* 108, no. 4 (2014): 745-748.

⁵² Kyle Beardsley and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, "Peacekeeping as Conflict Containment," *International Studies Review* 17, no. 1 (2015): 84.

⁵³ Bratt, "Assessing the Success of UN Peacekeeping Operations," 79.

⁵⁴ Doyle and Sambanis, "International Peacebuilding," 779-801.

⁵⁵ Lisa Hultman, "Keeping Peace or Spurring Violence? Unintended Effects of Peace Operations on Violence against Civilians," *Civil Wars* 12, no. 1-2 (2010): 29-46.

effectiveness of a peace operation also depends on the mandate being tailored specifically to the UN peace operation and the realities on the ground. He also argued that access to resources such as the required number of peacekeepers is also essential to achieve the mandate effectively.⁵⁶

Moreover, the Brahimi Report (2000), formally known as the Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operation and well-cited in many peacekeeping literatures, stated similar factors argued by Bratt. The document highlights the importance of consent in peacekeeping. It states that “the consent of the local parties, impartiality and the use of force only in self-defence should remain the bedrock principles of peacekeeping”.⁵⁷ Authors such as Diehl (1993) also recognize the importance of consent in peace operations. He specifically argues that a peacekeeping operation is more successful if it is “consent-based, deploys neutral lightly armed personnel and the geographical conditions allows separation of combatants and detection of violations”.⁵⁸ Doyle and Sambanis (1999) also hold the same position as they argue that consent is crucial to a peace operation, with involved parties expressing their genuine desire to have peace through a formal peace agreement. Without this consent, a peace operation can only perform its mandate by military force. In this case, it will violate one of its principles which is impartiality, and consequently lose its peacekeeping character. This could eventually lead to war.⁵⁹

Moreover, aside from Pushkina (2006) and Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon (2014), there are also other scholars who analysed the effectiveness of UN peace operations alongside carefully selected cases. This includes Van der Lijn (2009) who presents factors for the success and failure of UN peace operations and tested them on four cases namely Cambodia, El Salvador, Mozambique, and Rwanda. The factors that he utilised are drawn from scholarly literature. These are consent, willingness and sincerity, impartiality and the non-use of force, cooperation from important outside actors, sense of security of the parties, clear, appropriate, and achievable mandate, timely deployment and at the right time, competent leadership and personnel and clear command structures, sufficiently long duration, internal and external coordination, ownership, and causes of the conflict. He argues, in the end, that majority of these factors proved to be valid as evident

⁵⁶ Assefaw Bariagaber, "United Nations Peace Operations in Africa: A Cookie-Cutter Approach?" *Journal of Third World Studies* 23, no. 2 (2006): 11-29.

⁵⁷ Lakhdar Brahimi, Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, UN doc. A/55/305-S/2000/809. New York: United Nations, (2000): 9.

⁵⁸ Diehl, *International Peacekeeping*.

⁵⁹ Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, "Building Peace: Challenges and Strategies After Civil War," (1999), <http://nachtwei.de/zkb/buildingpeace.pdf>.

in the selected cases and found that two of these factors namely clear, appropriate, and achievable mandate and non-use of force could not be considered explanatory factors for the success of a peace operation. This is in contrast with the arguments of previously mentioned authors regarding the importance of mandate and non-use of force as essential factors. Additionally, the author highlights that there still hasn't been a blueprint that can generally be used to evaluate the effectiveness of UN peace operations.⁶⁰

Based on the review conducted, existing scholarly literature demonstrates the complexities of peacekeeping operations. Majority of the scholars focused on the evolution of peace operations and presented diverse views regarding the criteria for assessing the effectiveness of UN peace operations and the explanatory factors that affect them. Among these scholars, the most common criteria for assessing the effectiveness of UN peace operations are mandate fulfilment, limiting casualties, conflict containment and conflict resolution. In terms of explanatory factors, the most common factors argued by scholars are associated with the nature of the peace operation, domestic level, and international level. Seeing how varied these factors are, it affirms the arguments of Di Salvatore and Ruggeri and Van der Lijn that there still hasn't been a clear consensus for assessing the effectiveness of UN peace operations. To account for these diverse views, this thesis aims to utilise a combination of these theories in its analysis. Moreover, while it shows that peace operations have been broadly studied, it appears that there is limited research targeted specifically on active UN peace operations in Africa. Thus, this thesis aims to help address this research gap by conducting a contemporary and in-depth study on currently active UN peace operations in Africa, with a motivation to contribute to existing scholarship on UN peace operations which could aid in policymaking and future peace operations.

⁶⁰ Jaïr Van der Lijn, "If Only There Were a Blueprint! Factors for Success and Failure of UN Peace-Building Operations," *International Peacekeeping* 12, no. 1-2 (2009): 45-71.

Chapter 3: Theoretical and Methodological Framework

This chapter establishes the theoretical foundations upon which this thesis is built. It will present clear working definitions of key concepts and conceptualization of criteria and independent variables, establishing common understanding and clarity for the analysis. Drawing from existing scholarly literatures, it will also introduce the theories that will guide the analysis in the succeeding section as well as the hypotheses that will be tested. Consequently, this chapter will present the case selection and methodological approach that will be utilised, providing a structured framework for the comprehensive analysis involving the selected cases of UN peace operations in Africa.

3.1 Working definition of key concepts

This study adopts the term “UN peace operation” which refers to the various missions that are deployed under the UN flag. This term covers its different types such as peacebuilding, peacekeeping, and peace enforcement and different natures particularly traditional and multidimensional.⁶¹ While most scholarly literatures referred to in this thesis refer specifically to peacekeeping and UN peace operations in Africa take the form of peacekeeping operations, this study utilises “UN peace operation” to acknowledge the complex nature of these operations that as seen today has moved from traditional peacekeeping to multidimensional approach. This also allows for a broader understanding of contemporary peacekeeping highly relevant in the study of UN peace operations in Africa, a region that presents complex security landscape.

Moreover, this study utilises the term “effectiveness” in evaluating UN peace operations. Most scholarly literature on UN peace operations commonly utilise the term “success” as evident in the literature review. While “success” generally refers to achieving a positive result,⁶² “effectiveness” encompasses the ability to successfully produce an intended result.⁶³ This study recognizes that in the context of UN peace operations, the distinction between these terms is very minimal. With this, these two terms are viewed as closely related to each other and will thus be used interchangeably. Nonetheless, the decision to utilise “effectiveness” in this study is in line with the previous explanation, which

⁶¹ Bellamy and Hunt, “Twenty-first Century UN Peace Operations”, 1.

⁶² Cambridge Dictionary, “Success,” <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/success>

⁶³ Cambridge Dictionary, “Effectiveness,” <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/effectiveness>

serves to provide a broader understanding of the multidimensional nature of contemporary UN peacekeeping operations. This term is particularly relevant in this study given that it focuses on UN peace operations that are still active and have not yet been concluded, allowing for a more comprehensive analysis taking into account their ability to fulfil their mandated tasks amid the complex nature and challenges posed by the evolving security environment in Africa.

3.2 Criteria for measuring the effectiveness of UN peace operations

The criteria for measuring the effectiveness of UN peace operations are drawn from existing works presented in the previous chapter on literature review. To account for the complexity and broad nature of measuring the effectiveness of UN peace operations, this study utilises a combination of criteria presented by different prominent scholars, with a particular focus on Brown⁶⁴, Bratt⁶⁵, and Pushkina⁶⁶. These criteria are mandate fulfilment, limiting casualties, conflict containment, and conflict resolution. These were carefully selected to cover the operational performance of the operations on the ground through the help of peacekeepers and the contribution of the operations towards international peace and security. Additionally, more than one criterion will be utilised to ensure adequacy as relying solely on examining one criterion will generate limited insight regarding the effectiveness of the UN peace operations.

The first criterion, mandate fulfilment, refers to the ability of the UN peace operation to accomplish its mandate as specified in the UN Security Council resolution. This study evaluates if this criterion has been met by the selected cases by referring to their mandates and examining the extent to which the tasks indicated were fulfilled.⁶⁷

The second criterion is limiting casualties. Establishing the scope of these casualties, these involve both military and civilian casualties as well as direct and indirect casualties caused by the ongoing conflict. The former refers to conflict-related casualties such as victims of bombings, landmines, and snipers while the latter refers to health diseases and famine caused by the conflict, identified through the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance as well as internally displaced persons. This criterion will

⁶⁴ Brown, "United Nations Peacekeeping."

⁶⁵ Bratt, "Assessing the Success of UN Peacekeeping Operations."

⁶⁶ Pushkina, "A Recipe for Success?"

⁶⁷ Brown, "United Nations Peacekeeping."

be evaluated by comparison of number of casualties prior to and after the deployment of the peace operation and identifying if there is a significant reduction of casualties, limited reduction, or little to no effect.⁶⁸

The third criterion is conflict containment which refers to whether the peace operation was able to prevent the spread of the conflict beyond the state's borders and consequently prevent a greater war involving great powers and neighbouring countries. This study recognises that not all conflicts pose a tendency to spread externally. With this, the nature of conflict will first be identified and if applicable, this criterion will be evaluated by assessing the extent to which the conflict spread and involved neighbouring countries.⁶⁹

The fourth criterion, conflict resolution, refers to the ability to achieve lasting peace and political settlement and contribute to the UN's broader goals of reduction of human suffering and international security by preventing the resurgence of hostilities. This will be evaluated by looking into the security environment that the peace operation has produced and the extent to which this enables the possibility of violence in the future.⁷⁰

Each of these criteria will be examined against the selected UN peace operations, MONUSCO and UNISFA, and subsequently categorized as complete success, moderate success, or failure.⁷¹ With minor modification from Bratt's study wherein he aggregated these four criteria to identify the effectiveness of UN peace operations, this study will assess each criterion separately to avoid suppressing the important role of mandate fulfilment against the three other criteria which are closely related to the effects on the conflict. This allows each criterion to be given proper consideration and give way to more nuanced insights that can be drawn in relation to the selected cases.

By conceptualizing the effectiveness of peace operations, this study contributes to preventing misguided policies. As reiterated by Bratt, this is crucial when evaluating both past and current peace operations given that the UN and its member states rely on these studies in making informed decisions about future peace operations.⁷² Moreover, this allows for a more systematic analysis of factors that affect the effectiveness of UN peace operations.

⁶⁸ Bratt, "Assessing the Success of UN Peacekeeping Operations," 69-70.

⁶⁹ Pushkina, "A Recipe for Success?", 134.

⁷⁰ Pushkina, "A Recipe for Success?", 134-135.

⁷¹ Bratt, "Assessing the Success of UN Peacekeeping Operations," 78.

⁷² Bratt, "Assessing the Success of UN Peacekeeping Operations," 65.

3.3 Independent variables and hypotheses

Existing works presented in the previous chapter on literature review reveal that there is no single blueprint for assessing the effectiveness of UN peace operations. With this, this study takes into consideration the diversity of views by employing a combination of explanatory factors from various scholars, classified into three different categories: the nature of the peace operation, domestic level, and international level. Each independent variable will be classified as low, moderate, or high. By doing so, this will aid in examining the relationship between the independent variables and the criteria for effectiveness in the latter part of the analysis.

Under the nature of the peace operation, this study will utilise three factors namely conflict intensity, effort to address the causes of the conflict, and level of commitment from the UN. The first factor will be assessed by examining the intensity of the conflict faced by the UN peace operation in terms of the level and extent of the conflict, specifically the severity of attacks, its geographical reach, and the damage it inflicts. For the second factor, it will be evaluated in terms of the activities of the UN peace operation directed towards addressing the causes of the existing conflict in the countries they are deployed. The third factor will be measured in terms of the UN's commitment to supply sufficient resources to the UN peace operation to fulfil its mandate and on a timely manner. These involve necessary personnel, financial, logistical, and military support.

In the domestic level, this study will examine the consent and cooperation from local parties. This will be assessed by the extent to which involved local parties cooperated and accepted the actions of the UN and whether peacekeepers on the ground were either kept safe or targeted by belligerents.

In the international level, it will delve into the external support to the belligerents. This specifically refers to any military, financial and political support provided to the belligerents by external actors. This will be evaluated in terms of the sources and level of support received.

With this, the hypotheses of this study are as follows:

H1: Conflict intensity decreases the effectiveness of a UN peace operation.

H2: Consent and cooperation provided to the peace operation by the local parties increases the effectiveness of a UN peace operation.

H3: External military and political support to the belligerents decreases the

effectiveness of a UN peace operation.

H4: Commitment from the UN, through sufficient and timely provision of resources, increases the effectiveness of a UN peace operation.

H5: The execution of activities by a UN peace operation that address the causes of the conflict increases the effectiveness of a UN peace operation.

3.4 Case selection

This study selected UN peace operations in Africa because this region has a long history of UN peace operations dating back to 1960, with a total of 26 past peacekeeping operations deployed in the region since the beginning. This is in addition to 5 peacekeeping operations currently active in the region. For decades, the United Nations work actively in the region to aid in different aspects spanning from social, economic, humanitarian, and security issues. This region presents a complex and challenging security environment, making the presence of UN peace operations undeniably crucial. Thus, focusing on this region allows for a more comprehensive insight and analysis on UN peace operations' effectiveness and contribution towards international peace and security.

Specifically, MONUSCO and UNISFA were carefully selected as the cases for this study due to the differences that exist between them. While MONUSCO captures the contemporary multidimensional nature of UN peace operations, UNISFA demonstrates a smaller scale peace operation. They also differ in terms of the nature of conflict that they face, operational challenges, and provision of resources. By conducting a study on the selected cases, it offers an opportunity to identify trends and consequently allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how the explanatory factors affect the effectiveness of UN peace operations.

While most scholarly literature related to the effectiveness of UN peace operations deal with UN peace operations that have already been concluded, this study utilises active UN peace operations as this allows for a more contemporary analysis, covering the contemporary nature and challenges embedded in the security environment, that can eventually contribute to future policymaking and UN peace operations.

3.5 Methodology

This study is a qualitative case study, employing the explanatory and comparative

approach. Having established the conceptualization of criteria and independent variables and theoretical framework, this study will proceed with the analysis on the next section. The two selected UN peace operations in Africa, MONUSCO and UNISFA will be studied in-depth through the collection of relevant primary and secondary data sourced from the United Nations peacekeeping website, UN news and press releases, official websites of MONUSCO and UNISFA, UN Security Council resolutions, UN Secretary General reports, and UN General Assembly budget reports publicly available in the United Nations Digital Library, World Bank statistics website, official government reports, and academic books and journal articles from prominent scholars regarding international relations, peacekeeping, and conflict resolution. The analysis will be performed by meticulously examining the selected cases to enable classification of established criteria as complete success, moderate success, or failure and explanatory factors as low, moderate, or high. Consequently, the hypotheses will be tested on both cases to examine possible underlying causal mechanisms between the explanatory factors and the effectiveness of UN peace operations which will subsequently reveal conclusions and answer the research question of this study, what explains when the UN peace operation is effective?

Chapter 4: Comparative Analysis of MONUSCO and UNISFA

This chapter presents an in-depth analysis of the selected cases, MONUSCO and UNISFA. Through the application of the established theoretical and methodological framework backed by empirical evidence, this chapter will analyse the effectiveness of the selected cases and subsequently test the hypotheses, revealing insights on the explanatory factors that explain the effectiveness of UN peace operations.

4.1 The Case of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), through the years, has faced a multitude of conflicts and wars. Specifically, the latter part of 1990s to early 2000s in the DRC was characterized by the Congo Wars, consisting of domestic conflicts and involvement of internal and external actors. The First Congo War from 1996-1997 stemmed from the Rwandan genocide in 1994, which subsequently led to more than a million Rwandese Hutus fleeing to the eastern part of Congo, the formation of rebellion forces and the renaming of the country to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This war resulted to multiple casualties, widespread displacement of people, and alarming humanitarian crisis. After this period, the conflicts caused by rebel groups persisted, prompting the Security Council to call for a ceasefire and urging countries to withdraw their forces and not to interfere with internal conflicts in the country. In 1999, following the signing of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement between the DRC and five other countries namely Angola, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe, the UN decided to establish the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo or MONUC to observe the ceasefire and compliance of all parties to the agreement.⁷³ Subsequently, its mandate was expanded to supervise the implementation of the ceasefire along with many other political and military tasks.⁷⁴

In July 2010, as security challenges in the country persisted and continued to pose a threat to international peace and security, through Security Council Resolution 1925, MONUC was succeeded by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the

⁷³ UN Peacekeeping, "MONUC Background," <https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/past/monuc/background.shtml>.

⁷⁴ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 1291 (2000)," S/RES/1291, February 24, 2000.

Democratic Republic of the Congo or MONUSCO. The name of the UN peace operation was revised, and “stabilization” was added to represent the central purpose of MONUSCO which is to establish long-lasting peace and stability in the country and help build the capabilities of the Congolese government in taking over the tasks performed by the UN in the future. The abovementioned resolution set the mandate of the peace operation focused initially on protection of civilians, peace consolidation and stabilisation.⁷⁵ Throughout its operation, the mandate has been expanded several times to address the evolving security environment in the country. The DRC continues to face a complexity of conflicts driven by disputes over land and resources, ethnic tensions, poor governance, intercommunal conflicts, weak legitimacy of the government, absence of rule of law and deteriorating socioeconomic conditions.⁷⁶

At present, MONUSCO continues to operate in the DRC. Its leadership is in Kinshasa, the capital city located on the Western part of the country, while majority of its personnel are based in Eastern DRC where conflicts are most rampant. Before testing the hypotheses, it is crucial to identify the extent to which MONUSCO has been effective in its operations in the DRC by examining the established criteria namely mandate fulfilment, limiting casualties, conflict containment and conflict resolution. Subsequently, the analysis of the explanatory factors will be conducted to determine how they affect the effectiveness of MONUSCO.

4.1.1 Criteria for effectiveness

Mandate fulfilment

When MONUSCO took over in July 2010, its mandate focused on two areas: protection of civilians, and stabilisation and peace consolidation.⁷⁷ Through the years, as reflected in Table 1, its mandate expanded to adjust with the evolving security environment in the DRC as it recognizes that the situation in the country remains a threat to international peace and security.

⁷⁵ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 1925 (2010)," S/RES/1925, para. 12, May 28, 2010.

⁷⁶ United Nations Security Council, "Special report of the Secretary-General on the strategic review of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," S/2017/826, para. 17, September 29, 2017.

⁷⁷ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 1925 (2010)," S/RES/1925, para. 12, May 28, 2010.

Table 1: MONUSCO's mandate

Year	MONUSCO's mandated tasks
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protection of civilians - Stabilisation and peace consolidation
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protection of civilians - Support for the national, provincial, and local elections
2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protection of civilians - Neutralizing armed groups through the Intervention Brigade - Monitoring the implementation of the armed embargo - Provision of support to national and international judicial processes
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protection of civilians - Political situation - Stabilisation - Protection of the United Nations - Security Sector Reform - Arms embargo - Mining activities
2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protection of civilians - Implementation of the 31 December 2016 agreement and support to the electoral process - Protection of the United Nations - Stabilisation and DDR - Security Sector Reform (SSR) - Sanctions regime - Mining activities
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protection of civilians - Implementation of the 31 December 2016 agreement and support to the electoral process - Protection of the United Nations - Stabilisation and DDR - Security Sector Reform (SSR) - Sanctions regime
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protection of civilians - Support to stabilisation and the strengthening of State institutions in the DRC, and key governance and security reforms
2020, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protection of civilians - Support to stabilisation and the strengthening of State institutions in the DRC, and key governance and security reforms, in order to establish functional, professional, and accountable state institutions, including security and judicial institutions

2022, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protection of civilians under threat of physical violence by taking all necessary measures to ensure effective, timely, dynamic and integrated protection - Disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration (DDR) and stabilisation - Security Sector Reform (SSR)
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Source: United Nations Security Council Resolutions S/RES/1925 (2010), S/RES/2098 (2013), S/RES/2277 (2016), S/RES/2348 (2017), S/RES/2409 (2018), S/RES/2556 (2020), S/RES/2612 (2021), S/RES/2666 (2022), S/RES/2717 (2023)

Table 1 covers the specific years wherein new tasks were introduced in MONUSCO's mandate. These mandates include an extensive list of tasks but for the purpose of solely highlighting the expanded nature of MONUSCO's mandate through the years, the table only includes the main areas.

UN Security Council Resolution 2717, adopted in December 2023, specifies the most up-to-date mandate of MONUSCO and reiterates that it is authorized to take all necessary measures to be able to carry out its mandate. Specifically, it states that MONUSCO's tasks are focused on the following main areas:

- i. "Protection of civilians under threat of physical violence by taking all necessary measures to ensure effective, timely, dynamic and integrated protection.
- ii. Disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration (DDR) and stabilisation.
- iii. Security Sector Reform (SSR)⁷⁸

The Security Council resolutions reiterate the crucial role played by civilian protection in fulfilling the mandate of MONUSCO as it positively influences the security environment in the DRC. It explicitly "reaffirms that the protection of civilians must be given priority in decisions about the use of available capacity and resources".⁷⁹ MONUSCO has achieved a lot on this aspect. Its ability to protect civilians was particularly visible in 2012 when conflicts brought by the armed group Mouvement du 23 mars, more commonly known as M23, emerged in the DRC. As a response, the Security Council authorized an expanded mandate for MONUSCO in 2013 that reflected a robust military approach in the form of the Force intervention Brigade (FIB), allowing the UN peace operation to conduct targeted offensive operation to neutralize M23, reduce the security threats that they pose in Eastern DRC and promote stabilisation. As a result, the group eventually fled in 2013.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2717 (2023)," S/RES/2717, para. 34, December 19, 2023.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2147 (2014)," S/RES/2147, para. 4, March 28, 2014.

This evidently showed its ability to take all necessary measures to successfully protect civilians. However, it resurfaced again in 2022. In between this period and up to the present, the existence of multiple armed groups continues to pose a huge threat to the country which challenges MONUSCO's ability to effectively protect civilians. Its failure to protect is evident in the consistently increasing number of casualties and internally displaced persons in the DRC despite its presence.

Additionally, the execution of this task has been done mostly through a militarised approach, with a lack of clear mandate on pursuing negotiations or dialogue with armed groups.⁸¹ As the FIB, initially introduced as a temporary tool, continues to be utilised by MONUSCO, its elements of clarity and appropriateness start to be questionable. FIB was originally set up to counter the M23, which features a more conventional military structure operating on a limited area situated near the Rwandan border. Then, its function expanded to deal with other armed groups such as Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), both operating on a more decentralised structure either on dense forest or inland which it is not set up for. As a consequence, this garnered limited outcome. Moreover, since the expanded mandate with the FIB was implemented, there was a lack of clarity among peacekeeping troops on the ground who have divisive interpretation regarding the use of force to protect civilians, with concerns that this interferes and violates the core principles of peacekeeping.⁸²

More importantly, MONUSCO's mandate put neutralising armed groups at its core, as part of its task of protecting civilians. This has significantly overshadowed other tasks stipulated in the mandate. As a consequence, civilians primarily identify MONUSCO as military in nature. This also fuelled misconceptions and frustration on civilians who perceive MONUSCO's operations in the country as ineffective. This opposition led to attacks targeted at peacekeepers on the ground. Moreover, its military approach is only capable of producing short-term outcome of neutralizing and disarming armed groups. This has overshadowed the political aspect of the mandate that is essential to address the root causes of the conflict, establish strong democratic and governance institutions, and generate long-term peace and stability. MONUSCO does not have a robust political approach aimed at ensuring that government authorities fulfil their responsibility to protect

⁸¹ Alexandra Novosseloff, Adriana Erthal Abdenur, Thomas Mandrup, Aaron Pangburn, "Assessing the Effectiveness of the United Nations in the DRC / MONUC-MONUSCO," Report 3/2019, Effectiveness of Peace Operation Network, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2019, 93.

⁸² United Nations Security Council, "Evaluation of the implementation and results of protection of civilians mandates in United Nations peacekeeping operations," A/68/787, para. 34, March 7, 2014.

civilians. Thus, the lack of a political framework in its mandate hinders long-term solution.⁸³ However, this does not imply that MONUSCO's mandate has completely hindered it from producing positive results. It has still made some valuable contributions in the political aspect, particularly its crucial support in creating a conducive environment during the 2011 and 2018 electoral process in the country.⁸⁴

Disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration (DDR) is a crucial part of the peace operation's goal of establishing long-term peace and stability in the DRC. DDR programmes aim to support ex-combatants and people formerly associated with armed groups by disarming them, extracting them out of their groups and assisting them to reintegrate and transition into the society as civilians.⁸⁵ The first phase of the DDR in the country commenced in 1999 during the term of MONUC. MONUSCO took over, and they have achieved progress for some time. In 2014, as part of the second phase of DDR, it initiated a voluntary disarmament process for FDLR, funding three camps in North Kivu, South Kivu and Tshopo where it hosted 1,350 FDLR ex-combatants and their dependants. In the period 2015-2016, it was able to complete the reintegration training of 3,777 ex-combatants and send them back to the east for long-term reintegration. It also supported the national DDR programme which resulted to the demobilization of 5,583 ex-combatants from the Congolese armed groups.⁸⁶ Despite this, the country continues to tackle the proliferation of armed groups. This is because of the shortcomings in the implementation of these programmes. It was reported that ex-combatants in the camp experienced starvation and long waiting time before they are sent for community-based reintegration. This builds frustration and violence subsequently tempting them to re-join the rebel groups.⁸⁷

Nonetheless, in the following years, MONUSCO continues to support the Congolese Government on the DDR of foreign and Congolese combatants by providing advice to the government, coordinating with local government authorities, civil society, and donors for their reintegration as civilians in the society, and providing advice to authorities on the proper disposal of weapons and ammunitions collected from disarmed ex-

⁸³ United Nations Security Council, "Letter dated 24 October 2019 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council," S/2019/842, paras. 74-78, October 25, 2019.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, para. 1.

⁸⁵ United Nations Peacekeeping, "Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration," <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/disarmament-demobilization-and-reintegration>.

⁸⁶ United Nations Security Council, "Special report of the Secretary-General on the strategic review of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," S/2017/826, para. 43, September 29, 2017.

⁸⁷ Novosseloff, Abdenur, Mandrup, Pangburn, "Assessing the Effectiveness," 92.

combatants.⁸⁸ In 2021, MONUSCO supported the adaptation of a new national strategy by the Congolese Government, the Demobilization, Disarmament, Community Recovery and Stabilization Program (P-DDRCS). The government recognized the firm support it provided in the drafting and implementation of this programme.⁸⁹

In terms of the Security Sector Reform (SSR), it was initiated to secure the creation of a civilian-controlled professional Police Nationale Congolaise (PNC), the national police of the DRC and Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC), the military force of the DRC. MONUSCO, working alongside international partners and the Congolese Government, performs a coordinating role, fostering dialogue among national partners to effectively monitor the reform and ensure a coordinated approach among involved parties.⁹⁰ Since 2010, MONUSCO has reiterated its willingness to support the government in this area. In 2011, it reiterated the primary responsibility of the government on the country's security sector and urged the government to take the necessary actions and coordinate the efforts of the international community on this matter.⁹¹ After a few years, in 2020, MONUSCO still urges the Congolese Government to uphold its commitments to the SSR by providing the required financial resources, recognizing that there has been limited action from the government resulting to hampered progress in stabilisation.⁹² There were instances wherein MONUSCO conducted trainings with FARDC, but the government failed to provide the support it committed to particularly in terms of financial, food supplies and logistical support.⁹³ Particularly, in 2022, MONUSCO reiterates the critical need to prioritize the SSR as the progress on protecting civilians and DDR are dependent on this area. At the same time, "it is also an indicator of success for the mission, including the level at which the national security forces can take over and ensure peace and stability after the departure of MONUSCO."⁹⁴ This reflects that MONUSCO hasn't had sufficient progress in this area given the challenges posed by the resistance of the government to fully cooperate

⁸⁸ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2502 (2019)," S/RES/2502, para. 29, December 19, 2019.

⁸⁹ United Nations Peacekeeping, "DRC: MONUSCO Supports the New Demobilization Program for Ex-combatants", April 1, 2022, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/drc-monusco-supports-new-demobilization-program-ex-combatants>

⁹⁰ MONUSCO, "Security Sector Reform (SSR)", <https://monusco.unmissions.org/en/security-sector-reform-ssr>.

⁹¹ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 1991 (2011)," S/RES/1991, para. 11, June 28, 2011.

⁹² United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2556 (2020)," S/RES/2556, para. 20, December 18, 2020.

⁹³ Novosseloff, Abdenur, Mandrup, Pangburn, "Assessing the Effectiveness," 97.

⁹⁴ MONUSCO, "Security Sector Reform (SSR)", <https://monusco.unmissions.org/en/security-sector-reform-ssr>.

on this matter.

Furthermore, for many scholars conducting an analysis on peacekeeping operations, they characterized MONUSCO's mandate as overly ambitious.⁹⁵ The extent of the tasks stipulated in the mandate does not match with the conditions on the ground and the resources allocated to MONUSCO. Insufficient resources provided to MONUSCO limit its ability to fulfil its mandate. Additionally, the reduction of troops and budget starting from 2018 amid the escalating security challenges in the DRC also imply a contradictory approach, making its mandated tasks unachievable. This led to worsening security environment and alarming humanitarian situation in the country that has become uncontrollable. Despite MONUSCO's continued operation in the DRC, without sufficient resources and a clear, appropriate, and achievable mandate, its effectiveness remains to be limited.

After evaluating these three main areas on MONUSCO's mandate, although there was considerable success on each area at specific periods of time, looking at it on a bigger picture, MONUSCO has still failed to fulfil its mandate.

Limiting casualties

In many instances, MONUSCO has demonstrated its robust responsiveness towards limiting casualties. In 2017, amid the clash between armed groups and the FARDC in Uvira, an area located in South Kivu, MONUSCO rapidly acted and deployed troops to avoid the situation from escalating further and the violence from spreading in the area.⁹⁶ This, in turn, helped prevent the rise of civilian casualties. In 2020, attacks by armed groups in Ituri were characterized by atrocious violence, killing of innocent civilians, attacks on security forces, looting on establishments, and burning of houses. MONUSCO provided rapid reinforcement to FARDC in the form of logistical support, fuel, water, and food. It also assisted by setting up military bases and implementing increased patrolling in the area to secure civilian population and limit casualties.⁹⁷

However, there were also alarming instances of casualties of both civilians and peacekeepers that MONUSCO was not able to prevent. In 2017, the UN witnessed what

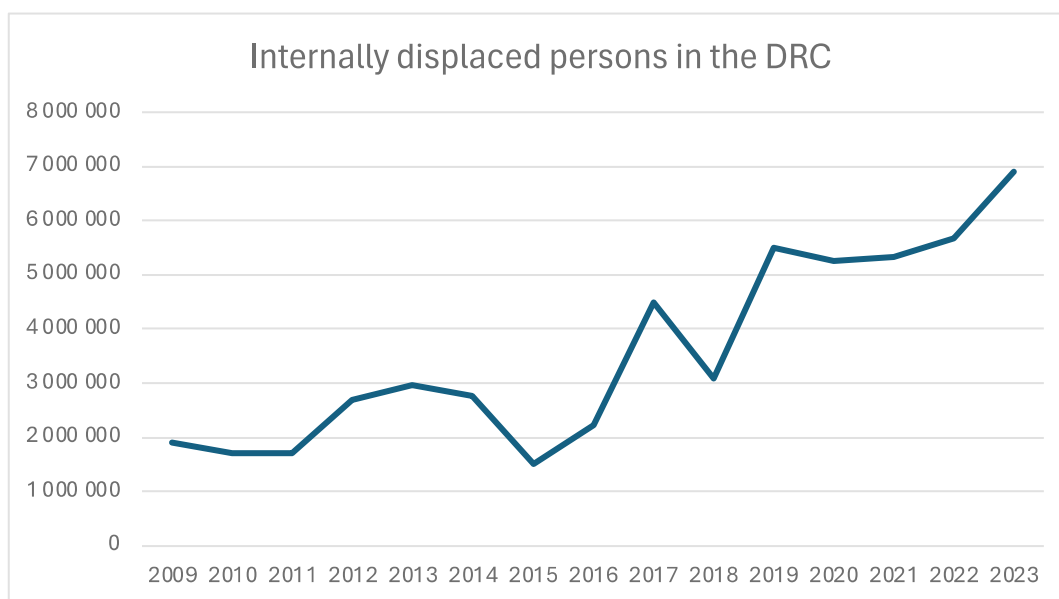
⁹⁵ Novosseloff, Abdenur, Mandrup, Pangburn, "Assessing the Effectiveness," 23.

⁹⁶ MONUSCO, "MONUSCO deploys troops to protect civilian in Uvira", September 28, 2017, <https://monusco.unmissions.org/en/monusco-deploys-troops-protect-civilian-uvira>.

⁹⁷ MONUSCO, "MONUSCO reinforces FARDC's operational capacities in the context of the fight against armed groups in Ituri", June 11, 2020, <https://monusco.unmissions.org/en/monusco-reinforces-fardc-s-operational-capacities-context-fight-against-armed-groups-ituri>.

was described by Secretary-General António Guterres as the “worst attack on UN peacekeepers in recent history”. One of MONUSCO’s bases located in North Kivu region, Eastern DRC was attacked by the ADF rebel group, leading to 44 peacekeepers injured and 15 peacekeepers dead.⁹⁸ In the period 2017-2018, the political vulnerability caused by the 2018 elections caused the outbreak of conflicts locally. This consequently resulted to significant casualties to both civilians and peacekeepers, with incidents of armed groups targeting MONUSCO personnel and attacking its compound. Combined with this was the budget cuts that were implemented in 2018, which led to the reduction of the size of MONUSCO in terms of necessary financial and troops resources and closure of some of its bases. This led to an immediate and significant impact on its capacity to protect civilians and its own personnel and limit overall casualties.⁹⁹ Moreover, in 2023, it was recorded that 26.4 million Congolese were affected by the conflicts and in urgent need of humanitarian assistance and an estimated 6.9 million were considered internally displaced persons, a significant increase compared to 2009, a year prior to MONUSCO’s deployment.¹⁰⁰

Chart 1: Internally displaced persons in the DRC caused by conflicts and violence



Source: World Bank¹⁰¹, United Nations Security Council Resolution 2717 (2023)¹⁰²

⁹⁸ United Nations News, “DR Congo: Over a dozen UN peacekeepers killed in worst attack on ‘blue helmets’ in recent history”, December 8, 2017, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/12/638812-dr-congo-over-dozen-un-peacekeepers-killed-worst-attack-blue-helmets-recent>

⁹⁹ Novosseloff, Abdenur, Mandrup, Pangburn, “Assessing the Effectiveness,” 84.

¹⁰⁰ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2717 (2023)," S/RES/2717, December 19, 2023.

¹⁰¹ World Bank, “Internally displaced persons, total displaced by conflict and violence (number of people) - Congo, Dem. Rep.,”

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/VC.IDP.TOCV?end=2022&locations=CD&start=1994&view=chart>

¹⁰² United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2717 (2023)," S/RES/2717, December 19, 2023.

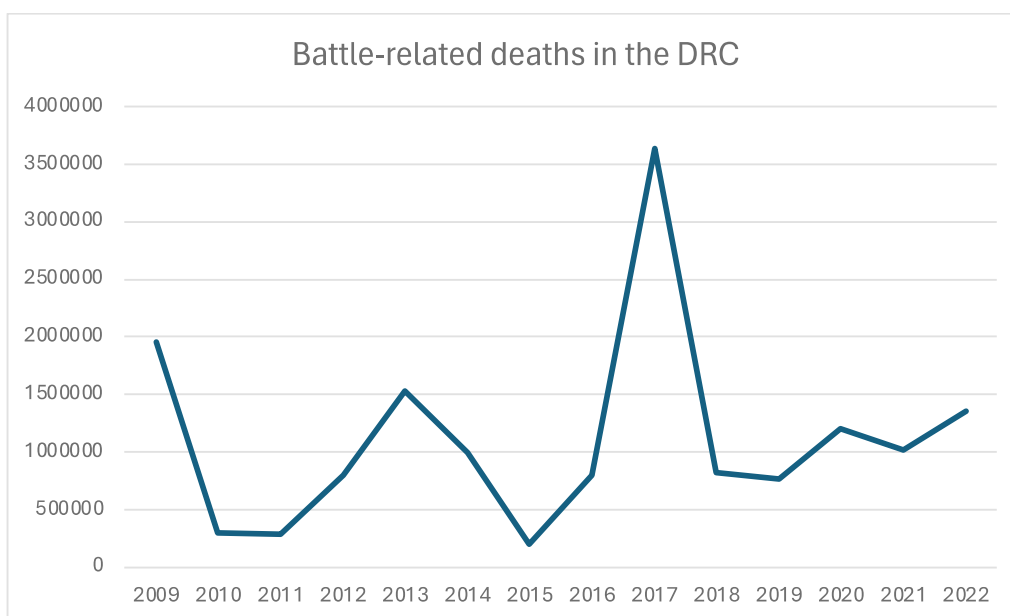
Furthermore, in February 2024, another attack against MONUSCO personnel happened in Kinshasa wherein 32 UN personnel had to be rescued, and two UN vehicles were burned down. This was part of a violent protest not only against MONUSCO but also the diplomatic community, with embassies based in the area, due to the frustration of locals that the response to the rebel attacks in the Eastern DRC was ineffective. Current Head of MONUSCO, Bintou Keitra stated that these incidents significantly hamper the implementation of MONUSCO's mandate. Additionally, the fighting between the M23 and national forces persists in the East of the country, causing massive displacement of people and spread of health diseases such as cholera due to lack of sanitation, clean drinking water, and adequate hygiene.¹⁰³ As of March 2024, the total number of fatalities of peacekeepers is 274. To break it down, 46 were accident-related, 160 were due to illness, 57 from malicious act, and 14 due to other reasons.¹⁰⁴

Based on statistics released by the World Bank on battle-related deaths in the DRC, beginning 2010 when MONUSCO started operating in the country until 2022, the number of fatalities related to attacks and conflicts in the country increased, with a clear spike in 2017. Although there was a significant decline in 2018, in comparison to the recorded number in 2009, it still reveals limited decrease in fatalities.

Chart 2: Battle-related deaths in the DRC

¹⁰³ United Nations News, "DR Congo: Fighting threatens stability of entire region, envoy warns", February 20, 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/02/1146782>.

¹⁰⁴ United Nations Peacekeeping, "Fatalities", <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/fatalities>.



Source: World Bank¹⁰⁵

The data presented in charts 1 and 2 includes data for 2009 as a point of comparison to gain insights on the number of casualties prior to and after MONUSCO’s deployment to the DRC. Data shows that the number of internally displaced persons in the country significantly increased while battle-related deaths slightly decreased. Combined with this is the high number of people in need of humanitarian assistance and casualties of peacekeepers. Hence, evidence indicates that there has been “little to no effect” in limiting casualties, revealing that MONUSCO has failed to meet this criterion.

Conflict containment

The nature of conflict being faced by MONUSCO in the DRC poses a high risk of spilling over outside its borders. Majority of conflicts occur in the eastern part of the DRC such as in North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri where it shares borders with neighbouring countries such as Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda. These conflicts also involve both domestic and foreign armed groups, with the latter posing greater security threat given its external links outside the country’s borders. Since its departure from the DRC in 2013, the Rwanda-backed armed group, M23 resurfaced again in 2022 and at present, it continues to fight against the DRC military forces, FARDC. The situation intensifies as M23 expands further to different parts of the country, particularly in the south, west, and north-east.

¹⁰⁵ “Battle-related deaths (number of people) – Congo, Dem. Rep.,” World Bank, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/VC.BTL.DETH?end=2022&locations=CD&start=1994&view=chart>

Moreover, M23's link to Rwanda is also concerning. Evidence shows that Rwanda, through the Rwanda Defence Force, is reinforcing the M23 combatants. This causes increased tension between DRC and Rwanda. On the other hand, Burundi National Defence Force is conducting joint operations with the FARDC.¹⁰⁶ Its involvement results to a clash between Rwanda and Burundi, as the former accuses the latter of supporting DRC.

The special report of the Secretary-General, released in 2017, reveals that the security threats posed by foreign armed groups in the DRC creates the perception of the DRC as a threat to international peace and security, and stresses the need to take action in building the capacity of the country's security forces to subsequently contain the conflict.¹⁰⁷ In line with this, the ability of MONUSCO to contain the conflict is linked to the successful implementation of DDR and SSR, which so far have garnered limited success.

With the involvement of neighbouring countries in the conflict and the tactical location of armed groups on the borders of DRC, this indicates that the conflict in DRC is not isolated in the country alone. In a way, it has already spilled over, although not in a bigger scale. However, the Head of MONUSCO, Bintou Keitra, stressed the big risk that this conflict will expand on a regional scale.¹⁰⁸ Hence, this confirms that MONUSCO has failed to contain the conflict in the DRC.

Conflict resolution

The analysis of the first three criteria reveals that the security environment in the DRC still does not show capacity for lasting peace and stability. In fact, in February 2024, the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator of MONUSCO, Bruno Lemarquis stated that the humanitarian situation in the DRC has worsened as violent clashes involving armed groups continue. He also described the crisis in the DRC as "one of the most severe, complex, prolonged, protracted and neglected in the world."¹⁰⁹

As recognized by the Security Council, as long as the root causes of the conflict in the country persists, it is not possible to have long-term peace in the DRC. Particularly,

¹⁰⁶ United Nations Security Council, "Letter dated 13 June 2023 from the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council," S/2023/431, June 13, 2023.

¹⁰⁷ United Nations Security Council, "Special report of the Secretary-General on the strategic review of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," S/2017/826, para. 104, September 29, 2017.

¹⁰⁸ United Nations News, "DR Congo: Fighting threatens stability of entire region, envoy warns," February 20, 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/02/1146782>.

¹⁰⁹ United Nations Media, "UN / DRC Humanitarian Presser," February 20, 2024, <https://media.un.org/unifeed/en/asset/d317/d3175509>.

there must be a “genuine political commitment to reform”, a critical factor that has been a challenge in MONUSCO’s operations since the beginning. The DRC government and authorities need to “embrace inclusive and peaceful politics, tackle security sector reform, root out corruption and mismanagement, uphold the rule of law and ensure that all Congolese are able to enjoy their basic human rights” in order to achieve long-term peace and stability in the DRC.¹¹⁰ Given this, MONUSCO has failed to effectively support the country towards building long-term peace and stability, and thus does not meet this criterion.

To summarize, the table below presents the result of the analysis of MONUSCO’s effectiveness, revealing that it failed in all four criteria.

Table 2: Evaluation of the effectiveness of MONUSCO

Criterion	Result
Mandate fulfilment	Failure
Limiting casualties	Failure
Conflict containment	Failure
Conflict resolution	Failure

4.1.2 Explanatory factors

Intensity of the conflict

The conflict in the DRC is characterized by “mass killings, systematic sexual violence against women and girls and other forms of gender-based violence, mutilations, targeted political violence and forced recruitment.” There are more than 250 local armed groups and 14 foreign armed groups in the DRC, spread out in different regions of the country with a majority in the East.¹¹¹ Particularly in Eastern DRC, the conflict is described as “recurring cycles of conflict and persistent violence by armed groups, both Congolese and foreign.”¹¹² These armed groups do not only target civilians but also peacekeepers on

¹¹⁰ United Nations Security Council, "Special report of the Secretary-General on the strategic review of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," S/2017/826, para. 132, September 29, 2017.

¹¹¹ United Nations, “Increased Fighting in Democratic Republic of Congo Exacerbating Security Woes Threatening Regional Conflagration, Special Envoy Warns Security Council”, 9615th meeting, SC/15677, April 24, 2024, <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15677.doc.htm>

¹¹² United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2098 (2013)," S/RES/2098, March 28, 2013.

the ground.

DRC, known to be the second-largest country in Africa and the largest country in Sub-Saharan Africa, is characterized by vast fertile land and dense rainforest.¹¹³ Its large geographical area poses an operational challenge to MONUSCO in terms of tracking down armed groups and allocating resources in different areas. First, the operational structure of the armed groups in the DRC varies. While some operate in a limited geographical area, others are spread out in various parts of the country either immersed with civilians or hidden in dense rainforest. The dispersed nature of these armed groups makes it challenging for MONUSCO to neutralize them and protect civilians across the country. Reflecting this limitation is the FIB, which is originally set up to counter the M23 operation on a limited area situated near the Rwandan border. Despite its success in 2013, its capability is proven to be less effective against other armed groups such as FDLR and ADF which are both operating on a more decentralised structure either on dense forest or inland and continue to operate in the DRC at present.¹¹⁴ Second, its mandate puts an emphasis on active deployment and patrolling in high-risk areas. Given that majority of conflicts by armed groups occur in Eastern DRC, particularly in North Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri provinces, a significant number of resources of MONUSCO is allocated in these areas. However, it could not be disregarded that other regions in the DRC also struggle with the existence of armed groups. With limited resources in these areas, the security environment continues to deteriorate.¹¹⁵

The damage that this conflict inflicts in the country particularly to the civilians are severe. This is evident in the alarming rate of internally displaced persons in the country due to conflict and violence, battle-related casualties, and high number of people in dire need of humanitarian assistance. Thus, it is evident that there is a high degree of conflict intensity in the DRC that limits MONUSCO from performing its duties effectively.

Consent and cooperation from the local parties

One of the operational challenges being faced by MONUSCO is the unwillingness of the Congolese government to cooperate with them. In the early years of MONUSCO's

¹¹³ The World Bank, "The World Bank in DRC", <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/drc/overview>.

¹¹⁴ United Nations Security Council, "Evaluation of the implementation and results of protection of civilians mandates in United Nations peacekeeping operations", *A/68/787*, Para. 34, March 7, 2014.

¹¹⁵ United Nations, "At Least 32 Peacekeeping, Associated Personnel Killed in Malicious Attacks during 2022, United Nations Staff Union President Says", Press Release, ORG/1730, January 20, 2023, <https://press.un.org/en/2023/org1730.doc.htm>

operation, the government supported it specifically during the fight against the M23 in 2012. One of the factors that contributed to its success is the coordination between MONUSCO and the government.¹¹⁶ However, as the years go by, the support of the Congolese government towards MONUSCO started to decline. This is evident with its lack of commitment on the actions it initially agreed to undertake, causing the slow progress in the fulfilment of various tasks aimed at strengthening the security in the country. The Security Council consistently reiterates the important role of the Congolese government in the successful implementation of DDR and SSR. However, local authorities lack sufficient political will to act towards resolving the persisting conflicts in the country.¹¹⁷ Moreover, during the 2016 elections, the political situation in the DRC was alarming, following the arrest and detention of people who opposed the re-election of Joseph Kabila for third term. Despite efforts by MONUSCO to support a peaceful and fair elections¹¹⁸, the lack of cooperation from Kabila's side resulted to nationwide protests, human rights violations, and postponement of elections up to 2019 when the current president Felix Tshisekedi took over. In 2018, it became explicit that the Congolese government did not support the presence of MONUSCO in the country. In Kabila's speech on the 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly, he stated, "Twenty years after the deployment of the United Nations forces in my country, and because of the very mitigated results in operational terms, my government reiterates its demand for the effective and substantial beginning of the withdrawal of this multilateral force."¹¹⁹ In November 2023, a disengagement plan for the withdrawal of MONUSCO was signed by the government of the DRC and head of MONUSCO, Bintou Keita.¹²⁰

Furthermore, there is also clear evidence that peacekeepers are targeted by belligerents, another indication of the lack of consent on the local parties' side. There were numerous instances wherein attacks were primarily targeted towards peacekeepers, causing multiple injuries and fatalities. Particularly, in 2017, one of its bases were

¹¹⁶ Novosseloff, Abdenur, Mandrup, Pangburn, "Assessing the Effectiveness," 94-95.

¹¹⁷ International Peace Institute, "Prioritization and Sequencing of Security Council Mandates: The Case of MONUSCO", December 2022, https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2212_The-Case-of-MONUSCO.pdf.

¹¹⁸ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2348 (2017)," S/RES/2348, March 31, 2017.

¹¹⁹ United Nations General Assembly, "Democratic Republic of the Congo His Excellency Joseph Kabila Kabange President," September 25, 2018, <https://gadebate.un.org/en/73/democratic-republic-congo>.

¹²⁰ MONUSCO, "PR: The Government of the DRC and MONUSCO sign a disengagement plan for the withdrawal of the missions," November 22, 2023, <https://monusco.unmissions.org/en/pr-government-drc-and-monusco-sign-disengagement-plan-withdrawal-mission>.

intentionally attacked by ADF, causing 44 casualties and 15 fatalities.¹²¹ This reveals that the low level of consent and cooperation from the Congolese government and belligerents significantly obstructs the activities of MONUSCO and its ability to effectively perform its mandate.

External military and political support to the belligerents

Some of the armed groups in the DRC receive external support from other countries which strengthens their military capabilities while undermining the operations of MONUSCO. Particularly the support is coming from neighbouring countries such as Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda. The M23 is being backed by Rwanda through provision of logistical support, military support against FARDC, intelligence and advice.¹²²

The Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) is known to be the largest foreign armed group in the DRC. It is predominantly composed of members of the Rwandan army and government who were overthrown in 1994 and fled to the DRC. It has been alleged of receiving external support from Rwanda. On the other hand, Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) is a Ugandan rebel group based in Eastern DRC. With roots in Uganda, it is believed that the group is receiving external support particularly funding from unidentified sources. Moreover, it also receives logistical and financial support from terrorist groups in Mozambique and Somalia, confirmed through a complex financial scheme that was uncovered.¹²³ Another rebel group with links to DRC's neighbouring countries is the Forces nationales de libération (FNL) which is composed of Burundians.¹²⁴

Some of these groups, aside from their links to neighbouring countries, are tied to local state authorities and national armed forces, making it more challenging for MONUSCO to work with state actors. FARDC, the country's armed forces who MONUSCO is working with, is reported of having links with FDLR and its splinter groups through political, financial, and logistical support.¹²⁵ Due to the fragmented structure of FARDC, factions

¹²¹ United Nations News, "DR Congo: Over a dozen UN peacekeepers killed in worst attack on 'blue helmets' in recent history", December 8, 2017, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/12/638812-dr-congo-over-dozen-un-peacekeepers-killed-worst-attack-blue-helmets-recent>.

¹²² Novosseloff, Abdenur, Mandrup, Pangburn, "Assessing the Effectiveness," 51.

¹²³ United Nations Security Council, "Letter dated 13 June 2023 from the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council," S/2023/431, June 13, 2023.

¹²⁴ MONUSCO, "The Foreign Armed Groups", <https://monusco.unmissions.org/en/foreign-armed-groups>.

¹²⁵ United Nations, "Increased Fighting in Democratic Republic of Congo Exacerbating Security Woes Threatening Regional Conflagration, Special Envoy Warns Security Council", 9615th meeting, SC/15677, April 24, 2024, <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15677.doc.htm>

within the group have divisive interests and various sources of external support, challenging its credibility and effectiveness as well as its joint operations with MONUSCO. As a consequence, this also affects the credibility of MONUSCO as a neutral actor in the eyes of civilians.

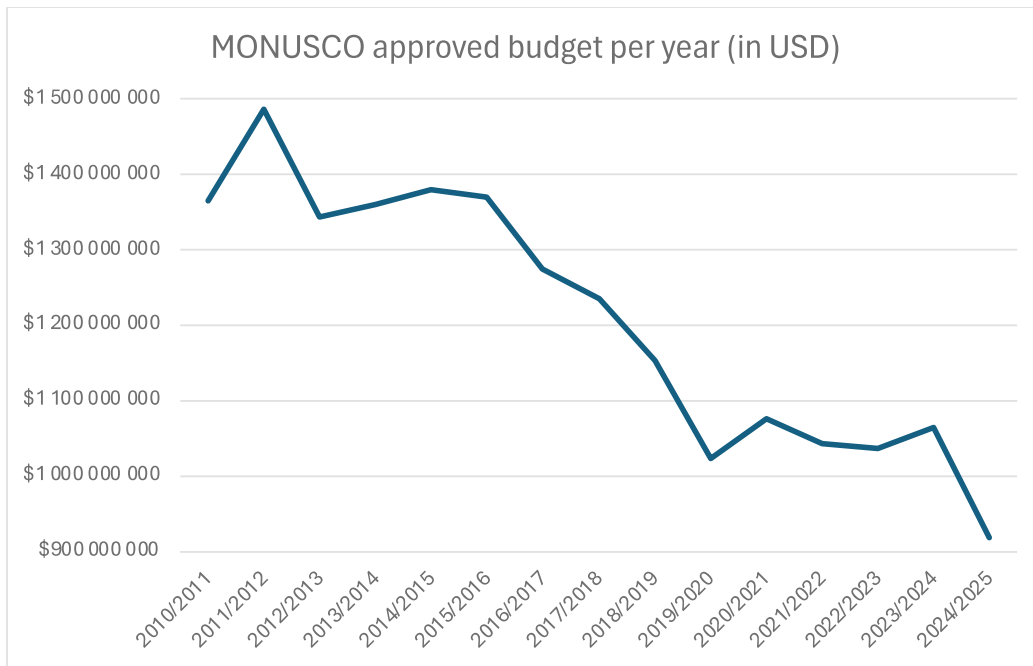
Given that these groups are backed and seen as useful by powerful actors in pursuing their economic, political, and military interests in the DRC, it poses greater challenge to halt their operations and the conflicts that they inflict in the country. Moreover, the high level of support that these armed groups receive from external sources strengthens their operational and military capabilities, making it more challenging for MONUSCO to effectively work towards improving the security situation in the DRC.

Commitment from the UN member states

MONUSCO is known to be one of the largest and most expensive UN peace operation in history,¹²⁶ with its highest budget allocation reported during 2011-2012 at an estimated \$1.4 billion. In its first few years, between 2010-2016, its total number of personnel ranged from 26,000 to 27,000. Given the complexity of the security environment that MONUSCO confronts in the DRC, it is necessary to allocate sufficient resources to be able to perform its mandated tasks. Comparing to present, its human resources decreased to 16,000 and its budget reduced to \$918 million. These data are presented in charts 3 and 4 below.

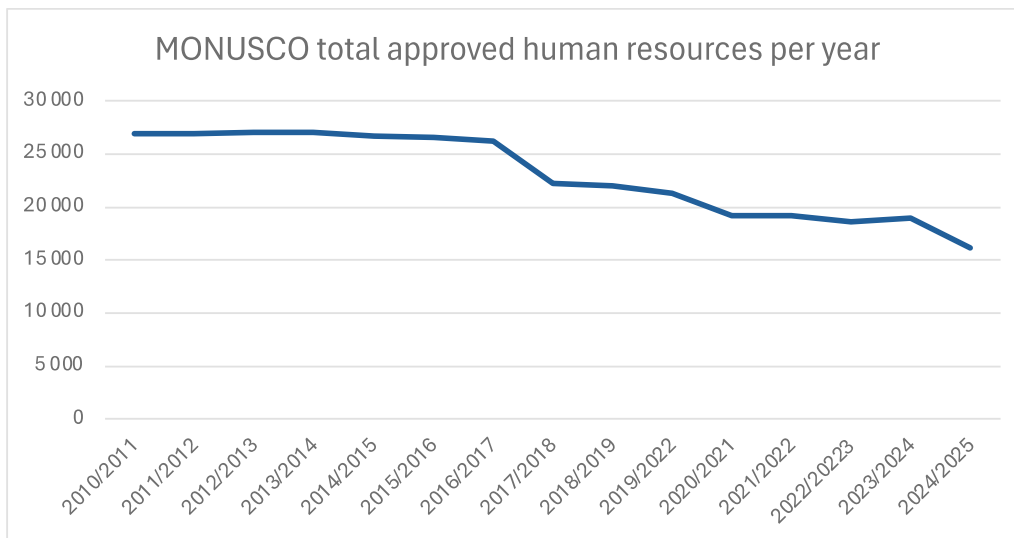
Chart 3: MONUSCO's financial resources

¹²⁶ Novosseloff, Abdenur, Mandrup, Pangburn, "Assessing the Effectiveness," 102.



Source: United Nations General Assembly, *Financing of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Budget Report of the Secretary General*

Chart 4: MONUSCO’s human resources



Source: United Nations General Assembly, *Financing of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Budget Report of the Secretary General*

MONUSCO’s annual budget, similar to other UN peace operations and specified in the report of the Secretary-General, is approved by the General Assembly and comes from UN member states’ contributions. A significant factor influencing this was U.S. President Donald Trump’s decision in 2017 to cut down U.S. contributions to UN peacekeeping efforts which led the Congress to decide to set a cap of 25%. As the biggest financial contributor

to the UN, this action had a significant impact on UN's total budget and consequently on MONUSCO's budget.¹²⁷ This affected MONUSCO's capability to fulfil its mandated tasks as it implied reducing troop strength and closing five bases in North Kivu. This also implied reduced reach for its military, police and civilian personnel, restricted mobility, and inability to cover other areas in the country. At the same time, other resources also had to be adjusted, including air assets. From having 69 air assets in 2013, it was reduced to 45 in 2018. This, in turn, had a negative implication as deployment of UN forces took longer due to limited road infrastructure.¹²⁸

In terms of its human resources, the data presented in chart 4 indicate the total number of personnel serving MONUSCO, including civilians, experts on mission, police, staff officers, troops, and UN volunteers. Although its current number still represents more than 20% of the total number of personnel serving in 11 active UN peace operations globally, this still considerably limits MONUSCO from fulfilling its mandate.

This reveals the drastic decrease in the commitment of UN member states, which consequently affects MONUSCO's operation on the ground. This is evident in the increasing rate of people needing humanitarian assistance, internally displaced persons, and fatalities in the DRC. Hence, the low level of commitment from UN member states significantly affected the effectiveness of MONUSCO.

Addressing the causes of the conflict

Contributing to the conflict in the DRC are economic, political, and institutional factors that are deeply rooted in the country's history. One of the causes is weak institutions. During the colonial and post-independence period, state institutions created tensions related to control of the state and natural resources. Particularly, during the colonial era, state administration introduced a system mainly characterized by exploitation of natural resources for the rulers' own interests. This has been passed on until the present time and has been a source of conflict among groups as there are no strong institutions capable of managing these resources. At present, the Congolese government is dominated by elites who control various mining sites and activities through the FARDC. This produces conflicts over mining resources between FARDC and armed groups. Aside from this, the politicization of ethnicity and Congolese identity also contributed to the conflicts in the

¹²⁷ Congressional Research Service, "United Nations Issues: U.S. Funding to the U.N. System", April 9, 2024, <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/IF10354.pdf>

¹²⁸ Novosseloff, Abdenur, Mandrup, Pangburn, "Assessing the Effectiveness," 83.

country. State leaders manipulated nationality and citizenship laws for their own political interests, resulting to the marginalization of Rwandan population and consequently causing antagonism between them and other groups and undermining the government's credibility in the eyes of civilian population.¹²⁹ Moreover, political elites in the country are historically linked to rebel groups, and up to the present, they are still linked to them and are utilised by elites to exert political pressure and benefit from the exploitation of natural resources. The absence of state authority and political instability were seen by armed groups as an opportunity to advance their agendas. These led to significant socio-economic problems and an uncontrollable humanitarian crisis, making the country even more vulnerable to conflicts at the present time.

Security council resolutions stressed the importance of addressing the root causes of the conflict to stop the conflict in the DRC. Additionally, as stated by Bintou Keita, the head of MONUSCO, "without a combined approach addressing both the causes and the symptoms, the efforts of both the United Nations and Congolese forces will remain insufficient".¹³⁰ With this, in April 2013, MONUSCO actively participated in the signing of the Peace, Security and Cooperation framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. This was intended to address the underlying causes of the conflict and promote peace and stability in the country and region. Along with this, MONUSCO established a specialized intervention brigade aimed at neutralized existing armed groups which in turn would reduce security threat, protect civilians, and allow stabilisation activities.¹³¹ As mentioned in the previous section, however, its military approach can only generate short-term outcomes, and does not target the root causes of the conflict and steer the country towards long-term stability.

MONUSCO also acted in the political spectrum particularly by providing support to the elections in 2011 and 2018, instilling credibility and restoring confidence to the government by urging Kinshasa to hold peaceful, inclusive, fair, and credible elections. Specifically, it supported the Comprehensive and Inclusive Political Agreement in 2016 which paves the way to long-term stabilisation and consolidating the constitutional

¹²⁹ United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, "Conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Causes, impact and implications for the Great Lakes region," September 2015, <https://repository.uneca.org/bitstream/handle/10855/22687/b11546694.pdf>.

¹³⁰ United Nations, "DR Congo: UN envoy calls for strategy to address root causes of conflict," March 29, 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1115022>.

¹³¹ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2098 (2013)," S/RES/2098, para. 12. March 28, 2013.

democracy in the country.¹³²

However, despite moderate effort to address the root causes of the conflict in the DRC, the recurrence of conflict and violence remains, and there are no signs that this effort has contributed to the effectiveness of MONUSCO given its failure to meet all four criteria.

4.2 The Case of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA)

Abyei, a territory situated between Sudan and South Sudan, has been a long-standing disputed area due to political and economic reasons that are deeply rooted in its history. Predominantly, the rich oil and grazing resources in Abyei have fuelled the clash between the local parties, specifically the governments of Sudan and South Sudan as well as ethnic communities such as Misseriya and Ngok Dinka. Abyei, through the years, have faced multiple conflicts and wars, and the vulnerability of its security environment has made the implementation of peace agreements very challenging. Attempts at establishing a demarcation in the area and resolving the territorial dispute, through the Abyei Boundaries Commission boundary in 2005 and Permanent Court of Arbitration ruling in 2009, garnered limited results due to disagreements between the Sudanese Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM).¹³³

The first civil war occurred from 1955 to 1972, and it was characterized by the violent clash between the ethnic groups, Misseriya and Ngok Dinka, particularly due to territorial claims on grazing areas in Abyei. It concluded with the Addis Ababa agreement which accorded Abyei with a special administrative status and entitled Ngok Dinka a place in the Southern Region of Sudan. However, Misseriya was not in favour of this arrangement, triggering them to attack the settlements of Ngok Dinka, and shortly after, they also targeted civilian population. This was followed by the second civil war in 1983 which lasted until 2005. During this period, Misseriya's attacks against the Ngok Dinka settlements had gotten more intense, as the former fought for access to oil reserves. As a response, the latter formed the Anyanya II rebel group, which later became the SPLM. This war was marked by the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 which established a referendum for Abyei and appointed the Abyei Boundaries Commission as responsible for

¹³² United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2348 (2017)," S/RES/2348, March 31, 2017.

¹³³ Joshua Craze. "Creating Facts on the Ground: Conflict Dynamics in Abyei" (2011). <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/131135/HSBA-SWP-26-Conflict-Dynamics-in-Abyei.pdf>.

the demarcation of its borders. However, Misseriya and the National Congress Party (NCP) were not in favour of the defined boundaries. Misseriya also opposed the Permanent Court of Arbitration ruling in 2009, given that during this process, only the two political parties, NCP and SPLM, were involved, and the two ethnic communities did not have a representation in the proceedings. Despite this, both parties eventually accepted the ruling, but conflict broke out again a few months after. Also, threats from the Misseriya militias hindered the progress on the construction of the demarcation. On the other hand, on Ngok Dinka's side, frustration was building up due to the lack of sufficient political progress and fear that its experience with Misseriya forcing them out during the second civil war will repeat again.¹³⁴

The conflict in Abyei escalated further in early 2011, in line with the Southern referendum which was aimed at the secession of the South. This allowed people to decide and vote regarding the independence of the South, which subsequently formed the Republic of South Sudan in July 2011. Tensions broke out between Misseriya militias and police units which resulted to 154 fatalities. This was followed by Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) invading Abyei, causing 110,000 people to flee to South Sudan. This left no civilians in the area, as SAF together with Misseriya militias took full control.¹³⁵ In June 2011, the government of Sudan and Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) agreed to sign the Temporary Arrangement for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area to end the occupation of SAF in Abyei and consented to the deployment of Ethiopian peacekeepers through the establishment of UNISFA, which was tasked with monitoring the flashpoint border between North and South Sudan as part of reinforcing the objectives of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.¹³⁶

At present, UNISFA continues to operate in Abyei. Its main headquarters is in Abyei Town, and consists of three different sectors: Sector North, Sector Central and Sector South. Their headquarters are in Diffra, Abyei Town and Anthony respectively.¹³⁷ The next section will assess the extent to which UNISFA has been effective in its operations in Abyei by examining established criteria namely mandate fulfilment, limiting casualties, conflict containment and conflict resolution. Subsequently, the analysis of the explanatory factors

¹³⁴ Joshua Craze, "Creating Facts on the Ground: Conflict Dynamics in Abyei," (2011). <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/131135/HSBA-SWP-26-Conflict-Dynamics-in-Abyei.pdf>.

¹³⁵ Peter Martell, "After independence, what next for South Sudan?", *United Nations Africa Renewal*, August 2011, <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/august-2011/after-independence-what-next-south-sudan>.

¹³⁶ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 1990 (2011)," S/RES/1990, June 27, 2011.

¹³⁷ UNISFA, "Mandate," <https://unisfa.unmissions.org/mandate>.

will be conducted to determine how they affect the effectiveness of UNISFA.

4.2.1 Criteria for effectiveness

Mandate fulfilment

Through Security Council Resolution 1990, UNISFA was established. Its initial mandate was established for a period of six months and primarily focused on ensuring the security in Abyei by monitoring the demilitarization of armed forces in the area and ensuring that only UNISFA and Abyei Police Service will remain.¹³⁸

Table 3: UNISFA's mandate

Year	UNISFA's mandated tasks
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitor and verify the demilitarization and redeployment of armed forces - provide de-mining assistance and technical advice - facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and the free movement of humanitarian personnel - strengthen the capacity of the Abyei Police Service - when necessary, provide security for oil infrastructure in the Abyei Area
2011 (extended mandate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - assist the parties in ensuring the observance within the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone - support the operational activities of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) - assist and advise the JBVMM in various tasks - facilitate liaison between the parties - support the parties in developing effective bilateral management mechanisms along the border - assist in building mutual trust

Source: United Nations Security Council Resolutions S/RES/1990 (2011), S/RES/2024 (2011)

Table 3 contains the mandate of UNISFA as stipulated in UN Security Council resolutions. Upon reviewing all resolutions, UNISFA's mandate, since it started in 2011 and up to the present, is centred on the above tasks. It was reconfigured in 2018 in line with the

¹³⁸ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 1990 (2011)," S/RES/1990, Paras 1-2, June 27, 2011.

changing security situation in Abyei wherein the original mandated tasks were retained but the composition of its personnel was altered.¹³⁹

Its mandate is grounded by two main agreements: the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on temporary arrangements for the administration and security of the Abyei Area of 20 June 2011 and the Agreement on the Border Monitoring Support Mission between the Government of the Sudan and the Government of South Sudan of 30 July 2011.¹⁴⁰ The resolutions explicitly states that further reconfiguration of its mandate depends on the cooperation of the governments of Sudan and South Sudan in line with these agreements and the effective implementation of the border security mechanisms: Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) and the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ).¹⁴¹

While the main political aspect is mostly dealt with by the African Union, UNISFA focuses on establishing security and stability in Abyei. It was evident that its presence and work garnered positive results given the absence of major conflicts and confrontation between Sudan and South Sudan since 2012.¹⁴² It fulfils its mandate by conflict prevention, mediation, and deterrence.¹⁴³ Specifically, it provided crucial support in establishing border security mechanisms agreed by the two governments, specifically the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone, including the 14 Mile Area, and Border Security and the Joint Political Security Mechanism. It also provided operational assistance and advice related to the activities of the JBVMM.¹⁴⁴

A Security Council report recognises UNISFA as “one of the best performing peacekeeping missions”, highlighting its “success of keeping relative calm in Abyei”.¹⁴⁵ Its success in stabilisation is a result of its effort in various areas. UNISFA's facilitation of community-level peace processes positively contributed to addressing existing grievances between Misseriya and Ngok Dinka, which are mostly related to cattle rustling and other crimes. Since 2013, UNISFA actively engages with local communities through intercommunal dialogues, consequently reinforcing security and facilitating reconciliation.

¹³⁹ United Nations Security Council, "Letter dated 20 August 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council," S/2018/778, August 23, 2018.

¹⁴⁰ United Nations Security Council, "Letter dated 20 August 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council," S/2018/778, August 23, 2018.

¹⁴¹ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2412 (2018)," S/RES/2412, Paras 1-3, April 23, 2018.

¹⁴² United Nations Security Council, "Letter dated 20 August 2018," S/2018/778.

¹⁴³ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2075 (2012)," S/RES/2075, June 27, 2012.

¹⁴⁴ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2024 (2011)," S/RES/2024, December 14, 2011.

¹⁴⁵ United Nations Security Council, "Letter dated 20 August 2018," S/2018/778.

Examples of this engagement are the conference held on September 17 to 19 in Aweil, South Sudan and the joint meeting at Todach held on October 7.¹⁴⁶ Additionally, in 2018, it has also conducted 19,022 day and night patrols and 6,284 escort patrols. Its police personnel conducted 1,830 interactive community patrols, encouraging civilians to actively participate in peacebuilding initiatives. It has also trained “105 community protection committee members (90 men and 15 women) in basic policing principles and compliance with human rights standards; conducted 16 crime prevention and reduction awareness campaigns; and conducted seven road safety campaigns targeting drivers, pedestrians and schoolchildren”.¹⁴⁷ From October 2023 to April 2024, it conducted intensified patrols, with a total of 23,639 ground patrols and 47 air patrols.¹⁴⁸ In terms of humanitarian assistance, UNISFA also had considerable success. In 2014, it was able to facilitate World Food Programme’s nutrition and food security assessment of Misseriya population in the northern part of Abyei.¹⁴⁹ In 2018, it provided humanitarian assistance to 182,000 people in Abyei, mostly vulnerable people from Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities.¹⁵⁰ In 2023, along with other national and international non-governmental organizations, UNISFA continued to provide humanitarian assistance to an estimated 220,000 people in the area.¹⁵¹

In terms of de-mining assistance, UNISFA has been consistent in its efforts. In November 2011, UNISFA was able to recover and dispose more than 100 unexploded mines in the area of Banton and Todach. Its actions are limited, however, due to the non-cooperation of the governments of Sudan and South Sudan in providing the maps indicating the location of mines. The security risks posed by these mines hamper the facilitation of humanitarian assistance.¹⁵² In 2023, Mine Action Service continued to provide necessary support to UNISFA in assessing lands, ensuring safe movement, and delivering risk education to communities.¹⁵³ Through this effort, a total of 546 kilometres of routes and 1,523,715 square meters of land are now identified as safe

¹⁴⁶ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2251 (2015)," S/RES/2251, Para. 15, December 15, 2015.

¹⁴⁷ United Nations Security Council, "Situation in Abyei," S/2018/923, Para. 16, October 16, 2018.

¹⁴⁸ United Nations Security Council, "Situation in Abyei," S/2024/354, Para. 19, May 1, 2024.

¹⁴⁹ United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei," S/2014/709, Para. 22, September 30, 2014.

¹⁵⁰ United Nations Security Council, "Situation in Abyei," S/2018/923, Para. 29.

¹⁵¹ United Nations Security Council, "Situation in Abyei," S/2023/777, Para. 44, October 16, 2023.

¹⁵² United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei," S/2011/741, Para. 7, November 27, 2011.

¹⁵³ United Nations Security Council, "Situation in Abyei," S/2023/777, Paras 52-54.

and helps in facilitating humanitarian assistance by UNISFA and other humanitarian actors.¹⁵⁴ Contrary to this, there were a few instances wherein the freedom of movement of UNISFA personnel were hampered due to checkpoints set up by military forces. In 2023, four violations were recorded, with South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) personnel insisting that UNISFA personnel notifies them before conducting patrols or accessing the Agok Area.¹⁵⁵ Additionally, UNISFA also continued to confiscate illegal firearms and intercept people transporting ammunition and arms, most of them heading to the Amiet market. Afterwards, Mine Action Service destroyed these confiscated weapons and rounds of ammunition.¹⁵⁶

Despite UNISFA's considerable success in the area of security and stability during this period, its level of success is not adequate to steer Abyei towards long-term peace and stability. The security environment is still vulnerable to the outbreak of conflict and violence which hampers UNISFA's ability to fully fulfil its mandate. In 2022, tensions broke out between Ngok and Twic Dinka due to land disputes.¹⁵⁷ In 2023, conflict occurred in Khartoum between the Rapid Support Forces and Sudanese Armed Forces which spilled over to Abyei and consequently affected the implementation of the JBVMM and limited UNISFA's ability to conduct ground and air patrols. This is combined by the continuous presence of security forces of both Sudan and South Sudan in Abyei, particularly the South Sudan National Police and South Sudan People's Defence Forces in the south and the Diffra oil police in the north. This is in clear violation of the 2011 agreement, which poses another challenge in UNISFA's mandated task on demilitarization. The absence of a police force in Abyei placed UNISFA in a tough position to temporarily play this role and continue its strong military presence in Abyei.¹⁵⁸

Notably, there has not been sufficient progress in the political process particularly in terms of the implementation of agreements signed by the governments of Sudan and South Sudan in 2011 and the continuation of Abyei Joint Oversight Committee meetings. UNISFA works to encourage both parties by holding separate meetings with committee co-chairs. It attended high-level meetings and official visits in Khartoum in August 2022 and April 2023 and in Juba in July 2022 and May 2023.

¹⁵⁴ United Nations Security Council, "Situation in Abyei," S/2024/354, Para. 52, May 1, 2024.

¹⁵⁵ United Nations Security Council, "Situation in Abyei," S/2023/777, Para. 19, October 16, 2023.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, Para. 17.

¹⁵⁷ United Nations Security Council, "Situation in Abyei," S/2022/316, Para. 17, April 14, 2022.

¹⁵⁸ United Nations Security Council, "Situation in Abyei," S/2023/777, Para. 61.

Aside from this, it also participated in the Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM) meeting in Juba in January 2023.¹⁵⁹ However, UNISFA's actions towards addressing the political issue in Abyei are insufficient to resolve it and establish long-term peace and stability. The lack of progress in the political aspect, particularly the lack of institutions in Abyei "created a dangerous political and administrative vacuum"¹⁶⁰, which triggers further tensions between the involved parties. At the same time, cooperation from the governments of Sudan and South Sudan remains inadequate, evident through the lack of regular dialogues between the two governments regarding border security and agreed joint mechanisms. These factors affect UNISFA's ability to meet the extended mandate.

Despite limited success on its tasks under the extended mandate, given that UNISFA has achieved relative success in preventing large-scale conflicts in Abyei, providing swift humanitarian assistance, and conducting de-mining activities, it is classified as "moderate success" for this criterion.

Limiting casualties

The casualties in Abyei are mostly caused by intercommunal violence involving Misseriya and Ngok Dinka and incidents of crimes related to the use of small arms. Increased violence between the two communities and multiple casualties often occurs during the migration season that begins in October when Misseriya herdsman starts to enter the Abyei area. In 2015, incidents of cattle stealing resulted to Ngok Dinka casualties.¹⁶¹ In 2019, there was also another similar incident that occurred which resulted to two fatalities. UNISFA demonstrated its ability to limit casualties in a few instances. One of these was in February 17 of the same year when tensions between the two communities due to animal rustling occurred in the Amiet common market. UNISFA was able to promptly intervene to stop the violence, which eventually prevented casualties. A separate incident in the Amiet common market, however, led to one of UNISFA's peacekeepers to be injured while intervening in the violence that broke out. On the same year, nine fatalities were also recorded related to other crimes, predominantly involving the use of small arms.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ United Nations General Assembly, "Budget performance of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei for the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023," A/78/597, Para. 26, November 17, 2023.

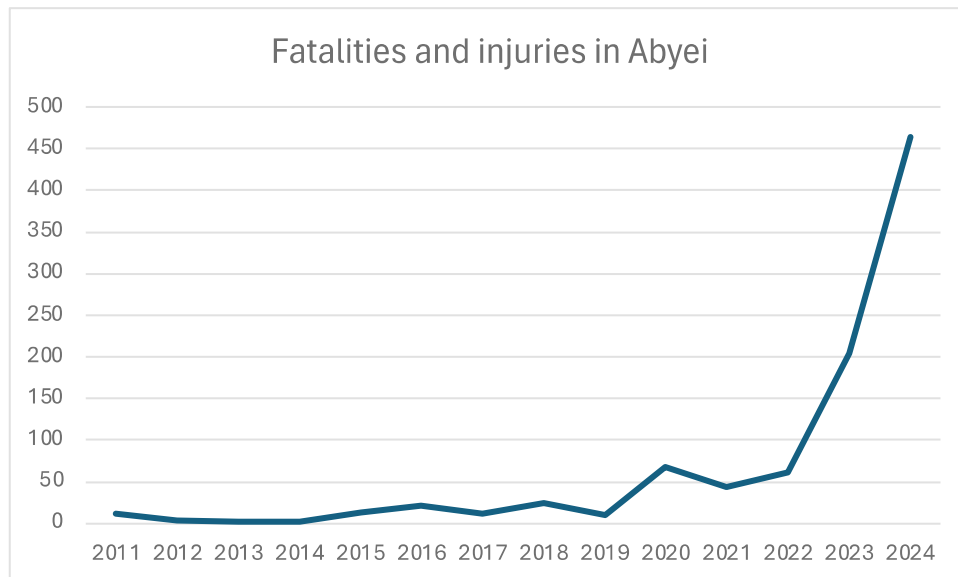
¹⁶⁰ United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei," S/2013/577, Para. 3, September 27, 2013.

¹⁶¹ United Nations Security Council, "Situation in Abyei," S/2015/77, Para. 6, January 30, 2015.

¹⁶² United Nations Security Council, "Situation in Abyei," S/2019/319, Para. 2, April 16, 2019.

In 2024, violence escalated in Abyei characterized by 13 intercommunal conflicts and involving various communities and security forces. These conflicts resulted to approximately 257 fatalities and 207 injuries. In many of these incidents, UNISFA quickly deployed quick reaction force to provide medical assistance, providing shelter and basic needs to approximately 2,000 displaced persons, and intensifying ground and aerial patrols. However, with UNISFA’s involvement, the safety of its peacekeepers was also put at risk. A Ghanian peacekeeper was killed when armed men targeted the base of UNISFA to shoot Nuer internally displaced persons who were currently seeking shelter. The next day, a Pakistani peacekeeper was killed, and four other peacekeepers were injured. Aside from this, there were also 14 incidents of kidnapping involving men, women and children. This escalation triggered frustration from civilians who perceive UNISFA as a failure for the lack of political progress in Abyei and the presence of armed groups in Abyei particularly the Twic Dinka and an estimated 1,700 personnel of the South Sudan People’s Defence Forces and South Sudan National Police Service, resulting to multiple casualties in the area.¹⁶³

Chart 5: Total number of fatalities and injuries in Abyei



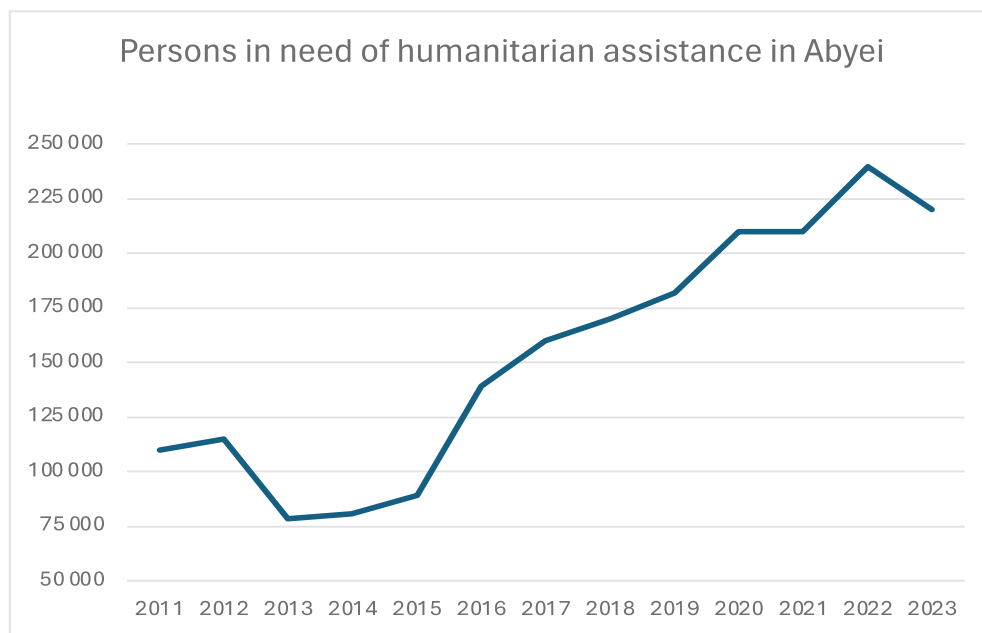
Source: United Nations Security Council Report of the Secretary-General on the situation of Abyei

Data was acquired from the Report of the Secretary-General on the situation of Abyei published every two months by the United Nations Security Council. The numbers are considered approximate given that some of the reports did not explicitly indicate the

¹⁶³ United Nations Security Council, "Situation in Abyei," S/2024/354, Paras. 7-14, May 1, 2024.

total number of fatalities and injuries per year. With this, the total number from 2011 to 2018 were manually counted based on the incidents mentioned in the reports. The data presented in Chart 5 indicates the increase in the rate of fatalities and injuries in Abyei, despite the presence of UNISFA in the area. This was due to the continuous occurrence of intercommunal conflicts. Along with this is the increase in the number of fatalities of UNISFA peacekeepers, with 55 total fatalities recorded since it started its operation in 2011.¹⁶⁴

Chart 6: Persons in need of humanitarian assistance in Abyei



Source: *United Nations Security Council resolutions, United Nations Security Council Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei*

Chart 6 presents the approximate number of people in need of humanitarian assistance in Abyei. Most of these people have been displaced and forced to flee their homes in Abyei due to the outbreak of violence, with a big portion coming from Ngok Dinka. The humanitarian assistance these people need involve aid in the sectors of food, health, education, hygiene, water, sanitation, shelter, and child protection. The data evidently indicates that there is an increase in the number of people in Abyei requiring humanitarian assistance as a consequence of the deteriorating security environment.

The comparison involving the number of casualties prior to UNISFA’s deployment cannot be performed as this could not be found in publicly accessible sources despite

¹⁶⁴ United Nations Peacekeeping, “UNISFA Fact Sheet,” <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/unisfa>.

extensive research. Nonetheless, since UNISFA started operating in Abyei in 2011 up to the present, it was clear that the rates of fatalities and injuries and persons in need of humanitarian assistance in Abyei continue to increase. This reveals that UNISFA has failed to meet this criterion, with “little to no effect” in limiting casualties.

Conflict containment

The nature of the conflict in Abyei is primarily characterized by intercommunal disputes between various communities, predominantly Misseriya and Ngok Dinka and territorial claims between the governments of Sudan and South Sudan, with the main motivation being access to resources in Abyei area. This conflict poses a significant challenge to the bilateral relations between Sudan and South Sudan, and the situation in Abyei is vulnerable given that it is influenced by political and military developments in both countries. For example, the outbreak of violence between the Rapid Support Forces and Sudanese Armed Forces in Khartoum in 2023 had direct impact to Abyei as it stalled the political progress towards resolving its final status and consequently rebuilding relations between Sudan and South Sudan.¹⁶⁵ Considering the nature of the conflict in Abyei at present, it does not pose a tendency to spread externally and involve great powers and other neighbouring countries. Thus, this criterion cannot be applied in evaluating the effectiveness of UNISFA.

Conflict resolution

UNISFA has achieved considerable success in terms of establishing security and stability in the Abyei area. Its efforts have led to the reduction of large-scale conflicts in Abyei and strengthened intercommunal relationships. It particularly reinforced community dialogues between Misseriya and Ngok Dinka which was crucial in reducing confrontation and violence between the two parties. It has also facilitated the re-opening of the Amiet common market which played a crucial role in establishing long-term stability and reconciliation. It also provided rapid humanitarian assistance and quick response when incidents occur.¹⁶⁶

Despite its effectiveness in these areas, the outbreak of conflict in 2022 and 2023

¹⁶⁵ United Nations Press, “Crisis in Sudan, Ongoing Fighting ‘Seriously Impacting Chances for Constructive Dialogue’ on Status of Abyei, Peace Operations Chief Tells Security Council”, Meeting Coverage, SC/15691, May 7, 2024. <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15691.doc.htm>.

¹⁶⁶ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2386 (2017)," S/RES/2386, Para. 19, November 15, 2017.

stalled the progress it has built through the years. The tendency for the resurgence of conflicts in Abyei is linked to the limited progress made in the political process. The final status of Abyei still has not been resolved due to disagreements between the governments of Sudan and South Sudan. The presence of conflict and violence, despite notable prevention of large-scale ones, persists specifically during the seasonal migration, which triggers a clash between the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka. This reveals that without resolving the root causes of the conflict and a concrete political settlement, there is still a high possibility for hostilities to occur, and lasting peace in Abyei remains unattainable. Given this, the security environment in Abyei still poses a threat to international security and does not indicate long-term peace and stability. Thus, UNISFA has failed this criterion.

To summarize, the table below presents the result of the analysis conducted on UNISFA, employing the four criteria for measuring the effectiveness of UN peace operations.

Table 4: Evaluation of the effectiveness of UNISFA

Criterion	Result
Mandate fulfilment	Moderate success
Limiting casualties	Failure
Conflict containment	<i>Not applicable</i>
Conflict resolution	Failure

4.2.2 Explanatory factors

Intensity of the conflict

The conflict in Abyei is characterized by crimes such as cattle rustling, robbery, theft, shooting, public disorder, use of weapons, and the involvement of the governments of Sudan and South Sudan, Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities, and other communities such as Twic Dinka and Nuer. One of the most common crimes is cattle rustling which usually peaks during the seasonal migration of Misseriya annually as they migrate their cattle south of the Abyei area. During this period, stealing of animals are very frequent. In October 2019, approximately 37,000 Misseriya herdsmen arrived. Shortly after, 16 incidents of animal rustling were reported, which resulted to two fatalities. UNISFA has been

swift to respond in each of these incidents to prevent the spread of tensions. They promptly dispatch patrols and conduct necessary investigation. In two of these incidents, UNISFA was successfully able to recover all stolen animals. In seven of these incidents, it was only able to track and retrieve some of the stolen animals.¹⁶⁷

Moreover, in 2019, there were 1,675 incidents that were reported resulting to injuries and fatalities of civilians and a peacekeeper. 1,409 were minor crimes while 266 were serious crimes such as murder and robbery. Majority of these are related to intercommunal conflicts and “a consequence of the adverse economic situation in Abyei and surrounding areas, as well as the prevalence of small arms.”¹⁶⁸ In a separate report of the same year, “11 cases of shooting, 3 cases of homicide, 468 cases of theft, 210 cases of aggravated assault, 2 murders, 2 cases of rape and 13 cases of animal rustling were reported, resulting in the loss of 1,537 livestock.”¹⁶⁹ Aside from this, the illicit transfer and misuse of small arms and weapons are also a problem. UNISFA responds quickly to this by conducting patrols and disarming individuals found with weapons. It also visits suspected areas and communicates with the local population, but in some cases, it is unsuccessful with identifying the suspects.¹⁷⁰ In addition to this, some of the conflicts involve various security forces from Sudan and South Sudan such as the Sudanese Armed Forces, South Sudan People’s Defence Forces, and Rapid Support Forces, with some attacks involving the use of heavy weapons such as grenades.

This reveals that the situation in Abyei has a moderate degree of conflict intensity. The small geographical area and low number of armed groups and security forces help UNISFA respond quickly to incidents. However, the recurring escalation of conflicts in Abyei due to unresolved political issues between involved parties and the presence of security forces who hinder their movement around Abyei make the operations of UNISFA more challenging.¹⁷¹ Hence, the conflict intensity in Abyei has an impact to the effectiveness of UNISFA.

Consent and cooperation from the local parties

One of the main reasons why there has been slow progress in terms of achieving

¹⁶⁷ United Nations Security Council, "Situation in Abyei," S/2019/319, Para. 3, April 16, 2019.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, para. 2.

¹⁶⁹ United Nations Security Council, "Situation in Abyei," S/2019/817, Para. 8, October 15, 2019.

¹⁷⁰ United Nations Security Council, " Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei," S/2014/709, Para. 4, September 30, 2014.

¹⁷¹ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2352 (2017)," S/RES/2352, May 17, 2017.

long-term stability and security in Abyei is because of the lack of consistent and adequate consent and cooperation from the local parties. However, progress in recent years indicates positive signs.

Initially, cooperation between the parties was evident through the successfully concluded agreements such as the “20 June 2011 Agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement on Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area, the 29 June 2011 Agreement between the Government of the Sudan and the Government of South Sudan on Border Security and the Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM), and the 30 July 2011 Agreement on the Border Monitoring Support Mission between the Government of Sudan and the Government of South Sudan, as well as the 27 September 2012 Agreements on Cooperation and Security Arrangements, the JPSM’s 8 March 2013 decision, and the Implementation Matrix of 12 March 2013.”¹⁷²

However, there has been limited commitment on the governments of Sudan and South Sudan in terms of putting these agreements into practice. Since 2012 up to the present, delays in the establishment of crucial institutions are evident. These include the Abyei Area Administration, particularly in terms of the deadlock on the appointment of senior officials, and Abyei Police Service, which is supposed to replace the military presence of UNISFA in Abyei. These delays resulted to ““public administration and rule of law vacuum” in Abyei.¹⁷³ Moreover, there has also been slow progress in the full implementation of JBVMM and SDBZ due to the disagreement of South Sudan to the initially proposed centreline.¹⁷⁴ In 2017, UNISFA continues to urge local parties to maintain their commitments in line with the agreements in 2011, particularly in terms of resuming discussions on border demarcation, conducting regular meetings related to joint mechanisms, reinforcing commitment on JBVMM and ensuring the full freedom of movement of UNISFA. Without meeting these conditions, UNISFA will be inclined to stop its mandated support to JBVMM.¹⁷⁵ In the succeeding years, it has been found that the same issues persist. There is still a lack of significant progress in terms of political process and reaching agreement on the final status of Abyei. Regular meetings of Abyei Joint Oversight Committee and establishment of Abyei Area Administration and Abyei Police

¹⁷² United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2469 (2019)," S/RES/2469, May 14, 2019.

¹⁷³ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2352 (2017)," S/RES/2352, May 15, 2017.

¹⁷⁴ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2318 (2016)," S/RES/2318, November 15, 2016.

¹⁷⁵ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2352 (2017)," S/RES/2352, Para. 7, May 15, 2017.

Service still have not been achieved.¹⁷⁶ In the area of demilitarization that is constantly reiterated by UNISFA, some parties violated the agreement. For example, in 2014, at least 120 Sudan armed oil police personnel and several armed Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) were seen in southern Abyei.¹⁷⁷ In 2018, the presence of Sudanese Armed Forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Army in the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone were reported multiple times.¹⁷⁸ However, events in 2023 suggest an increased level of consent and cooperation from the two governments. The Joint Political and Security Mechanism meeting was held wherein both governments agreed to adopt the recommendations of UNISFA and JBVM, particularly in terms of redeployment of government forces from the SDBZ and Abyei, and reopening border crossing corridors.¹⁷⁹

In terms of the involved communities, in 2015, UNISFA also faced a challenge in encouraging meetings between Misseriya and Ngok Dinka leaders. Eventually, UNISFA was able to successfully conduct a few intercommunal dialogues. In 2017, improved commitment towards cooperation and reconciliation between these communities was visible through the continuation of the trading activities and monitoring of stolen property and livestock.¹⁸⁰ The intensity and frequency of tensions were reduced but clashes still occurred in the succeeding years due to the lack of trust or "trust deficit" between the two communities.¹⁸¹ In 2023, UNISFA, together with Concordis International, the International Organization for Migration and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, facilitated the successful conclusion of a peace agreement between the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities aimed at resolving challenges during seasonal migration. Both parties agreed to the withdrawal of militias and armed units in the Abyei area, freedom of movement in the area, and revival of the Joint Peace Committee. They also expressed consent to UNISFA's patrolling and monitoring to ensure both parties' compliance to the agreement. This indicates a positive step towards cooperation and peaceful coexistence

¹⁷⁶ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2469 (2019)," S/RES/2469, May 14, 2019.

¹⁷⁷ United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei," S/2014/709, Para. 3, September 30, 2014.

¹⁷⁸ United Nations Security Council, "Letter dated 20 August 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council," S/2018/778, August 23, 2018.

¹⁷⁹ UNISFA, "Parties Agree to Hasten the Implementation of Decisions during JPSM Meeting in Juba," January 27, 2023, <https://unisfa.unmissions.org/parties-agree-hasten-implementation-decisions-during-jpsm-meeting-juba>.

¹⁸⁰ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2352 (2017)," S/RES/2352, Para. 18, May 15, 2017.

¹⁸¹ United Nations Office at Geneva, "Security Council hears of 'trust deficit' in disputed Abyei region," April 21, 2022, <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/news/2022/04/72546/security-council-hears-trust-deficit-disputed-abyei-region>.

between the two communities.¹⁸²

In terms of the consent of the local parties to UNISFA's presence in Abyei, a few incidents have been recorded. For example, in 2013, some members of Ngok Dinka conducted violent demonstration and attempted to forcibly enter the headquarters of UNISFA.¹⁸³ In 2017, unidentified assailants fired on UNISFA patrols.¹⁸⁴ In 2022, two more armed attacks targeting UNISFA occurred. These attacks pose a significant obstacle to its operations in Abyei.¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, the two governments' limited cooperation in terms of granting full freedom of movement to UNISFA personnel is also a challenge. This was evident by withholding visas for UNISFA police, blocking the appointment of a civilian Deputy Head of Mission and rejecting the peace operation's access to the Anthony airport which could significantly help UNISFA in resolving logistical challenges, reducing transportation costs, and strengthening the safety and security of its personnel.¹⁸⁶

Security Council resolutions reiterate the importance of the full cooperation of the Government of Sudan and the Government of South Sudan, as well as the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities, to UNISFA to enable it to fully implement its mandate.¹⁸⁷ Evidence reveals that in recent years, the consent and cooperation from the local parties have improved, suggesting a moderate level. Full cooperation still has not been achieved due to some agreements that have not yet been implemented, consequently hindering UNISFA's effectiveness.

External military and political support to the belligerents

There is no clear evidence that the support to the belligerents is coming from outside, other than the involved countries, Sudan and South Sudan. The violence caused by Misseriya and Ngok Dinka are strongly influenced by major political developments moulded by the governments of Sudan and South Sudan. Misseriya is backed by the government of Sudan, providing political backing through supporting its claim to Abyei and blocking peace negotiations and military support through the presence of Sudanese Armed Forces. The Sudanese government also uses it to maintain control over Abyei and as a

¹⁸² UNISFA, "UNISFA, IOM, FAO And Concordis Broker Peace Agreement between Ngok Dinkas and Misseriyas in the Abyei Box," March 23, 2023, <https://unisfa.unmissions.org/unisfa-iom-fao-and-concordis-broker-peace-agreement-between-ngok-dinkas-and-misseriyas-abyei-box>.

¹⁸³ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2126 (2013)," S/RES/2126, November 25, 2013.

¹⁸⁴ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2386 (2017)," S/RES/2386, November 15, 2017.

¹⁸⁵ United Nations Security Council, "Situation in Abyei," S/2022/316, Para. 97, April 14, 2022.

¹⁸⁶ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2575 (2021)," S/RES/2575, May 11, 2021.

¹⁸⁷ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2024 (2011)," S/RES/2024, Para. 4, December 14, 2011.

“counter-insurgency force” in instances wherein the Ngok Dinka pushes for self-determination. One of the pieces of evidence that verifies the link of Misseriya to Sudan is in early-2011 when the National Congress Party (NCP), the ruling party in Sudan, supported the Misseriya militias to advance its political interests, aiming to destabilize the negotiations on the North-South post-referendum and assert its control over the oil field in north Abyei.¹⁸⁸

On the other hand, Ngok Dinka is politically supported by the government of South Sudan, and militarily through the South Sudan People’s Defence Forces (SSPDF), formerly known as Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA). In an incident that occurred in 2011, it was reported that armed Ngok Dinka, together with the SPLA, disguised as police in various areas in Abyei to set up checkpoints and stop herders with their cattle from moving further to the south.¹⁸⁹

In 2017, Sudan suspended the scheduled regular meeting of the JPSM as it accused South Sudan of providing support to rebel groups who confronted the Sudan Armed Forces and whose presence were seen on the north of the SDBZ. On the other hand, South Sudan accused Sudan of supporting rebel groups present in its borders. As a result, it slowed down the progress of the implementation of decisions that have been agreed in previous meetings.¹⁹⁰

Given that there is no evidence confirming external support from other countries aside from Sudan and South Sudan, this factor is classified as moderate level. Additionally, this reveals that the political and military support provided by the two governments to the communities, armed groups and militias intensifies the conflict in Abyei. This, in turn, poses a challenge to UNISFA in terms of its operations, humanitarian assistance, and establishing peace and stability. Hence, this confirms that this factor affects the effectiveness of UNISFA.

Commitment from the UN member states

Since it was established in 2011, UNISFA receives sufficient resources to support its operations. As presented in charts 7 and 8, the financial and human resources allocated

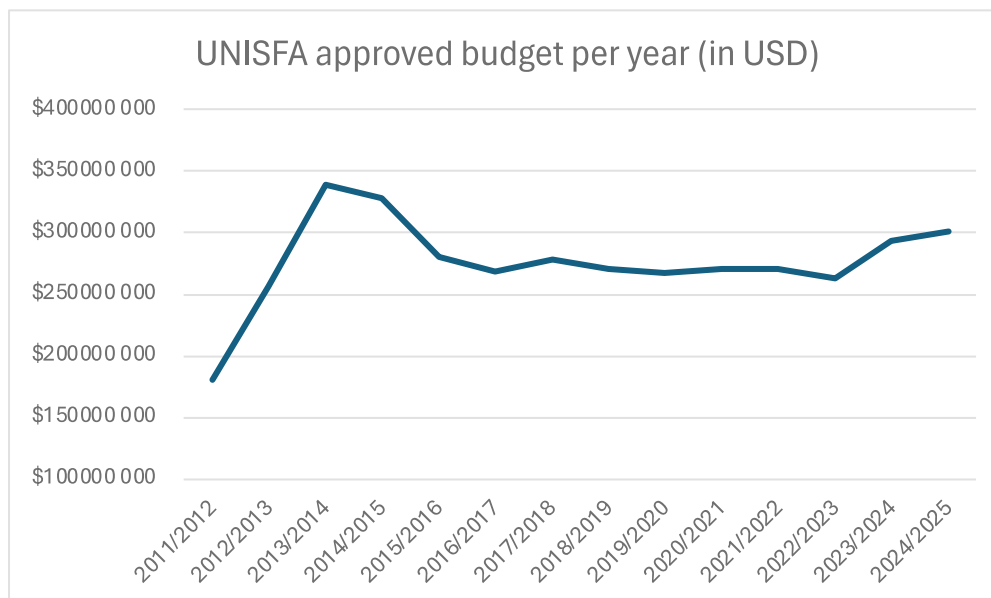
¹⁸⁸ Joshua Craze, “Attacked from Both Sides: Abyei’s Existential Dilemma” (2023), https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/sites/default/files/resources/Situation_Update_Abyei_Existential_Dilemma_Final.pdf.

¹⁸⁹ Joshua Craze, “Creating Facts on the Ground: Conflict Dynamics in Abyei” (2011), <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/131135/HSBA-SWP-26-Conflict-Dynamics-in-Abyei.pdf>, p. 50.

¹⁹⁰ United Nations Security Council, " Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei," S/2017/870, October 17, 2017.

to UNISFA remain stable. The minimal changes in the trend are supported by the changing security situation in Abyei.

Chart 7: UNISFA’s financial resources



Source: United Nations General Assembly, *Financing of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei, Budget Report of the Secretary General*

The slight decrease in the budget for 2015 is explained by the anticipated completion of ongoing activities related to establishing camps and acquiring assets.¹⁹¹ There was also a slight decrease in 2022 due to the reduction of troop ceiling. The budget remains consistent, however, due to the increase in demand for resources on air operations.¹⁹² On the other hand, the slight increase in the budget for 2023 is explained by the increase in the deployment of personnel, particularly “135 military observers, 3,115 military contingent personnel, 148 United Nations police officers, 492 formed police personnel, 197 international staff (including four positions funded under general temporary assistance), 10 National Professional Officers, 85 national General Service staff and 38 United Nations Volunteers” in line with the escalation of conflicts during this period.¹⁹³ The further increase in the budget allocation for 2024 reflects the high level of commitment by the UN towards

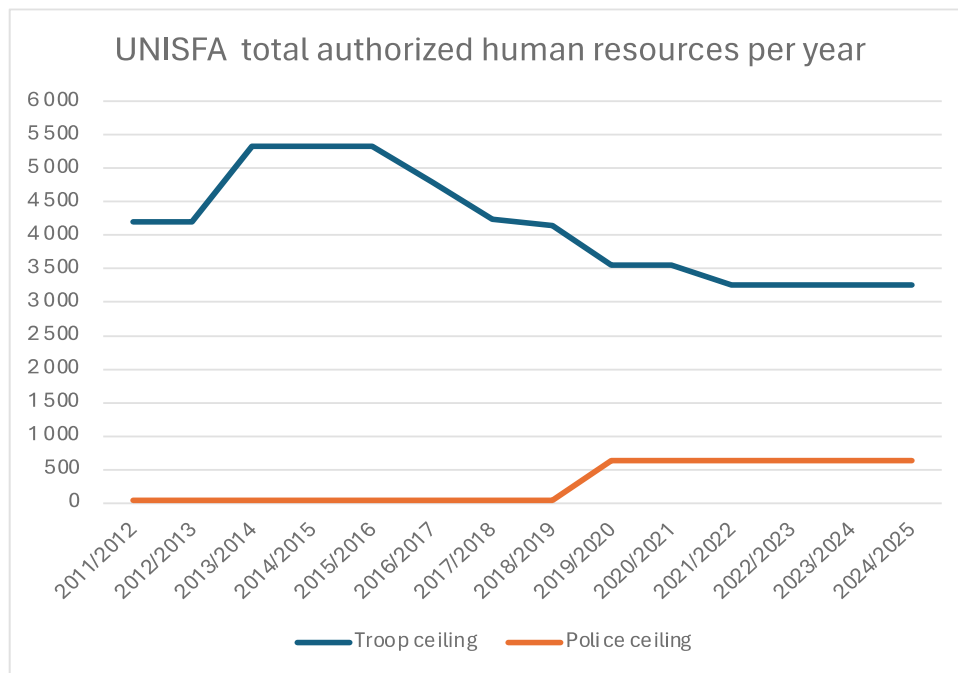
¹⁹¹ United Nations General Assembly, “Budget for the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016,” A/69/740, February 12, 2015.

¹⁹² United Nations General Assembly, “Budget for the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei for the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023,” A/76/699, Para. 35, February 15, 2022.

¹⁹³ United Nations General Assembly, “Budget for the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei for the period from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024,” A/77/769, February 24, 2023.

fully supporting UNISFA in achieving its strategic priorities in Abyei.¹⁹⁴

Chart 8: UNISFA human resources



Source: United Nations Security Council Resolutions and United Nations General Assembly, *Financing of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei, Budget Report of the Secretary General*

Chart 8 includes both troop ceiling and police ceiling. The former pertains to military personnel, including contingent troops, staff officers and experts on mission while the latter refers to police personnel. In 2013, the resolution recognized the need for more UN forces to support UNISFA and enable it to fully assist in the implementation of JBVMM and extend its operations in SDBZ. This was reflected through the increased number of authorized troops during this year.¹⁹⁵ The steady numbers from 2014 to 2016 reflected the decision to retain the number of troops due to the limited progress in the JBVMM which limited UNISFA’s performance.¹⁹⁶ From 2016, the troop ceiling continued to decline, not because of the lack of commitment from the UN, but due to the changing security situation in Abyei. Assessing the situation in Abyei, it was found that there is a need to reconfigure the military component of UNISFA in 2019 and increase the police ceiling instead. This was evident in

¹⁹⁴ United Nations General Assembly, “Budget for the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei for the period from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025,” A/78/737, January 26, 2024.

¹⁹⁵ United Nations Security Council, “Resolution 2126 (2013),” S/RES/2126, Para 2, November 25, 2013.

¹⁹⁶ United Nations Security Council, “Resolution 2318 (2016),” S/RES/2318, Para. 6, November 15, 2016.

2019 when the authorized police ceiling was significantly increased from 50 to 640. This decision was met with adequate support from troop-contributing countries. In 2022, troops from Ghana, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh arrived, supporting different areas of UNISFA's operation.¹⁹⁷ The support from the government of Ethiopia is also notable, given its position as the main contributor of troops to UNISFA during the early years of its operation.¹⁹⁸ As of 2024, Ghana contributes the highest numbers of military troops and Jordan contributes the highest in terms of police.¹⁹⁹

Sufficient UNISFA personnel are authorized but the challenge comes from the limited cooperation from the government of Sudan. In 2022, the police component of UNISFA consisted of 45 deployed officers, despite an authorized total of 640 police personnel. This was particularly caused by the non-issuance of visas. Additionally, the government of Sudan issued 1,383 visas for UNISFA personnel, but 605 visas remained pending approval. This is for 30 civilian staff, 422 military personnel, 86 contractors, 66 UN police and 1 consultant.²⁰⁰

Moreover, logistical support is also evident. In 2014, it was noted that the absence of important infrastructure projects posed a challenge to UNISFA's operations and its personnel.²⁰¹ Action has been taken to address this concern through the years. An example is in 2022 wherein the completion of infrastructure projects allowed for efficient troop rotation, construction of accommodation for its troops, waste management and generator platforms. It also received two Mi-8 helicopters to support its air operations.²⁰²

The renewal of UNISFA's mandate year-by-year, alongside approval of sufficient financial and human resources, reflects the high commitment of the UN member states in tackling the conflict in Abyei and eliminating the security threat it brings to international peace and security. Through this support, UNISFA is well-equipped to continue its presence in Abyei, reconfigure its mandate and personnel composition in line with the evolving security situation, and continue to perform its mandated tasks.

Addressing the causes of the conflict

The causes of the conflict in Abyei are mainly rooted in economic and political

¹⁹⁷ United Nations Security Council, "Situation in Abyei," S/2022/316, Para. 24, April 14, 2022.

¹⁹⁸ United Nations Security Council, "Situation in Abyei," S/2022/316, Para. 99, April 14, 2022.

¹⁹⁹ <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/unisfa>

²⁰⁰ United Nations Security Council, "Situation in Abyei," S/2022/316, Para. 72-73.

²⁰¹ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2179 (2014)," S/RES/2179, Para. 18, October 14, 2014.

²⁰² Ibid, Paras. 77-80.

factors. Given that Abyei is an area rich in oil and grazing resources, various parties clash in terms of ownership and access to the area. Particularly, the persistent clashes between Misseriya pastoralist tribesmen and Ngok Dinka Farmers are caused by claims over land rights and access to seasonal grazing. Aside from this, the conflict that broke out between the Ngok and Twic Dinka in 2022 wherein the latter tries to take control of the Agok and Annet Market, is mainly caused by economic and political marginalization.²⁰³ The governments of Sudan and South Sudan also consider natural resources as the primary motivation for claiming sovereignty over Abyei.

Abyei is still stuck in a “political stalemate”, wherein political agreements could not be concluded because of differences between the two governments and the feeling of marginalization on the side of the ethnic communities. This political situation is seen by the governments of Sudan and South Sudan as advantageous to them. They benefit from it politically and economically, as both parties continue to gain profit from the oil resources in Diffra, and these are not diverted to Abyei. On the other hand, Kiir, the current president of South Sudan benefits from this politically given that it allows him to verbally support Abyei joining South Sudan without taking concrete actions that could upset Sudan. Kiir has also managed to improve relations with Sudan which prevents the latter from providing support to rebel groups and targeting his government.²⁰⁴ This puts UNISFA in a difficult position given the lack of willingness from the two governments to resolve existing issues.

In addressing the root causes of the conflict in Abyei, however, the commitment and cooperation from local parties are required. As UN Peacekeeping Chief Jean-Pierre Lacroix stated, “it is – first and foremost – for the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan to renew their engagement on the final status of Abyei”.²⁰⁵ Nonetheless, UNISFA has been quick to act on incidents of crimes and animal rustling, provide prompt humanitarian assistance and actively engage in intercommunal dialogues and joint mechanisms. Its valuable support towards the implementation of Amiet common market served as a mutual ground for Misseriya and Ngok Dinka. However, it generated unintended consequences given that the market also became a breeding ground for crimes such as theft, robbery,

²⁰³ Joshua Craze, “Attacked from Both Sides: Abyei’s Existential Dilemma” (2023), https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/sites/default/files/resources/Situation_Update_Abyei_Existential_Dilemma_Final.pdf.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ United Nations Office at Geneva, “Security Council hears of ‘trust deficit’ in disputed Abyei region”, April 21, 2022, <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/news/2022/04/72546/security-council-hears-trust-deficit-disputed-abyei-region>.

cattle rusting, shooting and public disorder.²⁰⁶ This suggests the need for concrete actions targeted towards addressing the root causes of the conflict. Without doing this, conflict and tension between local parties will consistently recur. Based on its mandate, UNISFA works on addressing the root causes of the conflict through peacebuilding activities. It is one of its five strategic priorities, alongside protection of civilians and providing humanitarian assistance, supporting the political process between Sudan and South Sudan, conducting local-level mediation to address intercommunal conflict, and promoting accountability, justice and rule of law. Specifically, it will “continue to implement programmatic activities, civilian-military cooperation activities and quick-impact projects aimed at improving the environment for mandate implementation, addressing the population’s most pressing needs and focusing on improving the livelihoods and living standards of the Ngok Dinka and the Misseriya communities in equal measure and on establishing basic amenities and infrastructure”. In terms of the political aspect, UNISFA will continue to provide support to the political process between Sudan and South Sudan. Given that there is still no joint political process due to limited progress of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee, it will continue to promote discussions between the two parties regarding the final status of Abyei and work alongside the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa on an appropriate framework for mediation support.²⁰⁷

Given that there are shortcomings in UNISFA’s effort to address the causes of the conflict, this factor is classified as moderate. At the same time, this reveals that, to some extent, this factor has correlation to UNISFA’s moderate success in mandate fulfilment. However, considering its failure in the two other criteria, it could not be fully confirmed that this factor plays a crucial role in explaining effectiveness.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

After a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of MONUSCO and UNISFA, in this section, the hypotheses of the study will be tested to further support the analysis and ultimately identify the factors that explain the effectiveness of a UN peace operation.

²⁰⁶ United Nations Security Council, "Situation in Abyei," S/2019/319, Para. 7, April 16, 2019.

²⁰⁷ United Nations General Assembly, "Budget for the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei for the period from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025," A/78/737, Paras. 9-18, January 26, 2024.

H1: Conflict intensity decreases the effectiveness of a UN peace operation.

MONUSCO faces a high degree of conflict intensity. Contributing to this is the alarming number of local and foreign armed groups and recurring cycles of conflict and violence in the DRC. The vast geographical area of the country also poses operational challenges given that these armed groups are dispersed both in dense rainforest and inland. On the other hand, in Abyei, there is a moderate degree of conflict intensity. Majority of the crimes reported are minor and many of them are directly related to animal rustling. With few armed groups and security forces involved and small geographical area, UNISFA can respond quickly to majority of the reported incidents. However, the recurring cycles of conflict and the presence of security forces still restrict its personnel's movement around Abyei and consequently, limits its ability to fully fulfil its mandate.

Considering that MONUSCO failed in all four criteria and UNISFA failed in two criteria and achieved only moderate success in one criterion, evidence supports the hypothesis, revealing that conflict intensity decreases the effectiveness of UN peace operations.

H2: Consent and cooperation provided to the peace operation by the local parties increases the effectiveness of a UN peace operation.

For MONUSCO, the low level of consent and cooperation from the Congolese government and various armed groups significantly hampers its ability to effectively fulfil its mandate. Agreements have been sealed but the problem is putting these into practice. This is particularly evident in the slow progress of the implementation of DDR and SSR. It also faces opposition in terms of its presence in the country, experiencing intense attacks targeted at its peacekeepers and eventually leading to the decision to withdraw its operations from the DRC. On the other hand, for UNISFA, evidence reveals a moderate level of consent and cooperation from the governments of Sudan and South Sudan and the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities. Recent years suggest increased consent and cooperation, however there are still instances that indicate shortcomings such as limited outcome on some agreements and delays in approving visas for its authorized personnel.

Given that UNISFA has achieved moderate success in one criterion, this reveals that, to some extent, this factor increases its effectiveness. Despite

MONUSCO's case confirming this hypothesis, UNISFA's failure to meet the two other criteria makes this hypothesis only partially accepted.

H3: External military and political support to the belligerents decreases the effectiveness of a UN peace operation.

In the case of MONUSCO in the DRC, belligerents receive high level of external military and political support, including logistics and funding, from neighbouring countries that strengthens their capabilities and consequently amplifies the conflict and violence in the country. In addition, some of the armed groups are receiving support from local state authorities and national armed forces who find these groups beneficial in pursuing their economic, political, and military interests in the DRC. On the other hand, for UNISFA, the ethnic communities, armed groups and militias also receive a moderate level of military and political support, predominantly from the governments of Sudan and South Sudan.

The support received by the belligerents evidently pose a significant challenge to both MONUSCO and UNISFA in terms of improving the security environment and building long-term peace and stability in the DRC and Abyei respectively, evident in the fact that both cases have failed to meet majority of the criteria for effectiveness. Hence, this hypothesis is confirmed, revealing that this factor decreases the effectiveness of UN peace operations.

H4: Commitment from the UN, through sufficient and timely provision of resources, increases the effectiveness of a UN peace operation.

MONUSCO's case evidently reveals that low UN commitment, particularly the lack of provision of sufficient resources affected its operation in the DRC. Its ambitious mandate did not match with the resources it is receiving from the UN. Particularly, the reduction of financial and human resources in 2018, amid the deteriorating security environment in the DRC, made it more challenging for it to effectively perform its mandated tasks. On the other hand, for UNISFA, throughout its operations, high UN commitment is evident as it receives sufficient resources from the UN that enable it to perform some of its mandated tasks. Particularly, authorised resources, in the form of troop and police ceiling, were adjusted appropriately to meet the changing security environment in Abyei. Apart from sufficient budget allocation and staff resources, it also receives adequate logistical support through infrastructure projects and military support through the provision of air assets.

This reveals that UNISFA’s achieved moderate success in mandate fulfilment can be, to some extent, be attributed to this factor. Despite MONUSCO’s case supporting this hypothesis by demonstrating failure due to low UN commitment, UNISFA’s failure to meet the two other criteria despite high UN commitment makes this hypothesis only partially accepted.

H5: The execution of activities by a UN peace operation that address the causes of the conflict increases the effectiveness of a UN peace operation.

For the DRC, the causes of the conflict revolve around economic, political, and institutional factors that are deeply rooted in the country’s history. For Abyei, the causes of the conflict are mainly rooted in economic and political factors. Evidence reveals that both MONUSCO and UNISFA conducted activities that are aimed at addressing the root causes of the conflict in the DRC and Abyei respectively, with majority of them targeted towards resolving political issues. This factor is classified as moderate given that their actions were insufficient to completely address the root causes and consequently halt the recurrence of tensions and violence in the DRC and Abyei, with the lack of willingness and cooperation from local parties as a major obstacle.

Despite moderate effort to address the causes of the conflict, both cases still failed to meet majority of the criteria for effectiveness. MONUSCO’s case does not support this hypothesis while UNISFA’s case, with only a moderate success on one criterion, partially supports this. Hence, this hypothesis is rejected, revealing that this factor does not increase the effectiveness of UN peace operations.

4.4 Summary of Findings

The tables below summarize the findings of the comprehensive analysis that was conducted against the selected cases, MONUSCO and UNISFA, examining the established criteria for effectiveness and the explanatory factors.

Table 5: Evaluation of the effectiveness of MONUSCO and UNISFA

Criterion	MONUSCO	UNISFA
Mandate fulfilment	Failure	Moderate success
Limiting casualties	Failure	Failure

Conflict containment	Failure	<i>Not applicable</i>
Conflict resolution	Failure	Failure

Table 6: Classification of independent variables

Independent variables	MONUSCO	UNISFA
Conflict intensity	High	Moderate
Consent and cooperation	Low	Moderate
External support	High	Moderate
Commitment from the UN	Low	High
Addressing the causes of the conflict	Moderate	Moderate

Table 7: Validity of the hypotheses

Hypothesis	Result
H1: Conflict intensity decreases the effectiveness of a UN peace operation.	Confirmed
H2: Consent and cooperation provided to the peace operation by the local parties increases the effectiveness of a UN peace operation.	Partially accepted
H3: External military and political support to the belligerents decreases the effectiveness of a UN peace operation.	Confirmed
H4: Commitment from the UN, through sufficient and timely provision of resources, increases the effectiveness of a UN peace operation.	Partially accepted
H5: The execution of activities by a UN peace operation that address the causes of the conflict increases the effectiveness of a UN peace operation.	Rejected

Based on the tables above, it can be concluded that both MONUSCO and UNISFA have been ineffective in their overall operations in the DRC and Abyei respectively and in contributing to international peace and security. MONUSCO failed in all four criteria while UNISFA showed moderate success in one criterion and failed in two other criteria. Combined with the analysis of the independent variables, this reveals valuable insights which subsequently forms the findings presented in table 7, confirming that there is a

correlation that exists between majority of the independent variables and the effectiveness of UN peace operations.

Conclusion

With the constantly evolving security environment in different parts of the world such as in the DRC and Abyei and the risk to international peace and security associated with it, the role of the UN peace operations remains highly critical. The cases of MONUSCO and UNISFA revealed the varying and complex nature of UN peace operations. Their nature has undoubtedly evolved from traditional peacekeeping to complex and multidimensional nature. Aside from the UN Security Council resolutions, a multitude of factors form the overall character of UN peace operations. This implies that each of the 71 UN peace operations that were deployed since the beginning is *sui generis*, with distinct nature, operational realities on the ground and mandated tasks. With this, their outcomes also vary, wherein some peace operations end up being more effective than the others.

The comprehensive and systematic analysis conducted revealed how MONUSCO and UNISFA are performing in the DRC and Abyei respectively in terms of mandate fulfilment, limiting casualties, conflict containment and conflict resolution. After careful analysis, it was found that MONUSCO failed in all four criteria while UNISFA met only one criterion, specifically moderate success in mandate fulfilment. It also reiterated the differences that exist between them through the distinctive results in the analysis of the explanatory factors. Ultimately, the analysis reveals answers to the research question of this study, what explains when the UN peace operation is effective? Conflict intensity and external military and political support to the belligerents have a direct correlation to the effectiveness of a UN peace operation, with both factors decreasing its effectiveness. On the other hand, consent and cooperation from local parties and commitment from the UN are partially correlated to effectiveness, which means that these factors play a partial role and could not fully account for the increased effectiveness of a UN peace operation on their own. Conversely, the execution of activities that address the causes of the conflict does not affect its effectiveness. Accordingly, this reveals that more than the characteristics of a UN peace operation, external factors such as the intensity of the conflict and attitude of the involved actors, specifically the local parties and belligerents have critical influence on its effectiveness.

Moreover, despite the ineffectiveness of MONUSCO and UNISFA, it could not be disregarded that the role of UN peace operations remains indisputably crucial in the world that we live in today. In line with this, this thesis offers few implications. First, it reveals the failure of the selected UN peace operations, providing key lessons for developing better policies and strategies for future peace operations by taking into account the experiences of the selected cases, particularly the specific areas where it succeeded and areas where it did not, as well as the factors that are found to explain their effectiveness. Second, given that the selected cases are contemporary UN peace operations, it provides valuable insights that can contribute to future peace operations' preparedness for new challenges and the complexities that the current security environment presents and consequently, contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of future UN peace operations.

The multifaceted role played by UN peace operations at present time proves that studying the effectiveness of UN peace operations remains highly relevant. With this, this thesis recognizes a few limitations that future research could fill in. First, given that the cases utilised in this study are active peace operations, the analysis was constructed and backed by available empirical evidence at the time of writing. Future research should reassess the evolving situation in the DRC and Abyei and the role played by MONUSCO and UNISFA to offer a more accurate and up-to-date analysis that could guide policymaking and future UN peace operations. Second, this study recognizes that in analysing the independent variables, no precise criteria were established in relation to the categorisation of each variable as low, moderate, or high. Expanding the research to explore suitable criteria based on existing scholarly literature can better support the analysis. Third, the scope is limited to only two peace operations, and both were taken in the context of Africa. While this contributes to a better understanding of UN peace operations in the region, future research can conduct a study on contemporary peace operations in a different geographical location or focus on the changing conflict environment in relation to modern technological advancements. This can prove to be valuable in establishing a wider scope and more nuanced understanding of contemporary peace operations which can significantly contribute to moulding the future of UN peacekeeping, and consequently reinforce international peace and security in the years to come.

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