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**UN MISSIONS AND THEIR FAILURES: HOW COLLABORATION WITH MILITARY
FORCE COMPLICATES UN INTERVENTION IN AREAS OF CONFLICT**

by
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**SUBMITTED TO SCRIPPS COLLEGE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS**

**PROFESSOR PAHWA
PROFESSOR BODUSZYŃSKI**

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Introduction:

UN Peacekeeping and Assistance missions have often been vital to the protection of civilians, implementation of transitional governments, and stabilization of nations and large regions.

Yet, these two forms of U.N. missions are different. UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs) are essentially military forces deployed primarily to protect civilians. Protecting civilians often means that peacekeepers must collaborate with local groups first and foremost to prevent conflict. These operations often use civil servants who: a) provide expertise on topics varying from child protection to prevention of sexual violence, b) have soldiers who act as police, c) use armed force as a deterrent to warring groups from committing human rights abuses, and d) enforce ceasefire agreements.¹

UN Assistance and Support missions differ from PKOs. While PKOs are charged with peacekeeping and peace maintenance, Assistance and Support missions are typically deployed to help national building, providing experts to help guide governments into how they might best establish control over a certain area and improve the living conditions within that area.

Since 2000, UN missions have been structured to be large organizations with broad doctrines that are expected to solve a myriad of issues that arise in areas of conflict. As counterterrorism and counterinsurgency have become crucial parts of international conflict, the UN has adapted its 'use of force' policies to reflect the reality of global conflicts. UN missions now are often run in conjunction with an international military force that is created by primarily Western democracies to conduct counterinsurgency or counterterrorism operations. North American Treaty Organization (NATO) and the US have conducted many of these

¹ "Protecting Civilians," United Nations Peacekeeping, accessed December 7, 2021, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/protecting-civilians>.

counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations, as well as France and the Group of 5 Sahelian countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger -- countries that are in the Sahel region of Sub-Saharan Africa). While these military operations may be important for the stabilization of a region, they sometimes run counter to the mission's larger goals of civilian protection, implementation of peace agreements, or support of governments.

In essence, since 2000, UN missions have been created in such a way in which they have contradicting directives. On the one hand, they are tasked with stabilizing a country and working with multilateral counterterrorism forces, like Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. On the other hand, the missions are expected to help with state-building and remain impartial actors. In all of the cases I've studied, the missions have worked extensively to address the first directive of stabilization, but largely failed at their other mandated goals. Moreover, even where the missions have proven unsuccessful, the structure of the mission and force collaboration has yet to change.

The UN Security Council (UNSC) itself has explicitly stated that it believes UN missions should not be engaging in counterterrorism.² The UNSC has also emphasized that, when UN missions find it prudent to engage with a parallel international counterterrorism force, they should "maintain a clear division of labour and distinction of roles."³ Whether or not UN missions have obtained a separation of roles is almost irrelevant, because they have largely been perceived to not be "clearly delineated" from their parallel forces.⁴ The UN believes that collaboration with these forces is necessary for stabilization within a country. Stability is often a small part of peacekeeping and state-building operations. However I've found that these missions often value stability over every other mandated goal, neglecting other essential pieces

² *United Nations General Assembly* 70 (June 17, 2015) 12

³ *Ibid.* 12

⁴ *Ibid.* 12

of their mandates. The missions have prioritized stability because stability is the priority of the wealthy Western democracies that dominate the UN. A stabilized nation is one which is characterized by a lack of widespread violence within its borders, and a level of resiliency given various economic, social, or political shocks. More importantly, destabilized states are seen by these Western democracies as breeding grounds for terrorism, which these countries see as a formidable threat. Nevertheless, when a mission prioritizes stabilization, engagement with large, multilateral counterterrorism or counterinsurgency forces is simultaneously necessary and a kiss of death. Through looking at four UN missions, I have concluded that current UN missions face a use of force paradox. What this means is that these missions collaborate with multilateral counterterrorism forces for stability purposes, which, eventually, erodes the missions' abilities to state build, protect civilians, and remain impartial. Through these cases, I believe that the missions are doomed to fail. Each of these missions often requires stability to complete its goals, but in order to ensure stability within its area of purview, the mission must engage with counterinsurgency and counterterrorism.

In my thesis, *I argue that this engagement in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism in the name of stability is counterproductive to the mission's ability to accomplish its mandated goals because they either hinder the impartiality of the mission or erode the larger reputation of the UN and its various legal doctrines.* I compared two PKOs, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), and two assistance missions, the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), to see how the missions' collaboration with counterterrorism forces hurt the missions in the long-term. Multilateral counterterrorism forces often designate some armed

groups as being the “enemy,” and employ others in fighting terrorism. This designation of groups as ‘good or bad’ can, in turn, alienate people who have connections or are harmed by a certain group. Because of this, I have found that the PKOs face issues with impartiality post-collaboration, hindering the peacekeepers’ ability to act as a third-party observer, as it is now seen in these countries to be an actor in the armed conflict. The assistance and support missions are also hindered by their collaboration, but in a slightly different way; the missions’ reputations were harmed by Western forces accomplishing their own concrete goals, like NATO’s enforcement of a no-fly zone and arms embargo in Libya, but not focusing on any state-building capabilities and refusing to engage in the Second Libyan Civil War. This lack of engagement has the potential to erode large legal doctrines, like the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), which is a global political commitment established in 2005 whose main goal is to prevent genocide. R2P requires all UN member states to take action when any individual state is failing to protect its citizens from ethnic cleansing, genocide, or war crimes.

How the Military Force and UN Mission Cooperation Began:

The military and mission collaborations started in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Since events like the September 11th attacks, ‘Blackhawk Down,’ and various other terrorist attacks, terrorism, and insurgency have become some of the foremost issues in conflicts. After the UN peacekeeping failures of Bosnia, Rwanda, and Somalia in the 1990s,⁵ the organization tried to restructure its rules of engagement, allowing peacekeepers more leeway in when they can use deadly force. In Bosnia, Rwanda, and Somalia the UN missions were extremely limited in their scope and resources. For example, in Rwanda, peacekeepers could not use deadly force as a

⁵ Giovanna Kuele and Marco Cepik, "Intelligence Support to MONUSCO: Challenges to Peacekeeping and Security," *The International Journal of Intelligence, Security, and Public Affairs* 19, no. 1 (January 2, 2017): 45

deterrent against the Hutu government, which resulted in a genocide occurring while the Rwandan peacekeeping mission was actively deployed. In the aftermath of such failures, the UN pendulated in the opposite direction, creating UN missions with overly expansive mandates. In the Brahimi Report, a report which sought to explore changes in peacekeeping policy, the Chair of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations Lakhdar Brahimi argued that, for UN Peace Operations to be effective, they would need to be backed by “bigger forces, better equipped and more costly, but able to pose a credible deterrent threat.”⁶ This was in opposition to the more limited forces deployed in previous UN missions. The missions that I’ve analyzed were created in the aftermath of this report. Therefore, these missions undertake large over-reaching goals and work with state rebuilding and peace enforcement.⁷

This structure differs greatly from the pre-Brahimi missions, which were focused on monitoring ceasefires and ensuring peace within a very specific region. The Brahimi-report restructuring was directed at helping PKO and assistance missions use force to complete their mandated goals. However, UNAMA (created in 2001) and MONUSCO (partially created in 2000) have still failed to reach their goals. UNAMA was supposed to help the newly formed Afghan government after the US’s invasion in 2001. It failed to substantially reach this goal as the country fell to the Taliban. This is partially due to the importance Western democracies placed on counterterrorism initiatives in Afghanistan, rather than state-building. MONUSCO was mandated to help mitigate the conflict in the Congo as a third-party civilian protection force. It collaborated with an international force to eradicate one of the armed groups and is now seen as a party to the armed conflict. Terrorist groups target the PKOs directly, which hinders their ability to protect civilians as they need to protect themselves. Therefore, it is puzzling that the

⁶ *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (Brahimi Report)*. 21 Aug. 2000, undocs.org/A/55/305. Accessed 18 Nov. 2021. 9.

⁷ Kuele and Cepik, "Intelligence Support," 45.

Brahimi-report structure has yet to change given the failures of the missions that have been structured under the directives of the report.

Moreover, many have viewed peacekeeping as a foreign policy tool that can be employed to create more stability within a region, such as dealing with the threat of terrorism,⁸ but fail to realize that PKOs are usually meant to operate with a very specific set of goals, such as state-building and ceasefire enforcement. These goals are more difficult to achieve when the UN is perceived as using force for counterterrorism. The Brahimi report suggested that these missions should have large forces that work as a deterrent for malignant actors. Contrastingly, the UN outlined in its Global Counterterrorism strategy how eradicating terrorism should be a pre-emptive strategy, focusing on conflict prevention. Moreover, the UN General Assembly emphasized the necessity that it engages with counterterrorism only while abiding by international law and continuing to uphold human rights.⁹ What this means in practice is that UN missions should not engage with multilateral counterterrorism, lest they be seen as partial. The impartiality of UN missions is essential to their state-building capabilities, and, under the UN Counterterrorism strategy, the best way in which the UN can help to mitigate terrorist threats is via conflict prevention. Therefore, engaging in any activity that hinders a UN mission's ability to fulfill its mandate is actively working against the larger counterterrorism goals. Furthermore, because the UN and its uses of force have largely been dominated by Western democracies' interests, many of these missions have become convoluted, as a "mission inside a mission."¹⁰ These Western forces have been unable to successfully integrate with the larger mission and its goals.

⁸ Maline Meiske and Andrea Ruggeri, "Peacekeeping as a Tool of Foreign Policy," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics* (Oxford UP, 2017), 462.

⁹ United Nations General Assembly, "The United Nations Global Counterterrorism Strategy," The United Nations, last modified September 20, 2006, accessed December 5, 2021, 5

¹⁰ John Karlsrud, "For the Greater Good?: 'Good States' Turning UN Peacekeeping towards Counterterrorism," *International Journal: Canada's Journal of Global Policy Analysis* 74, no. 1 (March 2019): 66

The expansive mandates and collaboration with multilateral military forces are not successful, but the structures of these missions have failed to change. Each of the four missions I look at has been criticized for some feature or deemed a failure altogether. MONUSCO and MINUSMA are criticized by local citizens for being partial to armed groups and militias in the region, while UNAMA and UNSMIL are criticized for not doing enough to protect civilians and working disjointedly with NATO and US forces.

By researching UNAMA, UNSMIL, MONUSCO, and MINUSMA, I've found that all missions have conflicting goals. The post-Brahimi restructuring of UN missions has been ineffective, but the UN is still implementing these large, overreaching missions that are doomed to fail. The paradox of needing security, but also needing impartiality is an insurmountable issue that the UN should have addressed after the first mission failures. It has not.

Previous Research:

This topic has been discussed previously, most notably by Dennis C. Jett, a professor of International Relations at Penn State and former U.S. Ambassador to Mozambique and Peru. He wrote, *Why Peacekeeping Fails*, in 2000 and discussed the various missions in Somalia, Rwanda, and Bosnia and their subsequent failures. In that edition of his book, he discusses how the limited scope and military capability of PKOs eventually led to their downfall in the 1990s but aided their popularity less than a decade earlier.¹¹ Jett specifically references two important dates to describe this phenomenon: December 11, 1988, and October 1993. On December 11, the UN received the Nobel Peace Prize for its peacekeeping operations. This was seen as the apex of peacekeeping achievement. However, less than five years later, 18 American soldiers were killed

¹¹ Dennis C. Jett, *Why Peacekeeping Fails* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 3.

on a peacekeeping mission to Somalia.¹² The killing of these soldiers showed the stark reality of peacekeeping versus the ideal. Unfortunately, peacekeepers were not able to fulfill the grand goals put in place and expected of them because they were being improperly deployed and constrained to very strict rules of engagement. The Brahimi report was supposed to address the “negative image” that was left after the atrocities in Bosnia and Rwanda and the perceived ineffectiveness of the PKOs in those areas.

However, in the recent edition of his book of the same name Jett describes how this phenomenon has played out with PKOs in the post-Brahimi report era. He writes,

“The main reason the most recently launched peacekeeping missions will fail is because peacekeeping has become a way for rich countries to send the soldiers of poor countries off to deal with the wars the rich countries do not care much about. The fundamental problem is that there is no peace to keep in these conflicts and the soldiers being sent as peacekeepers are incapable of achieving the goals that are being assigned to them”¹³

Jett describes a conundrum in which peacekeepers were unable of accomplishing their mandated goals in the 1980s and the 1990s because they were not given rules of engagement that were broad enough to allow their intervention in these genocides and ethnic cleansings. But, since the Brahimi report, while the missions now have large enough rules of engagement, they are now being sent to places in which peace has not been accomplished, and are given Sisyphean tasks of keeping peace amongst ethnic conflict, terrorism, and global military operations.

Essentially, Jett describes the conflict curve (see Figure 1.1), and attributes many of the peacekeepers’ failures to the fact that they were asked to step into conflict during the crisis

¹² Jett, *Why Peacekeeping*, 3.

¹³ *Ibid*, 20.

management and peacekeeping phases, rather than the peace enforcement and peacekeeping. What this means is that peacekeepers, rather than being used for their original roles of enforcing ceasefires, protecting civilians, etc., are now asked by the wealthy countries to get involved in the conflict, to make peace and stability, rather than enforce and maintain it.

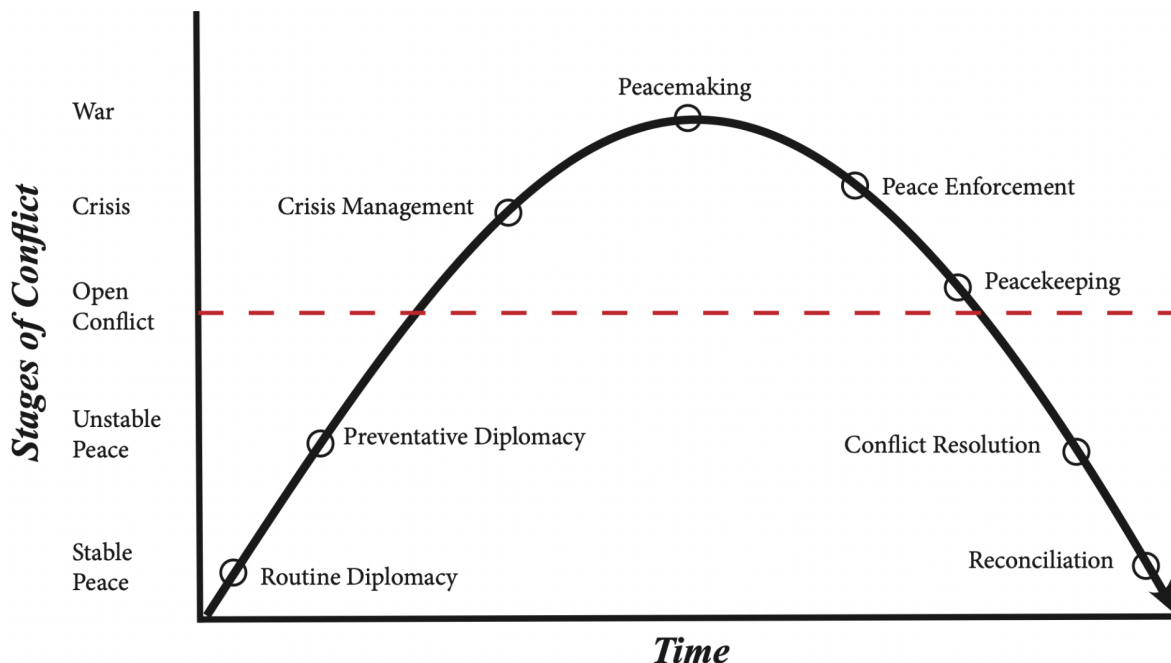


Figure 1.1

Other authors have also voiced concerns about conflicting objectives in UN peacekeeping on a structural level. For example, Duane Bratt, a political science professor at Mount Royal University wrote:

“The UN has two main objectives. The first is to establish and maintain international peace and security. The second is to improve the political, economic, and

social justice of the world's peoples. Although the founders of the UN expected that these two objectives could be reconciled, they have frequently tended to compete."¹⁴

In Bratt's assessment of UN peacekeeping operations, he argues that there is a tension between peace and justice in such a way that peacekeepers not only are asked to build both peace and justice, but also that establishing justice helps the UN with long-term goals, but is also overlooked for short-term 'victories' in peace and security (e.g. saving lives). He describes a common issue that the UN faces as it works to contain present threats and, in doing so, depletes the resources necessary to defeat future threats. Bratt argues that, in order for the UN to restore popularity in all its peacekeeping operations, "the objective of saving lives must take clear priority over attempts to make the world more just. Although we may find that peace can exist without justice, there will never be justice without peace."¹⁵

I agree with both Bratt's and Jett's assessments of peacekeeping missions, and I explain how both analyses of PKO objectives are present in the four missions I explore. Jett's argument of wealthy countries using PKOs as proxy fighters in wars that are unpopular in their own country is present in MINUSMA and MONUSCO. Bratt's description of justice and peace is present in all four missions as international military forces work to dismantle terrorist organizations and stabilizing regions, doing work that Bratt would consider to be "justice-seeking."

That being said, I believe neither Bratt nor Jett go far enough. While PKOs have been unsuccessful since the 1980s, the same tactics of stabilization and using UN missions to do the 'dirty work' of the wealthy countries' interests can also be seen in assistance missions. These missions are explicitly tasked with peacemaking as well as post-conflict peacebuilding and

¹⁴ Duane Bratt, "Peace over Justice: Developing a Framework for UN Peacekeeping Operations in International Conflicts," *Global Governance* 5, no. 1 (January/February 1999): 63, accessed April 27, 2022

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 77-78.

reconciliation, even when the conflicts are far from over. Jett posits that PKOs continue to be so ineffective at preventing violence and mitigating conflict, decades after Rwanda and Bosnia, because they are set up for failure, facing large mandated goals which only benefit wealthy countries, while being under equipped and trained to undertake the responsibility of peacemaking. Bratt explores the tension of justice and peace solely within the structure of UN peacekeeping operations, but does not expand his argument to the forces that the missions collaborate with, or assistance missions.

Methods:

In creating my research design, I wanted to explore the tensions described by Bratt and Jett but through both peacekeeping and assistance missions. While UN peacekeeping work is essential to its foundation and goals, many of the modern UN missions that operate in areas of warfare are assistance missions, or ‘Special Political Missions.’ These missions, rather than structured with the main goal of protecting civilians, have priorities of conflict prevention or supporting peace processes. They are slightly newer, with the first ones being created in 1996. Peacekeeping missions, on the other hand, have been around since 1948 and are supposed to work in the peace enforcement or peace-keeping stage of conflict, ensuring limited violence against civilians in their areas of operation. Because these missions are supposed to be structured differently, it was essential that I chose both assistance missions and peacekeeping missions to get a comprehensive study of all the satellite operations that the UN conducts in areas of conflict.

I chose UNSMIL and UNAMA as my assistance, or special political missions. Operating in Libya and Afghanistan, they were prone to heavy Western-military interference because the US had begun an invasion in Afghanistan with Operation Enduring Freedom and, along with

NATO's support, conducted interventional operations in Libya with Operation Odyssey Dawn. Moreover, both of these missions faced larger repercussions after the UN missions began as both Afghanistan and Libya descended into violence during the missions' tenures. Studying these missions allow me to show the same tension of Western governments' priorities that Jett describes in peacekeeping operations, as well as Bratt's theory of friction between peace and justice objectives in assistance missions.

I also chose the UN peacekeeping missions in Mali and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), I use the same frameworks as both Jett and Bratt in exploring peacekeeping directly, but rather than exploring Western countries' priorities and the tension between peace and justice, I specifically look at counterterrorism. These cases are especially relevant due to their unique structures with counterterrorism forces that are either under the control of the mission or collaborate very closely with it. The UN effort in Mali was partnered with a counterterrorism force created by its neighboring countries (the Joint Force on counterterrorism Group of 5 Sahelian countries) and the UN effort in the DRC has a multilateral military counterterrorism force within the mission, called the Force Intervention Brigade.

In studying MINUSMA, UNSMIL, UNAMA, and MONUSCO, I will use Jett's and Bratt's hypotheses on the failures of peacekeeping. extend those same theories to UN assistance missions and prove that when UN missions collaborate with counterterrorism military interactions, they are doomed to fail.

MINUSMA

Throughout the UN's efforts in Mali, the UN's priorities have slowly turned to stabilization actions with the urging of wealthy Western Democracies and the surrounding

Sahelian countries. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) has provided support for and teamed up with the Joint Force on Counterterrorism by the Group of 5 Sahelian countries (JF-G5S). This force has a bad reputation within Mali, and by engaging with the JF-G5S counterterrorism actions in the name of stabilization, MINUSMA has eroded its impartiality. This erosion has made its goals of enforcing peace agreements and protecting civilians more difficult, as the mission does not have the full trust and support of the local population.

Background:

The conflict in Mali began in January of 2012, when Tuareg (a Malian ethnic group) rebels, who were a part of the Mouvement de libération de l'Azawad (MNLA) joined forces with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and the Ansar Eddine and Mouvement pour l'unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest (MUJAO) to oust the Malian Army from the northern region of the country. This attack and the military's perceived lack of government support eventually led to a coup d'état, which, in turn, harmed the counterterrorism initiatives, as the paralyzed state could not mitigate the attack by the rebel groups in the north.¹⁶ Then, jihadists groups AQIM, MUJAO, and Ansar Eddine hijacked the uprising and subsequently forced their rule over the rebel-conquered northern territories. This later raised concerns about jihadism and the imposition of sharia law. As a result, the UN Security Council (UNSC) voted on Resolution 2085 on December 20, 2012, which approved a counterterrorism force deployment to Mali: the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA).¹⁷ France created its own military intervention, called Operation Serval, which worked in conjunction with the Malian military to

¹⁶ Bruno Charbonneau, "Intervention in Mali: Building Peace between Peacekeeping and Counterterrorism," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 35, no. 4 (August 8, 2017): 417, accessed October 5, 2021

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 417

help defeat Islamic militants in the north. Operation Serval was not a part of the deployment of AFISMA, but the intervention was encouraged by both the UN and the Malian government as a way to provide military, human rights, and humanitarian law training.¹⁸ Operation Serval also worked in conjunction with AFISMA to build Malian Defense Forces' capacity. This operation lasted a year and a half from early 2013 to mid-2014 and laid the groundwork for later military operations.

AFISMA, the UN authorized counterterrorism military force, was also supposed to help train Malian Defense forces and protect civilians.¹⁹ Because Mali had just faced a coup and did not have the military capacity to fight both the rebel groups in the north and terrorist organizations, like Boko Haram and AQIM, the Economic Coalition of West African States, determined that a mission like AFISMA would be prudent in helping build the capacity of Malian Troops. This Economic Coalition was previously tasked with creating a strategic solution for the crisis in Mali.

Shortly after AFISMA's creation, in April 2013, the UNSC voted on Resolution 2100 to establish the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). This resolution transferred the military affairs to MINUSMA from AFISMA, dissolving AFISMA completely.²⁰ This resolution also stated that MINUSMA will consist of 11,200 personnel. Moreover, this resolution stated that one of the mandated goals of MINUSMA is to protect "without prejudice" civilians under imminent threat.²¹ The wording of this mandated

¹⁸ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2085 - the Situation in Mali," United Nations, last modified December 20, 2012, accessed November 22, 2021, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2085>.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ "MINUSMA History," The United Nations, accessed December 10, 2021, <https://minusma.unmissions.org/en/history>.

²¹ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2100 - Mali," United Nations, last modified April 25, 2013, accessed November 22, 2021, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2100>.

goal is significant because it emphasizes the importance of impartiality within the mission so that the peacekeepers can adequately protect any and all civilians caught in the conflict.

Moreover, since 2015, MINUSMA has been focused on enforcing the Algiers Agreement. This agreement was formed between the Malian Government, pro-government forces, and the Coordination of Azawad Movements (an alliance of rebel groups) in 2015 to ensure peace in the country. There were five pillars to the agreement, which addressed: 1) a negotiation framework, 2) how to reorganize Malian states to create a more regionally focused government, 3) how to continue to work towards peace and security in Mali, 4) what the socioeconomic and developmental goals will look like, and 5) how to ensure transitional justice and reconciliation. Mainly, the agreement worked on regionalization in Mali, creating a new national army, and working on economic development in the north. What this means is that certain groups, like the Coordination of Azawad Movements, would gain more control over the northern areas; this division of government would ensure that northern Malians' grievances are heard and can be dealt with through a coordinated effort by the local and national government.²² For the Algiers Agreement to be constituted, each of the signatories must work on internal social and political reforms so that the Coordination of Azawad Movements and the Malian government could collaborate and take action. MINUSMA has been working on enforcing the aspects of the Algiers agreement on the various groups, and impartiality is essential to this goal as well because the UN should work as a mediator in the role of enforcing this agreement.

While the formation of MINUSMA did not pose any issues, the establishment of AFISMA and then MINUSMA shows the rapidly changing nature of the Malian conflict. The

²² "Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali Resulting from the Algiers Process," The United Nations, last modified July 24, 2014, accessed December 10, 2021, https://www.un.org/en/pdfs/EN-ML_150620_Accord-pour-la-paix-et-la-reconciliation-au-Mali_Issu-du-Processus-d%27Alger.pdf.

Malian conflict is a multi-faceted issue as there is both the civil war with the rebel group Azawad movements, and terrorist groups operating in the region, such as Boko Haram, AQIM, and MUJAO. From 2013 onwards, MINUSMA struggled with mitigating the terrorist groups in Mali, which led the G5 Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger) to form a Joint Force to fight terrorism in February 2017, the JF-G5S.²³ The G5S is a coordination framework and began in 2014 as a way to collaborate on counterterrorism operations and the economic development of the region. In practice, this means that the Chiefs of Staff of the five countries' armies collaborate to ensure that their counterterrorism operations are a coordinated effort by the use of the Joint Force G5S (JF-G5S). The UN supported the formation of the JF-G5S with the Resolution 2359 in June of 2017.²⁴ MINUSMA was mainly supposed to support human rights and the protection of civilians, while the JF-G5S was created to:

“(a) combat terrorism, drug trafficking, and human trafficking, with the aim of creating a more secure environment in the Sahel region by eradicating “terrorist armed groups” (TAGs) and organized criminal groups; (b) contribute to the restoration of state authority and the return of displaced persons and refugees; (c) facilitate humanitarian assistance; and (d) assist development efforts.”²⁵

Seeing the contribution of stability to Mali by the JF-G5S, which, in turn, helped fulfill MINUSMA's mandate, the UNSC asked MINUSMA to provide additional support to the JF-G5S in Mali until the force could become self-sustaining.²⁶ This also resulted in the JF-G5S being temporarily stationed at the MINUSMA headquarters from the creation of the force in 2017 until

²³ van der Lijn, Jaïr, editor. *Assessing the Effectiveness of the United Nations Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)*. Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2019. 8, Accessed 22 Nov.. 2021.

²⁴ "G5 Sahel Joint Force and the Sahel Alliance," France Diplomacy, accessed December 10, 2021, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/security-disarmament-and-non-proliferation/crises-and-conflicts/g5-sahel-joint-force-and-the-sahel-alliance/>.

²⁵ AU Peace and Security Council, Communiqué, 679th meeting, PSC/PR/COMM (DCLXXIX), 13 April 2017.

²⁶ van der Lijn, Jaïr, *Assessing the Effectiveness*, 12

June 2020.²⁷ Later in the cooperation, parts of MINUSMA collaborated with JF-G5S in intelligence gathering and information sharing. This intelligence collaboration shows the extent to which MINUSMA and the JF-G5S were working together. Because of their close collaboration, it is difficult for the local populations to discern what actions are conducted by MINUSMA and which ones are conducted by the JF-G5S. Therefore, when the JF-G5S takes sides and is partial to conflict to meet its own goals, it reflects badly upon MINUSMA, especially with regards to impartiality.

The JF-G5S were supposed to conduct counterterrorism operations while MINUSMA could focus on protection of civilians. However, the collaboration created an impossible paradox, as MINUSMA is no longer able to solely return to political tasks, as it “may risk further destabilization of the country and potentially the whole Sahel-West African region.”²⁸ At the same time, working with the JF-G5S sullies MINUSMA’s reputation and makes its job more difficult as civilians no longer trust the mission to protect them because of its fraught history with local militias. The JF-G5S essentially subcontracts the militias so that they work in conjunction with the multilateral force to fight terrorist groups in the region. This collaboration has been documented as unpopular by large surveys of the population, which I will discuss in detail in the next section. Because there is also an ethnic conflict in northern Mali between these various ethnic militias, when the JF-G5S works with a militia for counterterrorism purposes, many view that collaboration as the JF-G5S picking sides.

²⁷ "A New Command Post for G5S JF," European Union Training Mission Mali, last modified June 5, 2020, accessed December 10, 2021, <https://eutmmali.eu/a-new-command-post-for-g5s-jf/>.

²⁸ van der Lijn, Jair, *Assessing the Effectiveness*, 11

Why the JF-G5S has made MINUSMA's job more difficult:

While the JF-G5S should, in theory, make MINUSMA's job easier as it provides more stability in the area, that has not been the case because the counter-terrorism efforts have "fueled local conflicts,"²⁹ and eroded MINUSMA's reputation of impartiality. The JF-G5S itself has a "poor human rights and governance record" and has used "ethnic proxy militias who are responsible for committing atrocities against the civilian population."³⁰ Niger and its forces, specifically, use Tuareg and Doosaak militias to combat jihadist groups.³¹ These militias were created out of self-defense against these jihadist groups, and have been involved in cycles of intercommunal violence, significantly resulting in 40 killed in May 2016 with ethnic violence between the Bambara and Fulani militias,³² and the 23 March 2019 Ogossagou massacre, which killed 160 Fulani people.³³ These massacres, involvement in intercommunal violence, and usage of ethnic militias directly involved the JF-G5S in the conflict. Because MINUSMA has worked so closely with the JF-G5S, it is also involved in the conflict by proxy, or, at the very least, it is viewed by local populations to be involved. This involvement erodes the mission's impartiality as it is seen as being party to the conflict and, therefore, can not be an unprejudiced bystander and peace-enforcer.

Moreover, The JF-G5S and French military operations have also ostracized the Tuareg population, as there is a sentiment that these militaries see all Tuaregs as supporting the rebel group, MNLA, when this is not the case.³⁴ This also reflects poorly on MINUSMA as the

²⁹ van der Lijn, Jaïr *Assessing the Effectiveness*. 9.

³⁰ Ibid. 9.

³¹ International Crisis Group, *Niger Clash Kills U.S. and Nigerien Troops*, October 5, 2017, accessed April 28, 2022, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/niger/niger-clash-kills-us-and-nigerien-troops>.

³² *Central Mali: An Uprising in the Making?*, report no. 238, July 6, 2016, accessed December 6, 2021, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/mali/central-mali-uprising-making>.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Andrew Harding, "Mali's road ahead: Reprisal fears and desert warfare," The BBC, last modified January 26, 2013, accessed April 28, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-21200668>.

mission is considered to have a preconceived view of local populations, and, therefore, can not be neutral. Consequently, the JF-G5S is a horrendous partner for MINUSMA as it further endangers the civilians that MINUSMA was mandated to protect. The counterterrorism efforts have been especially harmful in ethnic conflicts in northern Mali.

Furthermore, multilateral state actors like the US, NATO, or the EU often see the conflict through a narrow lens, characterized by the 'war on terror.' Dennis Jett's description of UN Missions failing due to the priorities of wealthy Western Democracies can be seen here. These countries usually work towards peace only so that they can ensure their own national security and economic interests, rather than protecting Sahelian citizens. For example, French Operation Serval (January 2013 - July 2014) was, and, later, Operation Barkhane (August 2014 - Present day) is fully focused on counterterrorism. The French intervention, while it was supported by the UN, was meant to prevent Mali from becoming a safe haven for terrorist organizations, especially those who might target France and Europe. Therefore, these Western-backed counterterrorism containment strategies "[undermine and challenge] any sort of thinking about the 'root causes of conflict.'" Because these forces are so singularly focused on counterterrorism and national security, they "[create] little to no incentive to debate the forms that Malian peace, state sovereignty, and nation should take. Under conditions of regional counterterrorism war, the bases of legitimate state violence and authority are shifting, increasingly unstable, contested, and not where they are supposed to be."³⁵

The convoluted security issues in Mali and the UN's failed multilateral response have made MINUSMA the "deadliest of all current UN peace operations." The question is still being asked as to whether or not MINUSMA should have a renewed mandate so that they have the

³⁵ Charbonneau, "Intervention in Mali," 416.

purview to fight terrorists, or whether counterterrorism is beyond the scope and capabilities that UN missions can realistically face.³⁶

MINUSMA's Failures:

The joining of the JF-G5S has led to MINUSMA's failure. As I've mentioned, because Western actors were more concerned with their own national security interests than establishing a peace agreement between the warring factions, MINUSMA is potentially a failed mission. With the French interventions and the JF-G5S, the international support in Mali has been primarily focused on counterterrorism. Instead of focusing solely on peacekeeping, the mission has become directly involved in the conflict because it collaborated with the JF-G5S, which has led to local populations considering the mission as partial and biased.

Since the collaboration between MINUSMA and multilateral counterterrorism operations set a precedent, the UN took a "discursive turn towards stabilization, counterinsurgency, and counterterrorism in the debate on how UN peacekeeping should be reformed to be relevant to future needs of member states."³⁷ In particular, Western and African states have stressed that UN PKOs should break from the fundamental assumption of impartiality, and instead turn towards stability and counterterrorism. These nations have used MINUSMA as an example in support of this vision, citing the challenges that MINUSMA specifically faces. However, this is an impossible direction to take. Part of what makes UN peacekeeping missions successful is that they are impartial. Impartiality is vital to gaining the trust of civilians in the affected state so that the UN can work closely with locals to ensure civilian protection. Furthermore, UN missions have been unpopular not only for joining with outside forces but also because "blue helmets are

³⁶ Charbonneau, "Intervention in Mali," 416.

³⁷ Karlsrud, "For the Greater," 73.

deemed unable to prevent massacres or protect victims and are suspected of spreading diseases.”³⁸

The widespread decrease of MINUSMA’s legitimacy and credibility are well documented. Every year the Mali Metre Survey is conducted and it has recently documented public outrage of the mission. This outrage is exacerbated by the fact that few Malians know what the mandated goals of the mission are; 24.7% of the respondents to the 2018 survey mention MINUSMA’s failure to combat Islamic militants in the region, even though counterterrorism was never a mandated goal of MINUSMA.³⁹ The mission’s main goal is to support the implementation of the Algiers Agreement. This goal has been communicated ineffectively, and further muddled by the cooperation of MINUSMA with counterterrorism operations. In addition, because of the various complexities added with the JF-G5S, 33.7% of the respondents of the survey “criticized MINUSMA for being an accomplice to armed groups.”⁴⁰ This criticism could be due to general malice towards the ethnic militias and their inter-communal conflicts, but the negative public opinion is most likely aggravated by the 2016 intercommunal violence that killed 40 people.

MINUSMA has also failed in supporting the implementation of the Algiers Agreement. Because MINUSMA was entrusted with mediating the peace process and ensuring the implementation of the result, the mission needs to interact with all signatories. Some groups and civilians have shown outrage at the mission's interaction with violent groups as they “see such interaction as condoning the actions of those groups,”⁴¹ which is a direct result of MINUSMA’s close collaboration with the JF-G5S. In essence, many Malians see MINUSMA as a mission that

³⁸ Bergamaschi, Isaline. "MINUSMA: initial steps, achievements and challenges." *Norwegian Peacebuilding Research Center*, Sept. 2013, 3.

³⁹ van der Lijn, Jaïr, *Assessing the Effectiveness*. 237

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 238

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 239.

picks sides and is privy to violent armed groups, working with them. The negative perceptions of MINUSMA by Malians hinder MINUSMA's ability to be an impartial actor who can implement peace agreements, protect civilians, and apply pressure on various groups so that they institute reforms.

Overall, MINUSMA's credibility and legitimacy have been highly dependent on the ability of the mission to help stabilize Mali and continue peace reforms. Because MINUSMA partnered with the JF-G5S, which has an unfavorable record of working with armed groups and protecting human rights, the authority of MINUSMA to enforce peace agreements and protect civilians as a neutral observer has been greatly harmed because they have lost the trust of local civilian populations due to their reputation as a partial actor within the conflict. This has been shown again by the Mali Metre surveys: "Overall, 59% of the respondents to the 2018 Mali Metre survey do not think the Mission is effective when it comes to protecting the Malian population against the violence of armed and terrorist groups, which has been the main point of criticism since 2016."⁴²

The Mali Metre polls show that public opinion of MINUSMA dropped considerably during the time in which it partnered with the JF-G5S. For example, in 2015, respondents said that "MINUSMA was about the protection of civilians (70%)."⁴³ This fell in 2019 when only 17.5% of the respondents said they knew MINUSMA's renewed mandate was for the protection of the population."⁴⁴ The drop could be in response to the Ogossagou massacre in early 2019. The main criticism stayed the same: in 2015, 51.8% of those surveyed criticized the mission for "not protecting the populations against the violence of armed groups and terrorists,"⁴⁵ which was

⁴² van der Lijn, Jair, *Assessing the Effectiveness*. 244

⁴³ Mali Metre. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 30 Dec. 2015. Mali Metre 7.

⁴⁴ Mali Metre XI. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 26 Nov. 2019. Mali Metre XI.

⁴⁵ Mali Metre VII. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 30 Dec. 2015. Mali Metre 7.

the same in 2019, with 54.1% of respondents voicing this same critique. More alarming is the other criticisms. In 2015, 39.1% denounced MINUSMA for “being an accomplice of armed groups,” followed by other criticisms, like “contribute to the high cost of living (23.8%),” “A mandate that is not sufficiently known (27.7%),” and “respond very slowly to the challenges of stabilization of the country (20.1%).”⁴⁶

The negative views observed in Mali Metre escalated after the joining of MINUSMA and the JF-G5S. While the two most common critiques are the same, the less prominent ones are more negative. For example, in 2019, 77.9% of the respondents said they were not satisfied with the work of MINUSMA, with 60.3% saying they were “very dissatisfied and 17.6% saying they were somewhat dissatisfied.”⁴⁷ Only 2% said they were very satisfied. Moreover, the surveyed citizens complained that MINUSMA did not protect the people against the violence of armed groups and terrorists (54.1%), that MINUSMA is an accomplice of armed groups (34.4%), that the mission only protects itself (25.2%), and that they are in Mali for its own benefit (20%). 43% also said that the mission “must leave Mali.”⁴⁸

While public opinion polls only paint one portion of a complicated picture, they show an important trend, namely that MINUSMA is hated by the Malian people. While MINUSMA has faced some successes -- MINUSMA oversaw the presidential elections, which were “generally deemed to be free and fair, and held under calm conditions, with no major security incident reported. Approximately 48% of registered voters participated in the elections, the highest turnout in Mali since 2002”⁴⁹ -- the goal of the mission to protect civilians has been unmet.

⁴⁶ Mali Metre 7

⁴⁷ Mali Metre XI

⁴⁸ Mali Metre XI

⁴⁹ Lotze, Walter. "United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)." Oxford Handbooks Online, 2 Oct. 2014. Oxford Journals, 9.

Because MINUSMA was created post-Brahimi report, the mission has increasingly expanded its mandated goals and rules of engagement to account for counterterrorism threats and the emphasis of counterterrorism by wealthy Western Democracies. At the beginning of MINUSMA's mandate, its goals were stabilization, promotion of electoral reforms and processes, protection of civilians and UN personnel, promotion of human rights, supporting humanitarian assistance, supporting cultural preservation, and supporting national and international justice.⁵⁰ These goals have become more difficult to accomplish as the mission has worked more with attempting to stabilize the country than keeping peace. As the mission has ventured more towards using military force to stabilize the country, including assisting the JF-G5S, the reputation of the mission has been greatly harmed, creating an environment in which the very same people who are supposed to help protect civilians are not trusted, and actively despised. MINUSMA's collaboration with various military forces and its large goals have doomed the mission to failure. The JF-G5S military forces have bad track records and create a reputation of partiality for the mission, which then hinders its ability to protect civilians. Moreover, rather than enforcing the peace agreement in a small area, because MINUSMA has so many goals, such goals can, at times, contradict one another, making the mission face multiple impossible tasks. In essence, by engaging in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency, MINUSMA was doomed to fail as it could not both engage in stabilization while still being an impartial and trustworthy actor in its work to enforce peace agreements and protect civilians

UNSMIL

The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) was formed in response to the Libyan Civil War and relied on NATO and the EU to provide military force to ensure stability

⁵⁰ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2100," United Nations.

and civilian protection. These forces were provided on the basis of the R2P (Responsibility to Protect Doctrine). While these forces were effective in the First Civil War, NATO and the EU failed to provide any military force during the Second Civil War, essentially dismantling UNSMIL, which was structured to rely on these forces. The institutional incentives of NATO and the EU did not match those of UNSMIL, sinking the mission and harming the R2P Doctrine.

Background:

The Libyan Civil War began in 2011 as part of the Arab Spring. Anti-Qadhafi Protesters clashed with security forces on February 15th, 2011, which eventually led to a war between pro and anti-Qadhafi forces. The UN first took rudimentary actions, freezing Qadhafi's assets on February 26th because he repressed civilians. Later, after the protests devolved into a widespread uprising, a multilateral military force was created to protect Libyan civilians, and UNSMIL was established to help with a political transition after Qadhafi's death and the rebel groups' victory in the war. However, despite the international intervention, factional violence continued and eventually led to a Second Civil War in 2014.

The UNSC passed Resolution 1973 on March 17, 2011, "which gave authorization to use 'all necessary measures' to protect civilians and civilian-populated areas. Thereafter, a US-led multinational coalition launched Operation Odyssey Dawn."⁵¹ Resolution 1973 uses the R2P doctrine to ask UN member states to protect Libyan civilians. It was enacted due to the violence of Qadhafi's forces. Operation Odyssey Dawn was created to provide support to Anti-Qadhafi forces, at the very beginning of the Civil war, from March 13-31 2011.⁵² During this time, the US

⁵¹Anna Molnár, Ivett Szász, and Lili Takács, "Security Sector Reform by Intergovernmental Organizations in Libya," *International Journal of Euro-Mediterranean Studies* 14, no. 3 (2021): accessed November 5, 2021, 21.

⁵²"NATO and Libya," NATO, last modified November 9, 2015, accessed December 11, 2021, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_71652.htm.

established an UN-sanctioned no-fly zone over Libya and conducted airstrikes on various Libyan weapon assets, including anti-aircraft artillery and tanks. Later, on March 23rd the US military began to transfer authority to a NATO force, called Operation Unified Protector, which upheld the no-fly zone and ended with the ending of the war in October 2011.⁵³ The US involvement was harmonious with its larger goals of counterterrorism and stability.

The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Libya was formed on September 16, 2011, in response to the ending of the First Libyan Civil War. Because UNSMIL is a political assistance and support mission, rather than a PKO, the goals of UNSMIL mainly focused on assisting a political transition from Qaddafi to democracy, rather than purely focusing on civilian protection. UNSMIL's specific mandated goals were: to restore public security and promote the rule of law, undertake political dialogue including all actors, promote human rights, initiate economic recovery, and coordinate support from multilateral actors.⁵⁴

Moreover, in January 2012, to further support multilateral stabilization efforts, the UN deployed its Security Sector Reform (SSR) unit. This unit was intended to support the UNSMIL's goal of coordinating international assistance and peacekeeping. Security sector reform is a niche part of the UN's peacekeeping and assistance operations. The UN believes that "Delivering security to its people is the sovereign right and responsibility of any government,"⁵⁵ but also understands that many transitioning governments do not have the necessary bureaucratic infrastructure to provide this security, like a functioning police force. By supplying a SSR Unit, the UN wanted to stabilize the region so that UNSMIL could achieve "constitutional, judicial, electoral, and social security progress."⁵⁶ The UN firmly believes that SSR is not only essential

⁵³ NATO and Libya," NATO.

⁵⁴ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2009," The United Nations, last modified September 16, 2011, accessed December 3, 2021, [https://www.undocs.org/S/RES/2009%20\(2011\)](https://www.undocs.org/S/RES/2009%20(2011)).

⁵⁵ "SECURITY SECTOR REFORM," United Nations Peacekeeping, accessed December 11, 2021, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/security-sector-reform>.

⁵⁶United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2009," The United Nations.

for helping protect civilians but is an integral part of developmental goals. UNSMIL is substantially smaller than the mission in Mali, with 233 troops, compared to Mali's 13,000, but they have SSR units to aid in upholding ceasefire agreements and implementing defense provisions. Both missions face similar problems, as Western nations have prioritized ensuring their own national security interests are met, with less emphasis on aiming for the benefit of the country their forces are stationed in. In UNSMIL, the SSR unit is especially significant as it encompasses more of the mission because of the mission's small size.

While UNSMIL and MINUSMA are structured very differently, they share the "objective to help restore state authority across national territory. As of 2019, the mandates of both UNSMIL and MINUSMA explicitly frame this objective in terms of stabilization, or support thereof."⁵⁷ What this means in practice is that UNSMIL faces a similar issue to MINUSMA where it is seen by locals as "pretending impartiality while in reality flanking the government and promoting its agenda."⁵⁸ Essentially, the goals of stabilization and security are not the issues. The issues that plague both UNSMIL and MINUSMA are the actions that military forces do or do not take in the name of stabilization and security. UNSMIL's structure and reliance on NATO and EU military forces made the mission vulnerable to being left without necessary resources. Consequently, UNSMIL is dealing with the consequences of its structural failures after these wealthy Western democracies pulled their forces after the costs of intervention outweighed the benefits of providing security and stability to Libya.

⁵⁷ Raineri, Luca, and Francesco Strazzari. "(B)ordering Hybrid Security? EU Stabilization Practices in the Sahara-Sahel Region." *Ethnopolitics* 18, no. 5 (August 2019): 546.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 546

How International Forces Failed to Help UNSMIL:

The international military intervention did not succeed in stabilizing Libya, as there was a second civil war only a few years after the first. The start of the Second Libyan Civil War in 2014 showed that UNSMIL had failed in its goals of restoring public security and creating a dialogue between all factions. UNSMIL's failure was linked to military intervention, as the mission relied only on international actors to provide military deterrence to armed groups. The 236 people at UNSMIL include 233 troops, and 3 experts on the mission.⁵⁹ The small number of soldiers were clearly not enough to provide a substantial deterrent to factional violence, which is why the UN relied on international intervention for stability, rather than its own troops, leading to its structural problems with competing incentives for intervention. The UN was not in favor of deploying its troops because they believed that NATO forces had more capacity to protect civilians, with the backing of R2P.

While MINUSMA faced issues because it collaborated with international forces and gained an unfavorable reputation because of those forces, UNSMIL's main criticism is that the mission did not do enough, echoing the widespread condemnation of UN missions in the 1990s. NATO intervened militarily in 2011 and promptly left Libya without any real plan for state-building. The EU later deployed its own forces, which would focus on border security and monitoring immigration that was bleeding into European nations, but this force was less influential than NATO's forces. In both the NATO and the EU forces, the countries intervened selfishly, trying to prevent an immigration crisis, rather than focusing on the longer-term goals of state-building. The NATO and EU forces essentially aimed to create stabilization without the

⁵⁹ *Contribution of Uniformed Personnel to UN by Country, Mission, and Personnel Type*, October 31, 2021, accessed December 11, 2021, https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/03_country_and_mission_43_oct_2021.pdf.

institutions, state-building, and infrastructure to support it. As a consequence, the stabilization objectives failed, as Libya descended into the Second Civil War.

NATO's withdrawal and subsequent power-vacuum were the biggest obstacles facing UNSMIL. Critics of UNSMIL agreed that there were two obstacles to the UN's SSR initiative:

“The first is that every time a major armed conflict burst out in the country UNSMIL refuses to use military power, except once, in the beginning of the conflict...the second obstacle is that the UNSC passed numerous resolutions and statements regarding the SSR in Libya which cover almost every programme in the field of development and security. This is due to the UN's comprehensive approach.”⁶⁰

The UN deployed UNSMIL with very specific goals of state-building and relied on forces like NATO and the EUBAM (EU border force) for the military aspect of the mission. When those forces pulled out of Libya, the UN was left with a very small mission and still expected to accomplish lofty goals without the necessary military power.

Even with the NATO intervention, Western states were wary of intervening and advocated that their role should be small, yet supportive of the Libyan-led transition. This potentially explains why there was no intervention in the Second Civil War. Unlike MINUSMA and the French support of international intervention, in Libya the fear of intervention was, in part, in respect to Libyans, who Western diplomats feared were “hostile to outside interference in their transition.”⁶¹ Primarily, the issue that international intervention brought UNSMIL was the lack of long-sighted forethought and planning, which was a direct result of the competing incentives in Libyan intervention between Western Democracies and the UN. While NATO and

⁶⁰ Molnár, Szász, and Takács, "Security Sector," 35

⁶¹ Mieczysław P. Boduszyński, "The External Dimension of Libya's Troubled Transition: The International Community and 'democratic Knowledge' Transfer," *The Journal of North African Studies* 20, no. 5 (October 20, 2015): 742.

the EU were eager to intervene to promote human rights and prevent a large influx of immigrants into Europe, the long-term state-building forces needed by UNSMIL were not provided.

UNSMIL relied on Western interventionary forces for its military needs but was left dry when the immediate goals of these Western nations had been accomplished. The UN had designed UNSMIL to be small, in part, because they had expected to rely on international intervention.

Because the new interim government was not able to control rebel groups, the rhetorical commitments of NATO and the EU failed to manifest concretely. Therefore, state-building and democratization processes halted.⁶² UNSMIL was left with a gordian-knot of a task: state-building without the military power needed to do so.

UNSMIL's Failures and Successes:

While UNSMIL has some small successes,⁶³ for the most part, in the aftermath of the international intervention, the mission was a failure. The collaboration with NATO and subsequent power vacuum created a fragile, unstable nation with a transitional government hindered by the authoritarian history of Libya and the lack of civil society. In 2014, the security situation, which UNSMIL was supposed to help improve, had deteriorated so much that “the UN decided to evacuate all its international personnel to Tunisia.”⁶⁴ Because UNSMIL did not have the capacity to stabilize Libya with a mission force of just over 200 personnel, and the international forces had left without a plan to manage the weapons they had left behind, the situation in 2014 worsened quickly.

Furthermore, Libyans themselves became more cynical about international intervention:

⁶² Molnár, Szâszi, and Takács, "Security Sector," 16

⁶³ Ferraro, Giulia. "Prospects for Improvement in Peacebuilding: The Choice for Cooperation and Coordination." *Information & Security: An International Journal* 48 (2021): 178.

⁶⁴ Molnár, Szâszi, and Takács, "Security Sector," 25

“A survey of commentary on Facebook in response to joint Western communiqués calling for political dialogue and an end to violence in the summer of 2014 reveals deep divisions in opinion about outside involvement. Some Libyan commentators lament the inability of Western countries to stop the violence, and beg for more engagement, while others blast the West for unwarranted interference in Libya’s internal affairs”⁶⁵

This shows a similar issue as that faced by MINUSMA where there is a lack of communication of UNSMIL’s responsibilities. Because international intervention had dissipated so quickly the prospect of intervention became unpopular as Libyans were not able to see how previous interventions helped the situation -- in fact, because of the Second Civil War, the interventions likely made the stability in the state worse.

Perhaps, most alarmingly, the biggest criticism of this international intervention in Libya is how it eroded the R2P Doctrine. All the UNSC resolutions surrounding UNSMIL and military intervention in Libya were “adopted on the premise that the international community has a moral responsibility to protect civilians.”⁶⁶ While NATO used R2P as a justification for intervening during the First Libyan Civil War, the country faced very real and dangerous threats to its existence in the Second as well, but no international military intervention was taken. Moreover, “one of the biggest limitations of NATO's intervention is the lack of a post-conflict mission in Libya, which is in contrast with the original formulation of the R2P concept.”⁶⁷ The international intervention is also seen as harmful to R2P because Libya after the intervention was “swiftly moving towards renewed conflict and chaos and the UNSMIL encountered continued obstruction

⁶⁵ Boduszyński, "The External," 749

⁶⁶ Sawani, Youssef Mohammad. "Security Sector Reform, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Militias: The Challenges for State Building in Libya." *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 10, no. 2 (April 1, 2017): 179.

⁶⁷ Molnár, Szász, and Takács, "Security Sector," 22.

and frustration, neither the UN nor the powers that had intervened in Libya in 2011 were ready or willing to fulfill their moral responsibility and reconsider the developing situation in light of post-revolt realities.”⁶⁸ Essentially, the inconsistency of military intervention when applying the R2P doctrine risked invalidating the entirety of the doctrine altogether.

UNSMIL recently has been somewhat more successful, in part because it no longer uses international forces like NATO to conduct stabilization. The mission has been more focused on enforcing a ceasefire and coordinating peace talks and aid than stabilization. The Second Civil War lasted from 2014-2020, it ended when a ceasefire was negotiated between the Libyan army and warring rebel groups. In the short-term aftermath of the international intervention, ceasefires were unsuccessful, including the Skhirat agreement, which was signed by all actors in the conflict. While this agreement was substantial, it was declared void by General Khalifa Haftar of the Libyan National Army, a major actor in the conflict, in 2017. Various ceasefires, conferences, and agreements ensued between the various groups, but the 2019 Salamé three-point peace plan is the current one that has a chance of fully ending the conflict. The first part of the three-point plan is the ceasefire, then a meeting of all international actors who have been involved in Libya, and then the last part is a discussion between influential people across Libya.⁶⁹ Currently, Libya is planning on holding elections in June 2022. The elections were postponed from December 2018 to December 2021, and again to June. The full failure or success of UNSMIL will be seen in the aftermath of these elections.

UNSMIL, in a way, faces the exact opposite issue of MINUSMA, but they both stem from the same overarching problems. In MINUSMA, Western and African countries pushed the

⁶⁸ Sawani, "Security Sector," 178.

⁶⁹ Ghassan Salame, "The Situation in Libya," address presented at The United Nations Security Council, New York, City, July 29, 2019, United Nations Security Mission in Libya, last modified July 29, 2019, accessed December 11, 2021,

mission towards including counterterrorism in its mandate. France and the G5S were active in encouraging counterterrorism because combatting AQIM, among others, was important to their national security interests. With UNSMIL, NATO and the EU intervened in Libya because it was prudent to their own national security interests. Jumping on the political opportunity provided by the 2011 protests and subsequent uprising, NATO decided to intervene for a plethora of reasons: many nations cited the R2P doctrine (responsibility to protect) and the need for countries to protect Libyans against Qadhafi's onslaught. However, these decisions were also influenced by Qadhafi's intense authoritarianism and constant anti-Western rhetoric.

With MINUSMA, the JF-G5S is a corrupt force that faces many issues because of its misconduct. In other words, MINUSMA's collaboration with the JF-G5S was detrimental because MINUSMA was trying to accomplish too much, in terms of stabilization. With UNSMIL, the forces themselves were effective when they intervened, but they pulled out too quickly, leading to an absolute collapse in 2014. In this case, UNSMIL was also trying to accomplish too much but simply did not have the resources, rather than having tainted resources. Moreover, UNSMIL later developed the same issues as MINUSMA as "international actors often hired these very militias [Libyan rebel militias] to provide security."⁷⁰ The hiring of these militias emboldened them and later led to further state fragmentation.

UNAMA

During the UN's involvement in Afghanistan, the mission faced intense contention with wealthy Western democracies as these countries and the UN worked to further their own goals within Afghanistan. Through the creation of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the UN worked with these countries to provide the military power necessary to enforce peace

⁷⁰ Boduszyński, "The External," 742

agreements and ensure stability. However, because the UN and each country involved in the ISAF had conflicting incentives, UNAMA's failure was characterized by disorganized, competing and fragmented efforts to stabilize and build democracy in Afghanistan.

Background:

The United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) was established by UNSC Resolution 1401 on March 28, 2002, to help implement the Bonn agreement. The Bonn agreement was a peace talk process by different factions of the Afghanistan conflict with the goal of creating permanent government institutions. The Bonn Agreement created a five-step process that worked to create an Interim Authority, a Transitional Administration, an emergency Loya Jirga (an assembly of leaders), and to ask for international assistance in training new Afghan Security forces.⁷¹ The Interim Authority was asked to act as the government of Afghanistan, with Hamid Karzai chosen to be the chairman of the Afghanistan Interim Authority and sworn in on December 22, 2001. Later, there was an emergency Loya Jirga, which is a large legal assembly of Afghan leaders who were tasked with choosing a new President of Afghanistan and cabinet members of the Transitional Administration, on June 11, 2002. Karzai was, again, chosen as the leader of the Transitional Administration during this assembly.

UNAMA was tasked with helping institute the Bonn Agreement, by the “development of a sustainable nationwide political system; and relief, recovery and reconstruction work aiming to address both short-term humanitarian needs and long-term socioeconomic development.”⁷² In essence, UNAMA was tasked with the same coordination of international forces and

⁷¹ United Nations Security Council, "Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan," The United Nations, last modified December 5, 2001, accessed December 12, 2021, https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/AF_011205_AgreementProvisionalArrangementsinAfghanistan%28en%29.pdf.

⁷² Cottey, Andrew. "Afghanistan and the new dynamics of intervention: counter-terrorism and nation building." SIPRI Yearbook 2003, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2003. 189

international aid as UNSMIL was. The mission acted as the “primary coordinating mechanism for the targeting and distribution of international aid to Afghanistan,”⁷³ which became substantially more difficult as the US occupation of Afghanistan drew on.

UNAMA faced the same structural issues as UNSMIL and MINUSMA, as it was tasked with providing stabilization to a very complicated nation in conflict. The Secretary General’s 2002 Report on the security situation of Afghanistan laid out the mandated goals; UNAMA was responsible for ensuring the Bonn Agreement was being followed, especially concerning gender issues and human rights. The mission also was mandated to promote “national reconciliation and rapprochement throughout the country” and to manage “all United Nations humanitarian relief, recovery and reconstruction activities in Afghanistan.”⁷⁴

Furthermore, in managing humanitarian relief and stability in the region, UNAMA, from its creation in 2002, worked with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). The ISAF was created by UNSC Resolution 1386 on December 20, 2001, and was intended to help assist in the implementation of the Bonn Agreement by working with the Afghanistan Interim Authority to create a stable environment in which the UN and Afghanistan Interim Authority could conduct business safely. About half of the ISAF troops were contributed by the US, even though the US did not support the formation of the ISAF at the time.⁷⁵

Because the creation of UNAMA was in response to the US’s invasion of Afghanistan, there was a consensus at the start of the mission “that a more limited force should be deployed, at a minimum, to help maintain order in Kabul and support the new Afghan Government.”⁷⁶

⁷³ Cottey, "Afghanistan and the new dynamics," 190

⁷⁴ United Nations Secretary General, "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security," The United Nations, last modified March 18, 2002, accessed December 4, 2021, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Afgh%20S2002%20278.pdf>.

⁷⁵ Iselin Hebbert Larsen, *UNAMA in Afghanistan*, report no. 3 (n.p.: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2010), 22.

⁷⁶ Cottey, "Afghanistan and the new dynamics," 186.

UNAMA was also created as a smaller mission as they believed having a “light footprint” by international forces would help foster Afghan sovereignty and ensure that the peacebuilding processes would be locally led.⁷⁷ This idea of a smaller mission was, again, due to the failures of UN peacekeeping in places like East Timor (9,000 troops) and Bosnia (60,000 troops), where having more boots on the ground did not equate to stopping ethnic cleansing and civilian deaths.⁷⁸

The ISAF, at least at the beginning of the conflict, was successful in contributing to the stability in Kabul, and the force had established a good relationship with the Transitional Administration. Moreover, ISAF worked in conjunction with the Afghanistan Interim Authority in providing a secure environment for the Loya Jirga in 2002. In addition, the ISAF did great work in confiscating weapons, including over 175,000 unguided missiles, mines, and anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles.⁷⁹ Perhaps more importantly, the ISAF was successful in creating a good relationship with the local population during this time as well, with 78% of Afghans supporting the US and international forces in 2005.⁸⁰

How ISAF Made UNAMA's Job More Difficult:

The US's invasion of Afghanistan and UNAMA's interaction with US forces fatally flawed the mission from its conception. For example, the Bonn Agreement, which UNAMA was supposed to enforce, left out key actors in the conflict in Afghanistan. For example, the Taliban, Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin, and the Haqqani Network were all excluded from the Bonn Agreement

⁷⁷ Larsen, *UNAMA in Afghanistan*, 11.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 12

⁷⁹ Cottey, "Afghanistan and the new dynamics," 188.

⁸⁰ Langer Research Associates, "Attitudes Towards the U.S.," infographic, ABC News, accessed December 12, 2021, <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/Afghanistan/photos/afghanistan-poll-charts-things-stand-12294783/image-12303318>.

negotiations. This is likely because, in the aftermath of 9/11, to include these groups, which the UN categorized as “terrorists” was unthinkable.⁸¹ Moreover, similarly to UNSMIL, the US forces and the ISAF did not focus on long-term development. These clashing focuses are emblematic of the direct tension between the UN and Western governments during the intervention in Afghanistan. This tension would, ultimately, lead to the downfall of UNAMA.

Even though the first years of UNAMA and ISAF were characterized by successful stabilization, as the mission continued, issues arose. For example, the Northern Alliance leaders were against a peacekeeping force,⁸² and collaboration with the ISAF eroded the relationship between UNAMA and some signatories of the Bonn Agreement. Moreover, ISAF started to clash with the counterterrorism and counterinsurgency aims of Operation Enduring Freedom, a US military operation. This disagreement led to further strain with UNAMA, as one of the mission’s mandated goals was coordinating military efforts. However, without a singular military voice due to the international nature of the ISAF and the many militaries conducting operations in Afghanistan, the disagreement made UNAMA’s ability to complete its mandated goals more difficult.⁸³ Moreover, the ISAF had a fraught relationship with UNAMA as they criticized the mission as being “too weak to deliver on the civilian side of counterinsurgency,” to which UNAMA responded that ISAF did not understand the mission and its capabilities.⁸⁴ The tension between the ISAF and UNAMA is significant because they were created to work in conjunction with each other in stabilizing the country and overseeing peace processes. The tension and subsequent lack of coordination made UNAMA’s job all the more difficult.

⁸¹ Larsen, *UNAMA in Afghanistan*, 12.

⁸² Cottey, "Afghanistan and the new dynamics," 188

⁸³ Larsen, *UNAMA in Afghanistan*, 12.

⁸⁴ *Ibid* 30.

Consequently, UNAMA faced many of the same implications as UNSMIL and MINUSMA. The objectives of the US and its allies were often at odds with UN objectives. Thus, there was intense internal conflict within ISAF. The ISAF was more focused on counterinsurgency and supporting the new Afghan government, while Operation Enduring Freedom was solely focused on counterterrorism and driving Al-Qaeda out of Afghanistan.⁸⁵ The conflict between Operation Enduring Freedom and the ISAF often made UNAMA's job more difficult, as the mission was supposed to be the coordinating voice for military operations.⁸⁶ The US during this time was intensely focused on counterterrorism objectives in Afghanistan and framed the entire occupation as part of its 'war on terror.' As the US's Operation Enduring Freedom focused primarily on destroying the al-Qaeda safe haven, the US lumped the Taliban into the same enemy category. This categorizing was at odds with the state-building UNAMA mission because the US was deeply against including what it categorized as "terrorists" in the peace process. The US's short-sighted mission to oust al-Qaeda from Afghanistan directly opposed the UN's long-term goals of peacemaking and development. This disagreement manifested in the aftermath of the Bonn Agreement implementation; the US did not further support the reconciliation agenda, which then led to the UN facing major challenges. The disjointed nature of the US, UN, and ISAF led to "one group chasing the Taliban and another inviting them for talks."⁸⁷

The disjointed nature of UNAMA, ISAF and the US further supports my argument that the current structure of these large-reaching UN missions dooms them to failure. UNAMA did not have the resources within its mission to conduct stability operations, coordinate humanitarian aid, and encourage the economic development of Afghanistan. Therefore, the mission needed to

⁸⁵ Larsen, *UNAMA in Afghanistan* 32.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 32

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 32.

rely on these large, mainly Western counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations. These operations, however, had their own agendas to eradicate al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. To do this, NATO and the US vilified the Taliban, which, in turn, made UNAMA's ability to bring them to the table for peace talks near impossible.

UNAMA's Failures:

Although UNAMA was successful in its elementary years in implementing the Bonn Agreement, as the occupation of Afghanistan drew on, UNAMA became less successful. The Afghan support of US and International Forces fell from 2005 to 2009. More importantly, the local confidence in the rights of women, security from crime and violence, and overall conditions fell from about 71%, 72%, and 83%, respectively, in 2005 to 52%, 57%, and 69% in 2009.⁸⁸

Civilian casualties and injuries rose substantially between 2009 and 2015, not to mention the eventual fall of the Afghan government entirely and the reemergence of the Taliban in 2021.⁸⁹ Furthermore, civilian population confidence in the direction of Afghanistan fell dramatically as well during UNAMA's tenure, with 61% of the population feeling pessimistic for Afghanistan's future, 70% citing security as the main reason for this cynicism.⁹⁰ Since 2006, the amount of Afghans who responded that they fear for their own safety has risen by 31%.⁹¹ Even though UNAMA is not a peacekeeping operation, the goals of the mission centered around national recovery, human rights, and humanitarian relief allocation. These goals were not met, or, at least, perceived to be unmet as citizens feel more insecure financially and physically now than at the

⁸⁸ Langer Research Associates, "Attitudes Towards," infographic.

⁸⁹ Anthony H. Cordesman, "Civilian Casualty Trends Show Limited Growth in Total Deaths, but Growing Differences in Resolute Support and UNAMA Assessments of the Impact of ANSF and Coalition Attacks on Civilians," in *Afghanistan: A War in Crisis!* (n.p.: Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 2019), 161, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep22583.13>.

⁹⁰ Anthony H. Cordesman, "Uncertain Afghan Popular Perceptions of the War," in *Afghanistan: A War in Crisis!* (n.p.: Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 2019), 198, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep22583.16>.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* 198

beginning of UNAMA's tenure. This is mainly due to the conflict in Afghanistan, to which the ISAF was party.

I argue that UNAMA has failed as it was unable to successfully implement the Bonn Agreement, as the Taliban now rule the country. UNAMA's support of the Bonn Agreement was supposed to ensure that Afghanistan had a strong, popular government in the aftermath of the Taliban's control. UNAMA also was unable to ensure the security of the nation, and coordinate humanitarian aid so that the Transitional Authority and government thereafter would have the tools necessary to provide livelihoods for their citizens. This has not been the case. In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, not only did the Taliban take control of Afghanistan as soon as US forces left, but girls now face an increased risk of child marriage,⁹² there are reports of the Taliban conducting extra-judicial killings,⁹³ and there is still a general lack of inclusivity and disregard of human rights from the current Taliban government. Overall, UNAMA was created to help create a new sustainable government. With the takeover of the Taliban in 2021 and the humanitarian crisis that ensued, UNAMA failed at state-building, stabilization, and socio-economic development.

MONUSCO

The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) was founded with two overarching goals: stability and protection of civilians. However, unlike the previous missions, in order to accomplish this goal, the UN decided to equip the mission with a military force, the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB). While

⁹² "Afghanistan: Girls at increasing risk of child marriage," UN News, last modified November 12, 2021, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/11/1105662>.

⁹³ "Anxiety in Afghanistan as Taliban struggles for legitimacy," UN News, last modified November 17, 2021, accessed December 12, 2021, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/11/1106032>.

having a military force unified within the mission might seem beneficial, it brought MONUSCO closer to the conflict. Because of the FIB and its methods, MONUSCO was directly involved in ethnic conflicts, eroding its ability to help protect civilians and be an impartial moderator for peace. Thus, the collaboration with military force, through the DRC's army and the FIB complicates MONUSCO's ability to accomplish its mandated goals.

Background:

The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) has the most history of any of these four case studies. MONUSCO was originally formed as the United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC) in the 1960s to permit the full withdrawal of Belgium forces from the Congo in the aftermath of the Congo crisis. The Congo Crisis was a period of political upheaval from 1960 to 1965 that was sparked by a Congolese nationalist movement pushing for Belgian withdrawal. The withdrawal of Belgian troops from the Congo started in 1960 and all the Belgium troops were withdrawn by 1964. After the withdrawal of Belgian troops in 1960, a mutiny of black soldiers broke out against their white officers, which led to inter-communal fighting between white and black residents of Léopoldville (now Kinshasa). After various other instances of violence, including a hostage situation involving the Simbas, a Maoist group, and hostages from the local white population, the US and Belgium intervened in March 1965. After some stability, in November 1965, there was a coup d'état and Mobutu Sese Seko took control of the Congo, later renamed Zaire, from 1965 until 1997. In the 32 years that Mobutu was in power, the UN mission was dormant. Mobutu was a ruthless and corrupt dictator, but, as a result, there was less opportunity for dissent, conflict, and international intervention.

Shortly preceding Mobutu's death, the First Congo War broke out between the Allied Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL) (and its allies, including the US, Rwanda, Uganda, and South Africa), and the government of Zaire (and its allies, including France, China, Israel, Sudan, Chad and the Allied Democratic Forces, an Islamist group).⁹⁴ This war was, in part, fueled by the Rwandan genocide and mass exodus of refugees into Zaire and neighboring countries.⁹⁵ The war ended with an AFDL victory and the installment of Laurent-Désiré Kabila as President. The First Congo War was characterized by remaining hostilities between the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups, fueled by remnants of the Rwandan genocide, where around 700,000 Tutsis were killed.⁹⁶

Less than a year after the First Congo War, the Second Congo War began fueled by general disappointment with President Kabila. Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi fought with the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD), a political group that operated in the eastern part of the country. This war began in August 1998 and ended on July 18, 2003. The conflict included the genocide of 60,000-100,000 of the Pygmy people and created long-lasting intercommunal conflicts.

In 2000, the UN created the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) again as a response to the Second Congo War and the various human rights threats that were occurring throughout the international conflict. MONUC was renamed MONUSCO in 2010 to reflect the new stabilization aspect of the mission. As of 2020, the mandate for MONUSCO states that the mission should have two goals, the protection of

⁹⁴ International Crisis Group, "How Kabila lost his way: The performance of Laurent Désiré Kabila's government," news release, May 21, 1999, accessed December 12, 2021, <https://reliefweb.int/report/angola/how-kabila-lost-his-way-performance-laurent-d%C3%A9sir%C3%A9-kabilas-government>.

⁹⁵ UN High Commissioner on Refugees, "Great Lakes crisis at a glance," news release, December 19, 1996, accessed December 12, 2021, <https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/great-lakes-crisis-glance-11>.

⁹⁶ International Crisis Group, "How Kabila."

civilians, and the stabilization of the country, which includes security sector reforms and support for public institutions and governance.⁹⁷ With stabilization, MONUSCO is mandated to provide military support, help with disarming militias, and provide security sector reform.⁹⁸

The name change was in response to UNSC Resolution 1925, which was the specific resolution that added 'stabilization and peace consolidation' to MONUSCO's original mandate. The revision of this mandate shows MONUSCO's unique ability among missions to be responsive to the constantly changing security situations on the ground.⁹⁹ Moreover, the reorganization of MONUSCO from MONUC is also emblematic of the UN's shift from small, local UN missions to these large, overreaching, stabilization missions in the aftermath of the Brahimi Report. MONUC was supposed to be a small mission that was focused on the protection of civilians, especially during the Second Congo War, while MONUSCO is the largest peacekeeping operation in the UN's history and is far-reaching, dealing with everything from state building assistance and security sector reform to the protection of civilians in large conflicts within the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

MONUSCO faces many counterinsurgency and counterterrorism threats. Many armed groups operate in the DRC, especially with the power vacuum that was created in the aftermath of the Second War. Most notably, MONSUCO has dealt with the Ugandan Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR)--who are remnants of those who perpetrated the Rwandan genocide, and the March 23rd Movement (M23). M23 is also supported by Rwanda who supplies weapons. The M23 movement was, at one point, the most dangerous threat to stability within the DRC, especially when they took control of Goma,

⁹⁷ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 1925," The United Nations, last modified May 28, 2010, accessed December 4, 2021, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1925>.

⁹⁸ "MONUSCO Mandate," United Nations, accessed December 12, 2021, <https://monusco.unmissions.org/en/mandate>.

⁹⁹ Congo: Reflections on MONUSCO and Its Contradictory Mandate." *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 15, nos. 3-4 (March 25, 2011): 370

the capital city of North Kivu. Throughout the 21st century, the various conflicts in the Congo have been fueled by continued ethnic tensions with the Hutus and the Tutsis, as well as strife with Congo's neighbors.

Force Intervention Brigade and how it hurt MONUSCO:

In a similar vein to the other case studies, the Foreign Intervention Brigade (FIB) was formed by the UNSC on March 28, 2013, with Resolution 2098.¹⁰⁰ Unlike the other missions I've studied and their respective military forces, the FIB is integrated within MONUSCO, as a peacekeeping unit specifically dedicated to neutralizing armed groups.¹⁰¹ Troops were deployed to the eastern DRC, which had continued to suffer from conflicts and violence, especially in the aftermath of M23's capture of Goma. The UNSC hoped that by deploying the FIB, it would be able to combat armed groups militarily, which would, in turn, compel them to accept peace.¹⁰² The FIB was successful in pushing the insurgents out of Goma and the Kivu provinces, shortly after its formation in 2013. Both MONUSCO and the DRC's President Joseph Kabila voiced that they would like to continue the campaign against insurgency groups and turn their focus on targeting the ADF and the FDLR in 2013. Unfortunately, the FIB did not meet the expectations in continuing to fight these armed groups, even though the FDLR and ADF were notorious for committing atrocities and human rights abuses. Instead of fighting the insurgency groups head-on as they had promised, the FIB and MONUSCO changed course and supported the DRC's army's (FARDC) offensive against the FDLR and the ADF, which would prove to be

¹⁰⁰ UN Security Council, "'Intervention Brigade' Authorized as Security Council Grants Mandate Renewal for United Nations Mission in Democratic Republic of Congo," United Nations, last modified March 28, 2013, accessed December 12, 2021, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2013/sc10964.doc.htm>.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Kuele, Giovanna, and Marco Cepik. "Intelligence Support to MONUSCO: Challenges to Peacekeeping and Security." *The International Journal of Intelligence, Security, and Public Affairs* 19, no. 1 (January 2, 2017): 47

problematic.¹⁰³ The collaboration with FARDC was a result of stabilization and state-building efforts, but shows the competing incentives within the mission and the surrounding military forces. The FARDC is part of the conflict, so the collaboration of the army with the FIB involves all the UN's efforts in Congo in the conflict.

MONUSCO is also unique because of its relationship with intelligence. MONUSCO has used intelligence intensively in the neutralization of illegal armed groups and in helping the Congolese government in stabilization efforts. MONUSCO used human intelligence, imagery, and open sources, and through such intel, the mission was able to help the FIB in targeting individuals, researching areas of operation, assessing risk, and recommending actions, among other things.¹⁰⁴ This intelligence gathering has, in a way, implicated MONUSCO in acting as a party to armed conflict.¹⁰⁵ Many of the conflicts that rage in eastern DRC are linked to ethnic militias, often supported by Rwanda or Uganda. By targeting groups like the ADF and the FDLR, the mission and the FIB are becoming parties to armed conflict as they intervene with these armed militias and collaborate with the DRC's army.

MONUSCO's Failures:

As a peacekeeping force, MONUSCO faces a very similar dilemma as MINUSMA where it is charged with both stabilization and protection of civilians. These two goals have run counter to one another. To substantially protect civilians, one of its mandated goals, MONUSCO has to maintain a reputation of impartiality. However, MONUSCO needed to work with the FIB in order to create an environment in which peacekeepers could successfully conduct their mission,

¹⁰³ Denis M. Tull, "The Limits and Unintended Consequences of UN Peace Enforcement: The Force Intervention Brigade in the DR Congo," *International Peacekeeping* 25, no. 2 (August 2, 2017): 176.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* 176

¹⁰⁵ Lilly, Damian. "The United Nations as a Party to Armed Conflict." *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 20, nos. 3-4 (August 17, 2016): 326

which would fulfill the other goal of impartiality. The mission is very forthright with its condemnation of certain parties to the armed conflict. For example, MONUSCO views the FDLR as a “‘spoiler’ whose members must be disarmed...the FDLR leaders don't have a peaceful prospect. They survive on the backs of defenseless citizens and rob Congo of its resources.”¹⁰⁶ MONUSCO, moreover, does not have a clean record itself as it works in conjunction with the FARDC, “an army that is responsible for war crimes. MONUSCO is thereby compromising its own neutrality and potentially, by extension, its ability to fulfill its mandate to protect civilians.”¹⁰⁷ The UNSC has explicitly condemned attacks against civilians, including by “elements of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC).”¹⁰⁸

In fact, since collaborating with the FARDC, the FIB has been ineffective in continuing to protect civilians. In 2021, “at least 2024 civilians were killed by armed groups in North Kivu, South Kivu, Tanganyika, and Ituri provinces. The majority of victims were in Ituri and North Kivu, where inter-communal violence, as well as fighting between the FARDC and various militias, escalated throughout 2021.”¹⁰⁹ FIB partners with the FARDC, despite the fact that it is itself a perpetrator in the killing of civilians. As a consequence, MONUSCO, by proxy of collaborating with the FIB, is working with the same forces that are hindering the goal of protecting civilians. The FARDC and DRC police forces have “also been implicated in widespread violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, including sexual violence and arbitrarily killing civilians, while combatting armed groups.”¹¹⁰ For example, UN

¹⁰⁶ Clark, Janine Natalya. "UN Peacekeeping in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Reflections on MONUSCO and Its Contradictory Mandate." *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 15, nos. 3-4 (March 25, 2011): 374.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. 374.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. 375

¹⁰⁹ "Democratic Republic of the Congo," Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, last modified March 1, 2022, accessed April 22, 2022, <https://www.globalr2p.org/countries/democratic-republic-of-the-congo/>.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

human rights investigators found FARDC troops arbitrarily killed 12 individuals, and conducted around 70 rapes from the end of October until mid-December of 2009, thus working against the protection of civilians before the creation of the FIB.¹¹¹

The FARDC and its human rights abuses have continued even after the creation of the FIB. In 2017, “seven Congolese army officers [were] arrested and charged with war crimes after a video surfaced...that appeared to show uniformed soldiers opening fire on a group of civilians in a massacre that left at least 13 people dead”¹¹² in the Kasai-Central Province. Furthermore, the FARDC began an offensive against the ADF in October 2019. Since then, the ADF has “carried out retaliatory violence against civilians...attacks that have been ‘systematic and brutal.’”¹¹³ Either by its own doing or via retaliatory violence, the FARDC has created more harm for MONUSCO in its work to protect civilians. However, since MONUSCO houses the FIB, which works to help the government stabilize the DRC by mitigating armed groups, MONUSCO must work with the FARDC. In essence, the mission is stuck in a catch-22, where it must work with the FARDC through the FIB to create the state-building that would promote long-term stabilization, but in working with the FARDC they are hindering the mission’s ability to protect civilians.

Furthermore, because MONUSCO collaborated with the FIB in its offensive against M23, it can be argued that it is an actor in the conflict. Through the destruction of M23, “MONUSCO’s impartiality [was] completely diminished.”¹¹⁴ This presents legal consequences

¹¹¹ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “UN reports describe possible war crimes in DR Congo,” news release, September 9, 2009, accessed April 22, 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2009/10/un-reports-describe-possible-war-crimes-dr-congo>.

¹¹² Steve Wembi, “7 Congo Army Officers Charged With War Crimes in Massacre,” New York Times, last modified March 18, 2017, accessed April 22, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/18/world/africa/congo-massacre-war-crimes.html>.

¹¹³ “Democratic Republic,” Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect.

¹¹⁴ Spijkers, Otto. “The Evolution of United Nations Peacekeeping in the Congo.” *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 19, nos. 1-2 (September 23, 2015): 101. <https://doi.org/10.1163/18754112-01902004>.

for the future of UN PKOs. By directly stepping into armed conflict, MONUSCO peacekeepers have lost their protected status, and the UN will have to plan for contingencies by which their peacekeepers can feasibly be taken as prisoners of war.¹¹⁵

The FIB was unique because it was a dedicated armed force to act against militias in Eastern Congo as a part of MONUSCO, rather than as an adjacent multilateral military operation. What this means is MONUSCO is directly responsible for the ongoing activities of the FIB. When the FIB collaborated with the FARDC, for example, the abuses of the FARDC became directly related to MONUSCO because the FIB is a part of the mission. Therefore, the negative ways in which military forces conduct their operations within the DRC allow other armed groups and militias to capture peacekeepers as prisoners of war. This detrimental scenario is playing out in real-time. After the FIB was created, M23 began to target the peacekeeping forces directly. This is the direct result of the tarnished reputation of the UN as a third-party civilian protection force, as it is now being seen as a party to the armed conflict as a whole.¹¹⁶

The erosion of the UN as a third-party civilian protection force is consequential for the UN missions' legal futures. Because the FIB is a party to the armed conflict in eastern DRC, the armed groups and militias are justified in taking prisoners of war. Peacekeepers have previously held international protection because they are supposed to be third-party observers solely focused on the protection of civilians. MONUSCO is the first mission to have a dedicated force within the mission singularly focused on neutralizing armed groups. The creation of a FIB inside MONUSCO has created detrimental ramifications to the impartiality of the UN.

¹¹⁵ Spijkers, "The Evolution," 101.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. 103.

Conclusion:

Each of the individual cases I have studied has failed at accomplishing its mandated goals because of its cooperation with military forces in the name of stability. For the assistance missions, UNSMIL and UNAMA, the international forces were deployed to accomplish the counterterrorism objectives of the Western democracies which backed the forces. The UN missions worked with these forces to try and create some semblance of balance and cooperation of the intergovernmental organizations within these unstable states. In MINUSMA and MONUSCO, the PKOs cooperated with military forces to try and stabilize their respective nations.

When these missions began to use military force in their conflicts, the locals started to view the missions as being party to the armed conflict and biased to one side or the other. The perceived partiality of these missions hindered their ability to conduct peacekeeping operations, as they lost the trust of wide sections of their respective societies. In Mali, after MINUSMA began to cooperate with the JF-G5S, their popularity fell; many Malians reported that they were dissatisfied with the work of the mission. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO's Force Intervention Brigade (the military force that was created within MONUSCO to help mitigate armed groups and establish stability), collaborated with the DRC's military, the FARDC. The FARDC's bad human rights record, as well as the retaliation against civilians by some of the extremist groups which the FIB and FARDC fight, created an environment in which MONUSCO was collaborating with the very people it condemned. In Afghanistan, the UN's efforts were obstructed by the goals of the US military and the International Security Assistance Force. The military forces began fighting various factions of the conflict in Afghanistan, the same factions with which UNAMA was trying to negotiate peace deals.

While the collaboration of these missions with military forces has been detrimental for the missions, the fading line between peacekeeping, assistance, political support and military operations poses larger ramifications for the UN and its future. In Libya, the NATO forces intervened using the Responsibility to Protect Doctrine (R2P). However, when the Second Libyan Civil War began, the NATO forces did not intervene. The R2P Doctrine, which all NATO countries agreed upon in 2005, states a “responsibility of the international community to protect when a State is manifestly failing to protect its populations.”¹¹⁷ NATO intervened using this doctrine in Libya, but when the interests of NATO countries were met, the troops pulled out, leaving Libya in a dire situation that resulted in the Second Civil War. Notably, NATO forces did not re-enter Libya in this Second Civil War, even though, under R2P Doctrine, they had a responsibility to do so, just as much as their first intervention. The elective implementation of the R2P doctrine entirely erodes the theory on which it stands. The Responsibility to Protect is always present when a state is failing to protect its citizens, even when intervention would be unpopular. NATO’s selective implementation of the doctrine erodes the power it holds. Thus, not only did NATO forces hinder UNSMIL, but they potentially harmed one of the most important tools the UN and its members have in preventing ethnic cleansing and genocide.

Larger ramifications can also be seen in the DRC, MINUSMA, and UNAMA. As I mentioned, some of the armed ethnic groups and militias that the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) is fighting have begun to retaliate. The Allied Democratic Forces have committed violence against civilians explicitly in retaliation to the FARDC’s counterterrorism campaign (which was aided by the FIB). More alarmingly, the M23 movement began to target peacekeepers directly

¹¹⁷ Ivan Šimonović, "The Responsibility to Protect," the United Nations, last modified December 2016, accessed April 22, 2022, [https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/responsibility-protect#:~:text=The%20responsibility%20to%20protect%20\(commonly,and%20the%20responsibility%20of%20the](https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/responsibility-protect#:~:text=The%20responsibility%20to%20protect%20(commonly,and%20the%20responsibility%20of%20the)

within the conflict. Peacekeepers are given legal protections because they are supposed to be impartial to the warring factions. However, because of the FIB's collaboration with the FARDC, MONUSCO found itself an actor in the conflict. While it is a peacekeeping mission and has the goal of civilian protection, working with the FARDC, is harming civilians and taking sides. Thus, the legal protections that once applied to peacekeepers are at risk of being stripped. If PKOs continue to become involved in the conflict in the same way as MONUSCO, all peacekeepers will face being targeted for their involvement without the legal protections to which they were once privy. This trend of false impartiality is also seen in Afghanistan and Mali, but to a lesser extent as peacekeepers are not being directly targeted. Nevertheless, the threat to the future of UN peacekeeping is still present and demonstrated in each of these three missions.

Moreover, Jett, among others, argues that "Even in the most ambitious of PKOs, however, the political structure that emerges from the peace process will still be fragile at best."¹¹⁸ However, I agree more with his previous analysis where he argues that UN assistance missions and peacekeeping operations will always be partly due to the structure of the UN.¹¹⁹ The UN General Assembly is composed of 193 member states, and the Security Council, of 15. The member states are, by definition, recognized governments of the countries they represent. Even so, many of the wars that the UN is involved in are between recognized governments and non-state actors, such as terrorist organizations, insurgency groups, or ethnic groups. While the UN is supposed to protect all civilians, it often takes the side of established governments, even when those governments are committing the atrocities, such as in the DRC. UN missions are imperfect peacekeepers and assistants to all parties in the conflict because the UN is, by design, partial.

¹¹⁸ Jett, *Why Peacekeeping*, 258.

¹¹⁹ Jett, *Why Peacekeeping*, 12

As conflicts change globally with the introduction of new technologies, ideologies, and movements, peacekeeping and state-building will continue to evolve. The UN has historically been slow to acknowledge its failures in the missions it deploys. Hopefully, by recognizing its failures and working to mitigate the damage of working with military force, the UN can continue to change the structures of its missions to meet the demands of the world as it is.

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