policy
BRIEF

08-01

Does Deployment Matter?
Examining the Conditions under which Peacekeeping Missions Effectively Protect Displaced Persons and Refugees

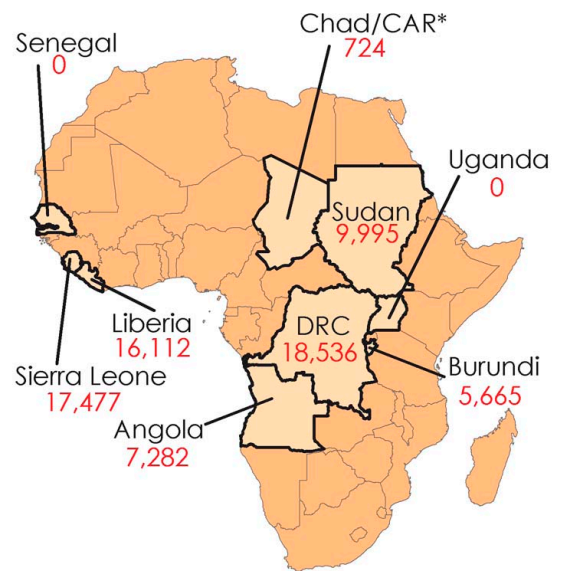*by Penelope Bissett and Christopher P. Farnsworth*

SUMMARY:

Across African conflicts, peacekeepers have faced persistent difficulties in trying to fulfill their mandate of tempering hostility and protecting civilians in internally displaced person (IDP) and refugee camps.

In a series of policy briefs, to be published over the next four months, the Ford Institute will examine the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations in recent and current African conflicts in an attempt to understand the conditions under which their deployment actually serves to enhance the protection of civilian populations. This first brief will examine the significance of three critical aspects of peacekeeping operations: 1. a force's mandate, 2. the ratio of the displaced population to peacekeeping forces, and 3. the relative density of the force's coverage in relation to the geographic area of a country. Future policy briefs in this project will examine related issues such as the composition and function of peacekeeping forces, their operational capability, and the deployment timeframe necessary to maximize effectiveness.

Map 1: Number of Peacekeepers in Nine African Conflicts During Peak Deployment**

Senegal 0
Chad/CAR* 724
Uganda 0
Sudan 9,995
Liberia 16,112
DRC 18,536
Sierra Leone 17,477
Burundi 5,665
Angola 7,282

* Peacekeepers in the MINURCAT mission are stationed in both Chad and the Central African Republic
** As of July 2008

Recent events in Darfur have called into question the ability of peacekeeping forces to protect civilians. As the publicized attacks in 2007 illustrate, ill-equipped or improperly mandated peacekeeping forces are themselves vulnerable to threats and often unable to adequately protect civilians (1). The relative success or failure of a peacekeeping operation begins with the **mandate** by which the peacekeeping mission is enacted. In the latest phase of its project, the Ford Institute is examining the protection of IDPs and refugees in nine African conflicts, seven of which in-

1. See, for example: Gettleman, Jeffrey. "Darfur Rebels Kill 10 in Peace Force." New York Times. October 1, 2007. Available: www.nytimes.com/2007/10/01/world/africa/01darfur.html?_r=3&ref=world&oref=slogin&oref=slogin&oref=slogin.

cluded the deployment of United Nations mandated peacekeeping missions. A closer examination of the specific language in each of these mandates showed them to be similar with regards to mission design and operational parameters (2). Minor variations existed, although these were mostly limited to the contextual nuances of each conflict. The outcomes of these missions in terms of civilian protection, however, are varied and cannot be explained by differences in the mandates alone.

Mandates matter, but other factors may also influence the success of a mission in quantifiable ways. First, Ford Institute researchers examined the number of peacekeepers deployed in each conflict per year. Next, they calculated the total displaced population present during each conflict year (3). Finally, researchers measured whether or not the geographic areas of each country in conflict affected the outcome of peacekeeping missions.

Can peacekeepers effectively protect civilians? The results of this study suggest that they can. Figure 1 concerning Sierra Leone illustrates the number of attacks on IDP camps in orange and peacekeeper deployments in tan. The attacks on camps mirror the intensity of the conflict there. The peak of the conflict was in late 1999 and early 2000. The United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) peacekeeping force was initially deployed in Sierra Leone in 1998, but was unable to quell the violence given its small size and lack of authorization to use force to protect civilians. In 2000, the UN deployed the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) force that drastically increased the number of peacekeepers and changed the mandate to authorize the use of force. Figure 1 demonstrates the marked decrease in attacks on camps as the number of peacekeepers increased. In 1999, the UNOMSIL mission deployed a meager .000012 peacekeepers per 10,000 people in the country, this limited ration potentially explaining the force's inadequacy. By 2000, with the introduction of UNAMSIL, the number rose substantially to 19.5 peacekeepers per 10,000. This dramatic increase in numbers and change in mandate altered the profile of the mission from a largely symbolic force to one meant to effectively stabi-

Figure 1: Attacks on Camps and Deployment of Peacekeepers in Sierra Leone
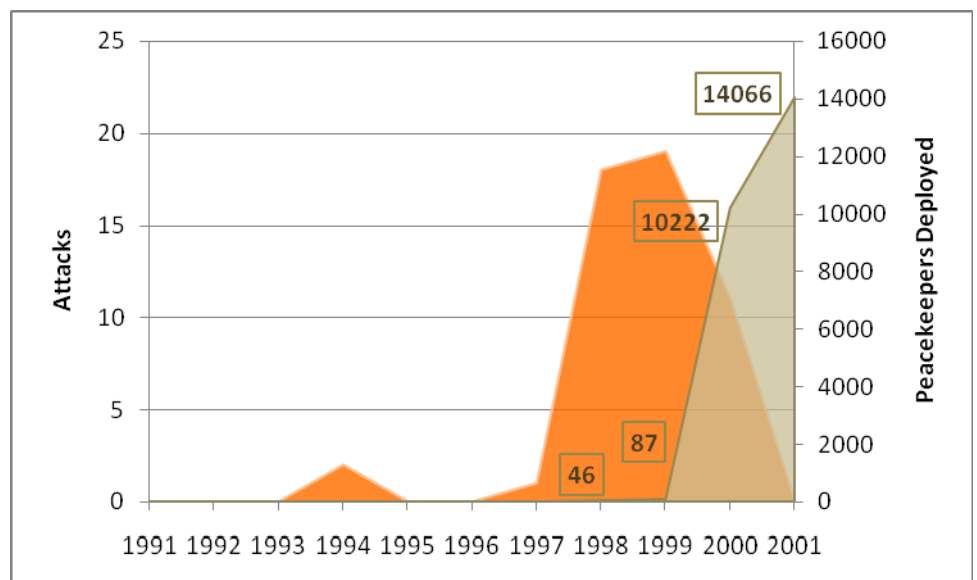
2. In these seven African cases, the peacekeeping missions operate or act under United Nations Charter Chapter 7 mandates. The difference in terminology is due to the time it took to pass UN resolutions authorizing the use of force. Thus, prior to the passage of a resolution, the mandate of a peacekeeping mission would state that the mission is acting under the provisions set forth in Chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter: www.un.org/aboutun/charter/chapter7.htm.
3. Total displaced population includes internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees.

lize Sierra Leone, restore peace, and protect civilians.

One of the most important factors identified by the Ford Institute in explaining civilian protection is the **ratio** of peacekeepers: the size of a peacekeeping force in relation to the host country's total displaced population. Map 1 lists the number of peace-keepers in each country during the year of peak deployment for each conflict. In absolute terms, Sierra Leone and the DRC have the two largest peacekeeping deployments; 17,477 peacekeepers in Sierra Leone during 2003 and 18,536 peacekeep-ers in the DRC during 2008. As was the case with comparing the peacekeeping man-dates, not enough variation exists in these numbers to explain the different outcomes of the respective conflicts in terms of the protection of IDP and refugee camps. How-ever, when the ratio of displaced persons to peacekeeping forces is calculated for these two countries, a different picture emerges. As Table 1 illustrates, in Sierra Leone in 2003, there were 5.07 displaced people per peacekeeper (4). As of June 2008 in the DRC, the ratio stood at 88.63 displaced people per peacekeeper. The DRC cur-rently hosts slightly more than twenty-four times as many displaced persons than Si-erra Leone did in 2003. The relative success of the UNAMSIL mission in Sierra Leone may therefore partially be attributable to the deployment of an appropriately-sized peacekeeping force in relation to the displaced population. In fact, reports in Sierra Leone indicate that peacekeepers were not only able to contain the violence, but were instrumental in initializing stability in the region (5).

While the ratio of displaced persons to peacekeepers may be a key factor, it insuffi-ciently explains the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions. The ratio of total dis-placed persons in proportion to peacekeepers was approximately the same for both Liberia in 2003 (89.87) and the DRC in June 2008 (88.63). While the level of violence in Liberia quickly declined subsequent to the arrival of a peacekeeping force, it has not done so in the DRC. This difference may be explained by comparing the geographic **density** of the peacekeeping operation: the total area of these countries with the number of peacekeepers deployed. If each peacekeeper was evenly distributed throughout the country in the DRC, each would be responsible for an area of 123.13 square kilometers. In contrast, in Liberia in 2003, each peacekeeper was responsible for only 15.32 square kilometers. Although responsible for a similar number of vulner-able civilians, peacekeepers in the DRC are presently geographically responsible for eight times the area of that of their counterparts in Liberia in 2003. Research

Table 1. Number of Displaced Persons and Square Kilometers Per Peace-keeper During Peak Deployment in Six African Conflicts

Country	Year	Displaced Persons / Peacekeeper	Square Kilometers / Peacekeeper
Burundi	2005	32.07	4.98
Chad	2008	4280.36	11242.86
DRC	2008	88.63	123.13
Liberia	2005	35.45	6.04
Sierra Leone	2003	5.07	5.38
Sudan	2008	280.34	125.43

4. 2003 is the earliest year for which reliable data on the number of IDPs in Sierra Leone is available.
5. See: "UNAMSIL Press Briefing." August 8, 2003. Available: www.un.org/Depts/dpko/unamsil/DB/DB080803.pdf.

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The Ford Institute's full analysis on the issues described in each of the policy briefs will be published in a report available in winter 2009.

conducted by the Ford Institute suggests that this density ratio may help explain differences in the effectiveness of such forces.

The preliminary findings of the Ford Institute's study therefore suggest that

- Mandates matter, particularly an expressed use of a Chapter 7 mandate.
- The ratio of displaced persons to peacekeepers as well as the density of the geographic area for which a force is responsible may help explain the difference in a force's effectiveness across the conflicts examined in this study.

The next Policy Brief in this series will further explore the density of peacekeeping forces as it relates to the conditions of deployment. It will also gauge the effectiveness of such forces when they are introduced in different phases of a conflict.

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