



# policy

BRIEF

08-03

## Does Force Composition Matter?

### Determining if the Relative Homogeneity of a Peacekeeping Operation Leads to Decreased Attacks on Civilians

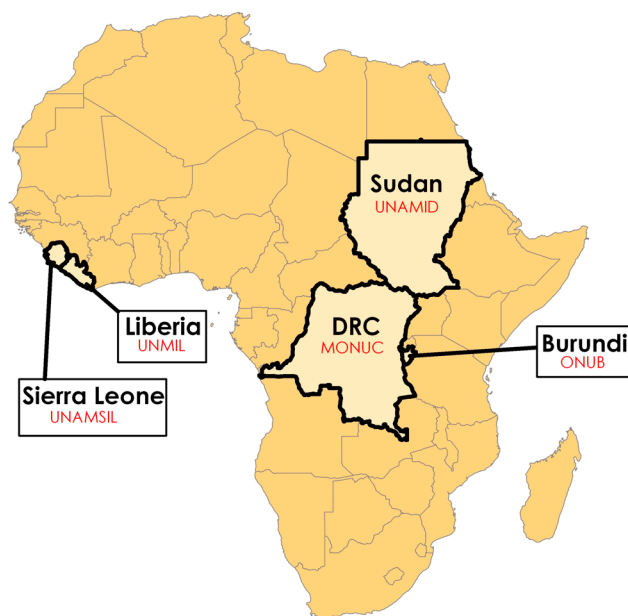
By Pamela S. Daley and Owen Foley

#### SUMMARY:

This is the third in a series of Ford Institute policy briefs examining the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations in civilian protection in African conflicts. Prior policy briefs in this series examined the mandate and importance of a peacekeeping mission's deployment and the deployment timeframe in relation to attacks on civilians.

This brief will analyze three critical issues regarding the character of a peacekeeping force in its efforts to fulfill its mandate and prevent attacks on civilians: 1. the proportion of forces provided by the five largest contributing countries to any peacekeeping force; 2. the degree to which a force is balanced across regions; and 3. the importance of force stability with regards to a low turnover of personnel. Future policy briefs will examine related issues such as the importance of secure borders in the protection of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees.

Map 1: Peacekeeping Missions in Five African Conflicts



Map created by Cathleen Marcks

For this policy brief, researchers at the Ford Institute examined the composition of peacekeeping forces in five African conflicts (Map 1) to determine their effectiveness in protecting civilians from attack (1). These data suggest that there may be an association between a peacekeeping force's ability to protect civilians from violence and the composition of its personnel. In the conflicts studied, attacks on civilians decreased: 1. during periods in which a higher proportion of the peacekeeping force came from the five main contributing countries; 2. when there was a cross-regional balance in a force's composition; and 3. when the makeup of a force was stable for at least six months. Seemingly, the longer a stable peacekeeping force is

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(1). The MINURCAT mission currently in Chad and the Central African Republic was also examined. However, given that as of August 2008 the mission currently only had 233 peacekeepers, researchers recognized that too many factors, such as lack of force strength and density, contributed more to the relative ineffectiveness of the peacekeeping mission than composition.

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The Ford Institute for Human Security was established in 2003 at the University of Pittsburgh through the generosity of the Ford Motor Company. The Ford Institute is committed to identifying, studying, and advocating action-oriented policy proposals that address internal and transnational threats to the human rights of civilian populations, specifically as those threats relate to the following issues:

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- corporate social responsibility;
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- internal displacement, forced migration, and refugees, and
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involved, the more time it has to establish a cohesive presence among the several actors in the conflict. This, in turn, contributes towards preventing violence and solidifying that force's position.

**Table 1: Average Number of Contributing Countries and Percentage of the Top Five Contributors**

Mission	Total Contributing Countries	Contribution of Top 5 (Average %)
Burundi (ONUB)	48	90
Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL)	44	80
Liberia (UNMIL)	56	73
Sudan (UNAMID)	48	69
DRC (MONUC)	54	54

the highest percentage of troops, 90 and 80 percent respectively, from the top five contributing countries.

Conversely, the UNAMID and MONUC missions, arguably the least effective of the missions studied, had the lowest percentage from the five largest contributing countries, 69 and 54 percent, respectively. This suggests that a possible relationship may exist between the number of contributing countries to a force and its ability to protect civilians. **Among the conflicts studied, creating a more homogenous force - with higher numbers of peacekeepers from fewer contributing countries - seemed to be more effective than diluting a force into a more evenly distributed proportion of peacekeepers from a larger number of contributing countries.**

Second, although reducing the number of contributing countries may help create cohesion within a force, these data also suggest that cross-regional balance in terms of a force's composition may play a key role in a mission's ability to protect civilians. Table 2 depicts the top five contributing countries to each force as well as their percent contribution over the length of the mission (2). Table 2 suggests that the contributing countries across the conflicts analyzed are either overwhelmingly from Africa or South Asia. Only one mission, MONUC, had a large contingency of troops from outside of these two regions. Of the top five contributing countries to ONUB, for example, 49 percent came from African states while 41 percent came from South Asian states. UNAMSIL displayed a similar balance with 36 percent and 44 percent for African and South Asian states, respectively. Well over 30 percent of the force for the ONUB and UNAMSIL missions came from South Asia. The evidence from Ford

**Table 2: Top 5 Contributing Countries & Percentage Contribution to Each Mission**

Burundi	RSA, 23	Pakistan, 21	Nepal, 20	Ethiopia, 14	Kenya, 12
Sierra Leone	Pakistan, 27	Nigeria, 21	Bangladesh, 17	Ghana, 9	Kenya, 6
Liberia	Bangladesh, 23	Nigeria, 22	Guinea-Bissau, 9	Pakistan, 8	Ethiopia, 6
DRC	Uruguay, 16	Pakistan, 12	India, 12	Bangladesh, 7	RSA, 7
Sudan	Nigeria, 27	Rwanda, 22	Ghana, 8	RSA, 7	Senegal, 5

(2). For research purposes, the study included data until August 2008, recognizing that the UNAMID and MONUC mission are still ongoing.

Institute research suggests that cross-regional balance within a force may increase its ability to protect civilians from attack.

Notably, the UNAMID force in Darfur is not only more widely distributed among the contributing countries, but also exhibits far less cross-regional balance. The five major contributing countries for the UNAMID force are all from sub-Saharan Africa, and comprise 69 percent of the total force (3). **This finding reinforces other data suggesting that coupling regional experience with troops from a different region may add to a force's effectiveness in protecting civilians from attack.**

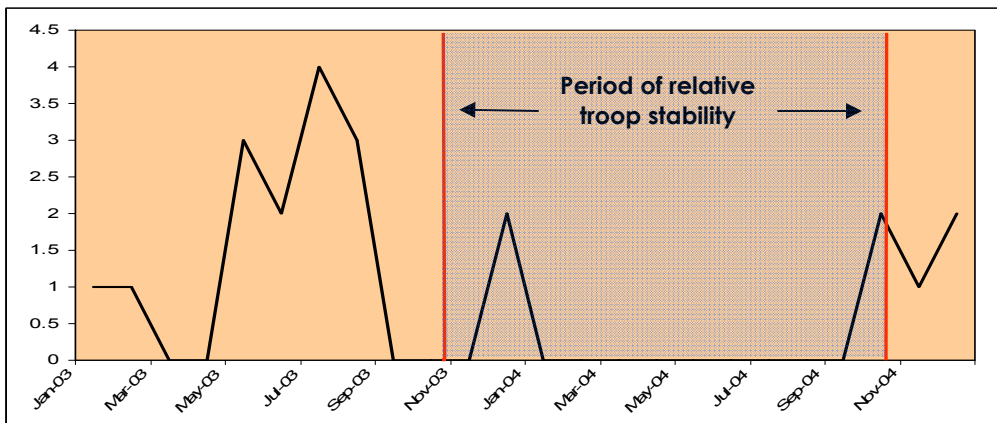
Finally, in addition to a peacekeeping mission's composition and cross-regional balance, data observed by the Ford Institute suggest that there is a positive duration effect associated with a contributing peacekeeping force's presence: when the turnover within that peacekeeping force is nominal over periods of six months or more, attacks on IDPs and refugees decrease. Throughout these periods of reduced violence, individual peacekeepers may be replaced, but the source countries providing the peacekeepers over that period do not change.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), MONUC has had a variety of contributing countries at differing stages of the conflict. Thus, force stability has not been preponderant over its eight year mission. Yet, when its force was relatively homogenous in composition, had cross-regional balance, and maintained troop stability, attacks on civilians also decreased demonstrating a correlation. As demonstrated in Graph 1, fourteen attacks were reported between January 2003 and October 2003. During this ten-month period, the composition of MONUC changed several times. Conversely, from November 2003 to October 2004, an eleven month period of relative troop stability, attacks on camps decreased by more than 50 percent.

Since 2005, India and Pakistan have contributed an average of 44 percent of all peacekeeping forces to MONUC. Furthermore, since 2006, troop stability has remained more consistent and the top five contributing countries have provided well over 65 percent of the peacekeeping force. During this time, the force also achieved a relative regional balance. The increase in South Asian troops and relative troop stability also correlated with a decrease in attacks on IDPs by 75 percent by the beginning of 2008. **Thus, a stable force may potentially provide the time to establish a cohesive presence among the several actors in the conflict. This may, in turn, help prevent violence and solidify that force's position.**

Given the recent upsurge in violence in the DRC (4), if additional peacekeeping troops are deployed, continuing to promote a concentrated, regionally balanced force for a continuous period of time may help the MONUC mission es-

**Graph 1: Reported Attacks in DRC (2003 through 2004)**



(3). This force structure differs due to the initial reluctance of the Sudanese government to allow non-African peacekeepers. Researchers also attempted to include the troop composition of the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS); however, appropriate data was not available to calculate monthly force composition of the top five contributing countries.

(4). In late October 2008, IDP and refugee camps sheltering nearly 50,000 people outside of Goma in eastern DRC were destroyed. See: "DR Congo Refugee Camps Burned" [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/newsid\\_7702000/7702099.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/newsid_7702000/7702099.stm) and "Battles Rage Near Key Congo Town:" [http://news.bbc.co.uk/mobile/1/bbc\\_news/top\\_stories/76976947/story7694766.shtml](http://news.bbc.co.uk/mobile/1/bbc_news/top_stories/76976947/story7694766.shtml).

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# policy BRIEF

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.

establish itself and protect the civilian populations from attacks.

The preliminary findings of this policy brief therefore suggest that:

- Increased numbers of peacekeepers from fewer contributing countries are more effective than fewer peacekeepers from a larger number of contributing countries.
- The forces in these five cases that consisted of cross-regional peacekeepers were more effective than those comprised of peacekeepers from one region.
- The stability of a force seems to be a critical factor. The longer a peacekeeping force is deployed, the more time it has to establish itself as an actor in the conflict.

The next policy brief published in this series will address the case of Chad and Sudan, examining the importance of cross-border security and how this relates to a peacekeeping force's effectiveness in preventing attacks against IDP and refugee camps.

