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**Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding in  
Post-Conflict Environments:  
A Critical Analysis of the UN Approach in  
Timor-Leste, Liberia and Nepal**

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## Introduction

There have been 63 United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions since the UN's inception in 1945. The number of operations has increased steadily over the years and at present almost 116,000 personnel are serving on 17 peacekeeping operations led by the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN DPKO). In addition to these missions, there are also 15 special political and or peace-building missions under the management of the UN's Department of Political Affairs.<sup>1</sup> This paper seeks to evaluate the UN approach to peacekeeping and peacebuilding in post-conflict environments. This will be done by looking at three case-studies; the UN missions in Timor-Leste, Nepal and Liberia. These case studies provide an insight into the UN approach in both an Asian and an African context. All three countries being considered are emerging from prolonged periods of political instability and armed conflict. Despite their geographical polarity and the fact that the situation in Liberia is particularly complex, they face very similar challenges. This paper looks at possible alternatives to UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions with a view to establishing if there are organizations or other interested parties, which may be more effective than the UN in terms of bringing stability to post-conflict environments. The issue of sovereignty will also be considered with the aim of assessing whether the international community's current stance on this issue is hampering the UN's ability to fulfill mission mandates.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the United Nations Department of Public Information. 2009. *Fact Sheet: United Nations Peacekeeping*. pp. 1-3. For information regarding missions led by the United Nations Department of Political Affairs see <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/ppbm.pdf>

Prior to embarking on an analysis of peacekeeping and peacebuilding in post-conflict environments it is first necessary to define both terms. Knight states that the

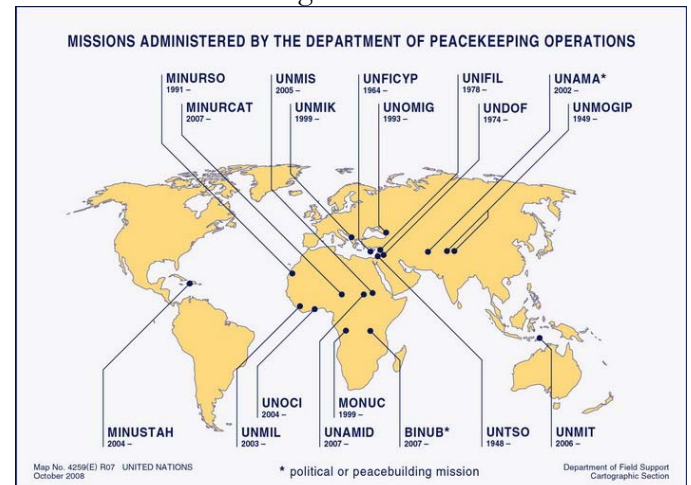


Figure 1. Map of United Nations Peacekeeping Missions<sup>2</sup>

term ‘peacebuilding’ became a part of official discourse in 1990 when it was used by Boutros Boutros-Ghali in *An Agenda for Peace*. The then UN Secretary-General defined peacebuilding as “action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict.” Boutros Boutros-Ghali also stated that peacebuilding “is conceived as the construction of a new environment – in terms of politics, culture, economics and security – and can be viewed as a direct counterpart to preventative diplomacy, which seeks to avoid the breakdown of peaceful conditions.”<sup>3</sup>

Mohamed explains that in contrast to peacebuilding, peacekeeping “sets out to

<sup>2</sup> This map only shows UN missions led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. It is available at <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/bnote.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Knight, W. Andy. 2005. *The United Nations and International Security in the New Millennium. Perspectives on Global Development and Technology*. Vol. 4(3-4). pp. 533-534.

enforce and police formal peace.”<sup>4</sup> Thus peacekeeping involves a military presence and involves the physical enforcement of peace whereas peacebuilding relates to the establishment of the conditions required to enable the establishment and maintenance of political and economic stability. It is important to note that in recent UN missions these roles have often overlapped. Integrated missions are a good example of this, involving military, political, legal and humanitarian components. Due to this overlap, the terms are often used interchangeably. However, for the purposes of this paper peacekeeping and peacebuilding will be referred to with the aforementioned definitions in mind

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<sup>4</sup> Mohamed, Saira. 2005. From Keeping Peace to Building Peace: A Proposal for a Revitalised Trusteeship Council. *Columbia Law Review*. Vol, 105(809). p. 819

# I

## UN, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding

The UN has faced much criticism over its approach to both peacekeeping and peacebuilding. It is therefore necessary to consider issues pertaining to UN missions and more specifically the key areas of discussion as highlighted by academics and UN officials alike whose focus area is analyzing the efficacy of the UN and its peace operations over the last few years.

Following the publication of the Brahimi Report in 2000, which gave a comprehensive overview of the failings of the UN, reform in the area of peace operations was implemented. According to Weir, there were numerous pre-reform problems with UN peacekeeping missions. She states that “lack of communication, duplication of efforts, and a failure to adapt strategy to the new tactics of belligerents meant that the ‘UN family’ was ineffective at best. At worst, agencies found that the lack of coordination and standardization was actually feeding into the cycle of war.”<sup>5</sup> Some would argue that despite reform, these problems remain. This is highlighted by the three case studies which follow and by the UN Peacekeeping Operations Update Report discussed below.

The UN Peacekeeping Operations Update Report outlines the capacity and resource problems facing the UN. One of the main issues is troops related. The UN report states that many of the “traditional troop contributors” (European and Latin American countries) no longer have the capacity to contribute troops due to their deployment in non-UN operations. Moreover, new contributors of troops are

developing countries whose forces lack the equipment, infrastructure and training to effectively integrate into complex missions. This is depicted by Figure 1, which shows that Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and Nigeria were the largest contributors of uniformed personnel to UN peacekeeping operations as of April 2009. The global lack of both available and qualified police and civilians also presents a problem.

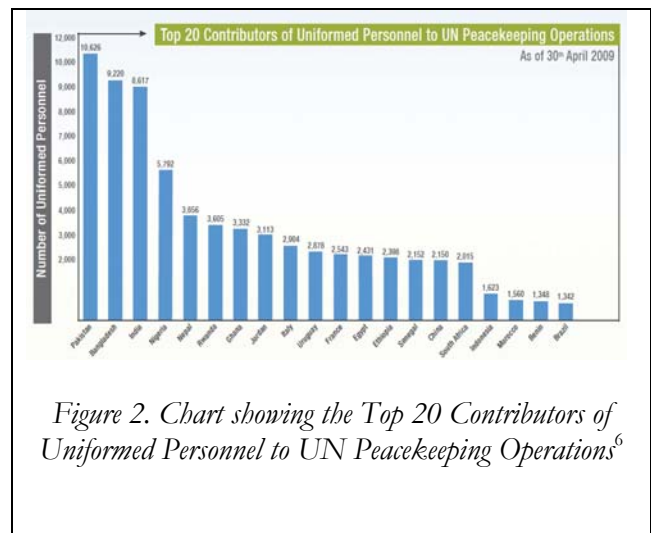


Figure 2. Chart showing the Top 20 Contributors of Uniformed Personnel to UN Peacekeeping Operations<sup>6</sup>

The report also argues that capacity is hindered by inflexible staffing rules and the global financial crisis.<sup>7</sup> Capacity constraints will be looked at in the context of the three missions selected as case studies for this paper. It seems clear that this is one of the key problems facing the UN. Staff shortages will make it almost impossible for the UN to fulfill its mandates in post-conflict environments, especially in the initial stages of deployment. There is also a danger

<sup>5</sup> Weir, Erin A. 2006. *Conflict and Compromise: UN Integrated Missions and the Humanitarian Imperative*. Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre. Monograph No.4. p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the United Nations Department of Public Information. 2009. *Fact Sheet: United Nations Peacekeeping*. p.3.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Security Council. 2009. *UN Peacekeeping Missions: Update Report*. No. 2. p.2.

capacity restraints will result in missions being downsized too early. This often serves to counteract any progress that has been made earlier on in the mission's deployment and can result in renewed conflict.

According to Caplan "when a UN peace operation is established, it is assumed to be a temporary measure that will endure until, in the best case, a lasting solution to the conflict can be found that will allow the UN to withdraw without jeopardizing the peace or, in the worst case, circumstances on the ground deteriorate and a continued UN presence is no longer thought to be able to contribute to maintaining the peace."<sup>8</sup> The problem with this premise is that it relies on good judgment. It may seem that a lasting solution to a conflict has been found and the UN may withdraw or make preparations to withdraw only to find conflict and tensions resurfacing. This was the case in Timor-Leste when peacekeepers withdrew only for violence to break out again in 2006. The criteria for deciding when the UN presence is no longer able to contribute to maintaining the peace must be clearly defined in order to avoid such errors.

Weir offers an interesting analysis of the changing face of peacekeeping operations and the reasons behind the difficulty of implementation. She states that "the UN system, designed to respond to interstate conflict, had difficulty adjusting to the new prevalence of intrastate crises." She adds that a new sort of warfare emerged, which was increasingly brutal and targeted civilians. She summarizes stating "human suffering had become a weapon, and the struggle to combat it necessitated a new 'multidimensional' approach to peacekeeping."<sup>9</sup> The case studies in this paper

all reflect the effects of this new form of conflict. Moreover the peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions in all three cases were especially designed to deal with this kind of complex conflict scenario.

In her analysis of UN integrated missions, Weir reminds us that "international policy makers have yet to articulate and apply a clear doctrine for international law enforcement."<sup>10</sup> This renders the implementation of peace operations fraught with difficulties. Moreover, there is no independent body, which oversees the work of the UN and which would ensure the application of such a doctrine were it to be decided upon. Until such time as a body of this kind is in place the obstacles discussed above and the mission specific problems laid out below will continue to prevent the UN from fulfilling its full potential both in terms of peacekeeping and in terms of peacebuilding.

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<sup>8</sup> Caplan, Richard. 2009. *Managing Transition: Exit Strategies and Peace Consolidation in Managing Complexity: Political and Managerial Challenges in United Nations Peace Operations*. International Peace Institute.

<sup>9</sup> Weir, Erin A. 2006. *Conflict and Compromise: UN Integrated Missions and the Humanitarian*

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*Imperative*. Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre. Monograph No.4. p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Weir, Erin A. 2006. *Conflict and Compromise: UN Integrated Missions and the Humanitarian Imperative*. Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre. Monograph No.4. p.9.

## II

# The United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT)

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UNMIT was established on 25 August 2006, with an initial mandate of six months. It replaced the United Nations Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL), its political predecessor. UNOTIL was preceded by two peacekeeping missions, the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISSET) and the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), and a political mission, the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET). These missions are generally believed to have been too passive in their approach to peacekeeping and this passivity is considered to be one of the factors behind Timor-Leste's 2006 security crisis.

UNMIT has drawn up a Medium-Term Strategy. The strategy outlines a series of objectives and sub-objectives referred to as benchmarks, the achievement of which the UN believes will provide the foundations for a "stable and sustained democratic state in Timor-Leste." Progress towards achieving the benchmarks is monitored and used as a means of assessing whether changes to UNMIT's mandate are needed and to establish when UNMIT's presence in Timor-Leste will no longer be required.<sup>11</sup>

The first objective set out in the Medium Term Strategy relates to security issues and requires "a stable security situation, and security sector institutions that respect and protect human rights and are sufficiently effective and accountable to guarantee security and stability in the short term, while at the same time contributing to the ongoing strengthening of security and stability over the long term."<sup>12</sup> Benchmarks falling under this objective include clearly defined roles

for security sector institutions and adequate capacity and resources in order for these institutions to be able to operate effectively.<sup>13</sup> This paper focuses on the policing aspect of this objective but in terms of the broader picture it is important to note that while the security situation in Timor-Leste remains fragile, there have been marked improvements. The only major setback was the attempt by rebels led by Alfredo Reinaldo to assassinate President Jose Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao on 11 February 2008. Reinaldo was killed during the shooting that ensued. Arguably one of the greatest threats to Timor-Leste's stability was thus eliminated, reducing the risk of a return to violence. According to the UN, the attack had the potential to destabilize Timor-Leste but the rational manner in which government forces responded to the attacks prevented a breakdown of law and order.<sup>14</sup> On the one hand, this suggests that significant progress has been made towards establishing a stable security environment. However, the fact that such an incident occurred at all indicates that much remains to be done if the security of Timor's leaders and citizens is to be safeguarded.

Timor-Leste is currently experiencing a period of transition with responsibility for policing the country gradually being handed over to the National Police of East Timor (PNTL). The number of United Nations Police Officers (UNPOL) operating in the country will remain unchanged despite the

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<sup>11</sup> UNMIT. 2009. *Medium Term Strategy*. p.1.

<sup>12</sup> UNMIT. 2009. *Medium Term Strategy*. p.2.

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<sup>13</sup> United Nations Security Council. 2009. Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (for the period from 9 July 2008 to 20 January 2009). p.19.

<sup>14</sup> UNMIT. 2008. *Report on human rights developments in Timor-Leste*. p.3.



handover. UNPOL will assume an advisory role, monitoring PNTL's progress and providing support where necessary. It will reassume responsibility for law enforcement if required.<sup>15</sup> To date, responsibility for policing has been handed back to PNTL in Manatuto, Oecussi and Lautem districts.<sup>16</sup> As the handovers have been recent, it is as yet impossible to gauge their success. A period of at least six months will be required before assessments of PNTL's policing can be made. It is however possible to look at PNTL's progress prior to the handovers in order to gain an insight into the challenges facing the PNTL as they resume control of policing and whether they have the capacity to meet them.

Bu Wilson, wrote a paper on the PNTL's capability in 2008. She expressed her concern that "rather than rebuilding the PNTL, the UN mission may be instead bequeathing a weak and unstable police force to *Timor-Leste*."<sup>17</sup> She cites poor relations between UNPOL and the PNTL as being behind this, claiming "increasingly PNTL does what it pleases, regardless of what UNPOL might think."<sup>18</sup> Wilson's argument raises questions about PNTL's ability to take full responsibility for policing in *Timor-Leste*. It also suggests that UNPOL will have difficulty in fulfilling their role as advisors. The extent to which there will be cooperation between the two forces after the handover remains to be seen. It is possible that given responsibility and a degree of sovereignty over policing, the PNTL will adapt well to their new role but this seems unlikely. It is vital that the government takes steps to ensure that PNTL cooperates with the international forces in *Timor-Leste*. Failure to do so will

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<sup>15</sup> UNPOL Brochure.

<http://unmit.unmissions.org/Portals/UNMIT/unpol/Brochure%20web%20PNTL.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> UNMIT. 2009. *UNMIT Newsletter 3 August 2009*. No. 95. Dili. p.1.

<sup>17</sup> Callinan, R. "Missing the Beat." *Time South Pacific (Australia/ New Zealand edition)*. Issue 48.

<sup>18</sup> B. Wilson. 2009. "Timor-Leste: the curious case of the fake policemen." *East Timor Law Journal*. 13<sup>th</sup> February.

seriously impede the country's progress towards a stable security situation and will further delay UNMIT's departure. It is worth noting that a lack of cooperation between UNPOL and local police forces is not unusual where peacekeeping missions are concerned. This is an issue, which must be addressed if there is to be progress in Security Sector Reform (SSR) in any of the countries in which the UN has a peacekeeping mandate.

The PNTL is hampered by severe equipment shortages. Writing in 2008, Rory Callinan described poorly equipped, poorly paid police officers living in tents without access to proper sanitation facilities.<sup>19</sup> While Callinan was describing conditions as of one year ago, there can be no doubt that the situation has seen little improvement, the problems described being too serious to be resolved in a matter of 12 months. If the PNTL is to be effective in policing a stable and secure *Timor-Leste* then provisions will have to be made for the supply of equipment and police infrastructure. This is another obstacle, which appears to be hindering progress towards SSR across all the UN peacekeeping missions and which was highlighted by the 2009 UN Peacekeeping Operations Update Report.

There are also obstacles hindering UNPOL's effectiveness. Among them is the fact that officers are typically deployed for a period of six months. The resulting high turnover of police officers means that few are familiar with the local context. Moreover, in order to reduce expenditure, there is no overlap between departing and arriving UNPOL officers so no handover of information takes place.<sup>20</sup> This situation is untenable with UNMIT's success being seriously compromised by the lack of

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<sup>19</sup> Callinan, R. "Missing the Beat." *Time South Pacific (Australia/ New Zealand edition)*. Issue 48.

<sup>20</sup> B. Wilson. 2008. "Smoke and Mirrors" in *Democratic Governance in Timor-Leste: Reconciling the Local and the National* edited by David Mearns. Charles Darwin University Press: Darwin. p.106.

coordination and cooperation between UNPOL staff. The capacity constraints outlined above are an example of those described earlier on in this paper, when the capacity problems facing the UN were discussed.

It seems that UNMIT may have started the handover of responsibility for policing too soon, potentially jeopardizing the security situation by giving responsibility to a poorly equipped, inexperienced force, which has not received adequate training or mentoring. Haste has often resulted in significant setbacks for the UN in post-conflict environments and as such the wisdom of this early handover has to be questioned. This is especially the case in Timor-Leste where violence broke out in 2006 in the aftermath of the UN's withdrawal of its peacekeeping troops in 2005.<sup>21</sup>

Dr. Atul Khare made a very valid point in his speech at the Lowy Institute in 2008. He stated "it is clear to me that training of a police service that is impeccably turned out for a parade takes a few months, provision of necessary professional skills, such as firearms training, might take another year, but the development of internal controls and an institutional culture that is consistent with the principles of a democracy, such as neutrality, transparency, adherence to the rule of law and self-restraint, requires a societal change that takes a generation or more."<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, Timor-Leste, like all nations emerging from a period of prolonged conflict, does not have the luxury of time. If the country is to feature on the global stage and to fulfill its regional aspirations, in particular becoming a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) then change must

come immediately. This is a key problem for all post-conflict nations. The West had hundreds of years in which to build up its institutions, yet countries like Timor-Leste and Liberia are expected to achieve the same in just a matter of years. There appears to be no solution to this dilemma. Countries that choose to take their time in the nation-building process will surely find themselves lagging behind the rest of the world while countries which rush this process in order to catch up will find themselves with ineffective and partially functioning institutions.

UNMIT's second objective, as set out in the Medium term Strategy, relates to justice and human rights. It requires a situation in which "the institutions and capacities of the justice sector are adequately developed and strengthened, resulting in an effective, accessible and credible judicial and penal system. The rule of law and the independence of the judiciary are respected; impunity is not tolerated and is appropriately addressed. Accountability and justice are achieved for the serious criminal offences of 1999 and April through May 2006, including as recommended by the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry."<sup>23</sup> Benchmarks under this objective include effective accountability mechanisms to enhance the integrity of the judiciary and the Provedoria for Human Rights and Justice serving as both an independent and transparent human rights institution.<sup>24</sup>

On 20 May 2008, the President issued a pardon or partial commutation of sentence for 94 of Timor-Leste's 179 prisoners. Former Minister of Interior, Rogério Lobato, who was involved in the 2006 crisis, was amongst those whose sentence was commuted. The President has also pardoned those imprisoned for the 1999 violence and while the Truth Commission which looked

<sup>21</sup> UNMISSET, a peacekeeping mission, was replaced by UNOTIL, a political mission, in May 2005.

<sup>22</sup> Speech by Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste Dr. Atul Khare. "The challenges of nation-building in a post-conflict society: the role of neighbouring countries." 18 June 2008.

<sup>23</sup> UNMIT. 2009. Medium Term Strategy. p.6.

<sup>24</sup> United Nations Security Council. 2009. Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (for the period from 9 July 2008 to 20 January 2009). p.19.

into the deaths of 200,000 people during the Indonesian occupation has resulted in an admission of guilt by Indonesia, nobody has been brought to justice.<sup>25</sup> More recently Martenus Bere, one of the perpetrators of the Suai Church massacre, which occurred in September 1999, was arrested as a result of investigations by UNMIT's Serious Crimes Investigation Team (SCIT). He was released just weeks after his arrest prompting renewed concern regarding the justice and human rights situation in Timor-Leste. It is difficult to understand why Timor-Leste's President has taken this stance. While the idea of looking forward and working towards a new future is laudable, this should not come at the expense of justice. Continuing calls for an International War Crimes Tribunal from both the international community and Timorese groups have failed in persuading the government to change their stance. In view of the current leadership's position on this issue it is possible to surmise that progress on this front will not occur unless there is a broadening of the UN's mandate in Timor-Leste. This is unlikely to happen, so at present there is little cause for optimism in this matter.

In terms of human rights, there were a number of reports of PNTL Task Force abuses in the period between the formation of the task force in December 2007 and February 2008. Allegations included excessive use of force and ill-treatment during arrest, abusive behaviour and unlawful searches of houses. There were also reports of human rights abuses by the F-FDTL – PNTL Joint Command<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> 2009. Burying Asia's savage past. *The Economist*. (392)8637.

<sup>26</sup> The F-FDTL – PNTL Joint Command was formed in response to the attempted assassination of Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao and President Jose Ramos-Hortas on 11 February 2008. The Joint Command continued to operate until 19 June 2009, when it was officially disbanded. A state of siege was in place between 11 February and 22 May 2008 during which freedom of movement was restricted and the right of freedom to assemble and demonstrate was suspended. See UNMIT. 2008.

following the assassination attempts on the President and the Prime Minister in 2008.<sup>27</sup> This is yet another area in which progress can only be made if the government cooperates with the UN. As progress on this front is vital if the UN is to consider downsizing with a view to ending its operations in Timor-Leste, it is essential that some headway is made.

After the 2006 crisis, UNMIT introduced a certification system for PNTL members. Under this system existing PNTL members and new recruits had to undergo a process of registration, provisional certification and final certification. PNTL members would be screened, undergo five days of training, additional firearms certification and six months of mentoring.<sup>28</sup> The aim of the programme was to uphold standards of integrity and capacity among police officers. The success of the programme has however been questioned, as by June 2008 there had been no dismissals on the grounds of criminal conduct or human rights abuses, despite numerous recommendations for such action.<sup>29</sup> The programme undoubtedly had the potential to succeed. However, the training period was hugely inadequate and failure to dismiss those found unsuitable for policing destroyed the programme's credibility.

The third objective set out in UNMIT's Medium term Strategy relates to democratic governance and seeks "widespread understanding, adoption of and adherence to the values and principles of sustainable democratic governance, throughout the institutions of State and society, which contribute to further strengthening the

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*Report on human rights developments in Timor-Leste.*

<sup>27</sup> UNMIT. 2008. *Report on human rights developments in Timor-Leste*. pp.4-6.

<sup>28</sup> B. Wilson. 2008. "Smoke and Mirrors" in *Democratic Governance in Timor-Leste: Reconciling the Local and the National* edited by David Mearns. Charles Darwin University Press: Darwin. p.99.

<sup>29</sup> UNMIT. 2008. *Report on human rights developments in Timor-Leste*. p.8.

institutional culture of democratic governance.”<sup>30</sup> Benchmarks under this objective include a functioning professional and independent media and a functioning anti-corruption regime.<sup>31</sup>

The relative success of the 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections can be attributed, at least in part, to the work of UNMIT, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). 80.5 per cent of the population went to polling stations to vote in the parliamentary elections.<sup>32</sup> While the elections were mostly peaceful, there were some isolated incidents of violence. This was to be expected and did not mar the success of the elections in any way. However, the opposition party, the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor’s (FRETILIN) continuing refusal to recognize the Parliamentary Majority Alliance (AMP) government, which they claim is unconstitutional, continues to impede political stability in Timor-Leste.<sup>33</sup> FRETILIN have on occasions threatened to withdraw all their MPs from parliament, believing that this would bring about a general election. They have also been planning a “March for Peace,” during which they would voice their claims that the AMP government is illegitimate.<sup>34</sup> Both these measures are divisive, increasing the risk of a return to violence in Timor-Leste.

On 5 November 2008, the Parliament ratified the United Nations Convention

against Corruption.<sup>35</sup> This is a positive step towards eradicating corruption in that it shows willingness to tackle the problem. It has however, had little impact on the levels of corruption prevalent in Timor-Leste today. Progress on the establishment of an anti-corruption commission has also been slow and although the commission was set up last month it is not yet functioning effectively. Senior officials, including the Prime Minister, have been implicated in a number of corruption scandals over the last 12 months, raising questions about the efficacy of UNMIT’s Democratic Governance Support Unit’s (DGSU) work.

The spate of corruption scandals in recent months, combined with the government’s use of force to contain opposition and discontent suggest that UNMIT’s third objective will not be achieved within the mission’s current mandate. The road to eliminating corruption and nepotism is likely to be long. Corruption has penetrated the highest echelons of government yet the President is unwilling to accept the fact that senior officials are guilty of corruption. It will be impossible to eradicate low-level corruption while Timor-Leste’s most senior ministers are steeped in controversy. Once again, UNMIT’s ability to rectify this situation is limited. The mission is not mandated to compel the government to take action to resolve this issue. They can do little more than advise the Timorese authorities, who are at liberty to reject any recommendations proffered. UN missions worldwide are often prevented from taking affirmative action when it is most needed because they are limited by the constraints of their mandates. Possible means for overcoming this problem will be considered later on in this paper, when the issue of sovereignty is discussed.

UNMIT’s fourth objective is related to socio-economic development and requires

<sup>30</sup> UNMIT. 2009. Medium Term Strategy. p.11.

<sup>31</sup> United Nations Security Council. 2009. *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (for the period from 9 July 2008 to 20 January 2009)*. p.19.

<sup>32</sup> Gutierrez. J.C. 2008. “Timor-Leste: A Year of Democratic Elections,” in *Southeast Asian Affairs 2008* edited by D. Singh and T.M.M. Than. pp.364-365.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* p.365.

<sup>34</sup> International Crisis Group. 2009. “*Timor-Leste: No Time for Complacency.*” Asia Briefing 87. Dili/Brussels. p.9.

<sup>35</sup> United Nations Security Council. 2009. *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (for the period from 9 July 2008 to 20 January 2009)*. p.4.

“a healthy, inclusive and sustainable economy which fosters social solidarity and provides the necessary opportunities for Timorese to support and develop themselves for more productive lives.”<sup>36</sup> Benchmarks under this objective include the reintegration of internally displaced persons (IDPs), effective disaster management structures, increased employment opportunities, access to water and sanitation, social welfare and social protection and a reduction in morbidity and malnutrition.<sup>37</sup>

In July 2009 the last remaining IDP camp in Timor-Leste was closed. The event marked a major transition for the country, signaling the beginning of a more stable future for its citizens. Those who had been living in the camp were awarded a Government national recovery package. However, not all those displaced during the 2006 crisis have been resettled and over 2000 people continue to live in transitional huts.<sup>38</sup> Moreover there have been instances of villages rejecting returning IDPs due to pre-conflict disputes.<sup>39</sup> It is essential that UNMIT, together with other UN agencies and NGOs operating in Timor-Leste work together to ensure that these issues are resolved as soon as possible. It will only be possible for the Timorese people to look to the future, when the instability and hardship they faced during the 2006 crisis become problems of the past.

50 percent of the Timorese population lives below the national poverty line of US\$0.88 per day and unemployment is rife.

<sup>36</sup> UNMIT. 2009. Medium Term Strategy. p.15.

<sup>37</sup> United Nations Security Council. 2009. *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (for the period from 9 July 2008 to 20 January 2009)*. p.19.

<sup>38</sup> “Breakthrough as Timor’s remaining IDP camp begins to close”. *UNMIT*. 2 July 2009. <http://unmit.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=228&ctl=Details&mid=456&ItemID=4541>.

<sup>39</sup> “TIMOR-LEST: Returning IDPs rejected by villagers” *IRIN*. 11 May 2009. <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=84318>

According to an IRIN report 50 per cent of men aged between 20 and 24 in Dili are unemployed.<sup>40</sup> The issue of unemployment must also be tackled if Timor-Leste’s economy is to become healthy and sustainable. Not only is it hindering socio-economic development but is also contributing to the risk of political instability and higher levels of crime. However, failure to resolve these problems cannot be ascribed to UNMIT alone. UNMIT is not the only UN agency working on the issue of socio-economic development in Timor-Leste. Other UN agencies working in this field include the UNDP, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Programme (FAO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). Moreover, the Timorese government also bears responsibility for development. Greater inter-agency cooperation is therefore required to ensure that the fourth objective is met.

It is clear that UNMIT is facing many of the obstacles described as generic limitations of UN peace operations earlier on in this paper. There can be no doubt therefore that these are real problems being experienced by current UN missions and that they must be addressed. It is however important to note that UNMIT’s failure to achieve the majority of its objectives to date does not mean that the mission has been a failure. The mission has had a number of successes, most notably the presidential and parliamentary elections held in 2007. It does however mean that like its predecessors, the mission has been too passive. UNMIT must play a more proactive role in ensuring that objectives relating to SSR, justice and human rights and democratic governance are met. The mission must also cooperate with the other UN agencies and NGOs working in Timor-Leste to ensure that progress is made in the field of socio-economic development.

<sup>40</sup> “Grappling with youth unemployment.” *IRIN*. 16 July 2009. <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85299>.

### III

## The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

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UNMIL was established on 19 September 2003. The mission's predecessor was the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL). UNMIL is an integrated mission and like UNMIT it has a multi-dimensional remit. The mission is currently mandated to remain in Liberia until 30 September 2010. The mandate was extended on 15 September 2009 by Security Council Resolution 1885, which authorises UNMIL to assist the Liberian government with the forthcoming elections in 2011 and cites free and fair elections as one of the prerequisites for the mission's final drawdown. The resolution also authorizes a significant downsizing in terms of the number of UNMIL military personnel but calls for the number of police personnel to remain constant.<sup>41</sup> This is largely due to the problems outlined below.

In terms of the security sector, there are many similarities between the challenges facing UNMIT and the challenges facing UNMIL. Police reform in Liberia has been described as an unqualified failure. This is mainly due to problems with the vetting procedure. Critics allege that insufficient numbers of corrupt officials were eliminated in the early stages of the process.<sup>42</sup> This problem has also been highlighted as one of the failures of UNMIT, raising questions about the UN's approach to police reform not just in Liberia but globally. Others claim that too many high-ranking officials have been removed due to UN mistrust. Equipment shortages are also a major problem for the Liberian National Police (LNP). The UN's police training programme has however been relatively

successful. While the original training period was to last 29 weeks, the training period has now been extended to one year.<sup>43</sup> A further success has been the deployment of the Indian Formed Female Police Unit (IFFPU). Mbadlanyana and Onuoha argue that the establishment of Female Police Units (FPUs) in multidimensional peacekeeping missions has generally been successful stating that they serve as a very important component in law enforcement missions.<sup>44</sup> The success of the IFFPU is particularly important in view of the prevalence of sexual and gender crimes in Liberia.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Liberia concluded its mandate on 30 June 2009. The commission has recommended the establishment of a criminal tribunal to prosecute those "identified as having committed gross violations of human rights and economic crimes." Liberia's President, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf is among those recommended to be subject to public sanctions including being barred from public office for a period of 30 years.<sup>45</sup> The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Liberia has certainly received more support than the commission in Timor-Leste. Questions do however remain regarding the implementation of the commission's recommendations and in particular regarding the likelihood of those recommended for prosecution and

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<sup>41</sup> United Nations Security Council. 2009. *Resolution 1885*. pp. 2-3.

<sup>42</sup> International Crisis Group. 2009. *Liberia: Uneven Progress in Security Sector Reform*. Africa Report No. 148. Dakar/ Brussels. p. 17.

<sup>43</sup> International Crisis Group. 2009. *Liberia: Uneven Progress in Security Sector Reform*. Africa Report No. 148. Dakar/ Brussels. pp. 17-19.

<sup>44</sup> Mbadlanyana, Thembanani and Onuoha, Freedom C. 2009. *Peacekeeping and Post-conflict Criminality: Challenges to the (re-)establishment of rule of law in Liberia*. ISS Paper 190. p. 11.

<sup>45</sup> United Nations Security Council. 2009. *Nineteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia*. p. 2.

sanctions facing justice. Recommendations that a court be established to try individuals who bear the greatest responsibility for serious crimes and human rights violations during the conflict were met with open threats from powerful former combatants, likely to be named for prosecution.<sup>46</sup>

Between July 2008 and July 2009, 13 serious cases of misconduct were carried out by UNMIL staff. These included nine allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. 122 minor misconduct cases involving UNMIL staff were also reported in the same period. These included petty theft involving items such as fuel and computers.<sup>47</sup> Although UNMIL is undertaking measures to combat these problems, the number of incidents of misconduct is still too high. The UN loses credibility and the support of the local populace when staff are found to be guilty of misconduct, especially when they are guilty of the same crimes, that the UN missions deplore and are supposed to be combating.

There have however been successes. The Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration programme (DDRR) was officially closed in July 2009. The programme successfully disarmed and demobilized more than 101,000 former combatants and more than 90,000 ex-combatants received reintegration assistance since its inception in 2003.<sup>48</sup> Although much remains to be done the programme's achievements are certainly a step in the right direction.

The mission in Liberia is often cited as an example of 'what not to do' in terms of peacekeeping. The reasons for this are manifold. Malan argues that constitutional reform, economic recovery and poverty reduction did not form a part of the UN-led transition process. He also states that major human rights abuses and high levels of sexual and gender based violence prevail because of the weak institutional base for the rule of law. He adds that many tasks remain to be completed including the reintegration of war-affected persons and former combatants, the consolidation of state authority throughout the country, the rehabilitation of the judicial system, ensuring access to justice and carrying forward the security sector reform programme.<sup>49</sup> The recent extension of UNMIL's mandate provides hope that at least some of these objectives will be achieved before the UN's departure from Liberia. It seems unlikely however, that significant progress will be made on all fronts by 2011, especially in view of the fact that UNMIL is facing many of the problems faced by UNMIT and yet is already in the process of downsizing.

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<sup>46</sup> United Nations General Assembly. 2009. *Implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa: Progress report of the Secretary-General.* p.10.

<sup>47</sup> United Nations Security Council. 2009. *Nineteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia.* p. 12.

<sup>48</sup> United Nations Security Council. 2009. *Nineteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia.* p. 4.

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<sup>49</sup> Malan, Mark. 2008. *Security Sector Reform in Liberia: Mixed Results from Humble Beginnings.* Strategic Studies Institute. p. 3.

## IV

### The United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN)

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Unlike UNMIT and UNMIL, UNMIN is not an integrated mission. Established on 23 January 2007, UNMIN is classified as a special political mission and is led by the UN's Department of Political Affairs as opposed to being managed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Its current mandate extends until 23 January 2010. A gradual reduction in staff numbers is taking place. UNMIN initially provided electoral assistance and ceasefire monitoring but the mission's current mandate covers arms monitoring, mine action and human rights. The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) is also cooperating with UNMIN on state transformation, recovery and conflict prevention and reconciliation.

Unlike the other missions discussed in this paper and unlike other UN missions worldwide UNMIN did not at any stage include armed peacekeepers. UNMIN ceasefire observers were both unarmed and civilian. The mission's mandate did not include provisions for humanitarian assistance and reconstruction and it made no provision for broader peacebuilding functions in the legal, political and social field. This was largely due to the presence of UN agencies and international aid organisations who were already well-established in Nepal.<sup>50</sup>

UNMIN's mandate has been extended four times since the mission's intended completion date of January 2008. Each extension has been for a period of six months. This suggests that the UN has been unrealistic about what is achievable in Nepal and about the time frames involved. There is also evidence to suggest that the UN

began to reduce UNMIN staff numbers too soon, before many of the challenges facing Nepal were resolved. This is highlighted by the fact that UNMIN has downsized despite the fact that key issues like the failure to discharge disqualified Maoist combatants and the continued existence of Maoist cantonments have not been met with a solution. This is a problem experienced in many countries where UN missions are operating and as such must be addressed at the Security Council level, rather than at a mission level.

According to the UN Secretary-General "the modest progress witnessed in some aspects of the peace process during the first quarter of 2009 has stalled against a backdrop of mistrust and a further deterioration of relations among key stakeholders, notably between UCPN-M and the other major parties and between UCPN-M and the Nepal Army."<sup>51</sup> As highlighted above, the reduction in UNMIN staff numbers does not reflect the lack of progress made in terms of political stabilization in Nepal. However, the innumerable extensions of the mission's mandate are unsustainable. UNMIN will have to terminate its operation in Nepal in the relatively near future, but despite progress on some fronts the UN will be departing without having truly fulfilled their mandate.

UNMIN has received a lot of bad press and there is a lot of resentment of what is considered to be "outside interference" in Nepal. This is ironic, considering the fact that UNMIN remains in Nepal at the

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<sup>50</sup> Suhrke, Astri. 2009. *UN Support for Peacebuilding: Nepal as the Exceptional Case*. Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute. p. 15.

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<sup>51</sup> United Nations Security Council. *Report of the Secretary-General on the request of Nepal for United Nations assistance in support of its peace process*. 13 July 2009. p.1.



request of the Nepalese government. Moreover, ICG argues that UNMIN does not have either the “will or capacity to engage in any of the skullduggery that India does so brazenly,” suggesting thereby, that the resentment and the criticism, which UNMIN faces, are largely unfounded and unjustified. This resentment was exacerbated by the fact that in May 2009, a leaked videotape showing Prachandra making a speech to Maoist army commanders and personnel in Chitwan was broadcast on local television and radio stations. In his speech he stated that the number of personnel presented for UN verification and registration had been significantly inflated. He also claimed that some of the money allocated for Maoist cantonments would be used to “prepare for a revolt.” This prompted questions about UNMIN’s role in the verification process, which took place in the latter half of 2007.<sup>52</sup>

As in Timor-Leste, no progress has been made in terms of justice and human rights. As yet there are no measures in place to ensure that perpetrators of human rights abuses, past and present, are brought to justice. The criminal investigations into allegations of human rights abuses by members of the Nepal Army and the Maoist Army have also failed to progress.<sup>53</sup> Human rights violations continue to be a part of everyday life and the government shows little inclination towards tackling the problem.

The ICG argues that one of UNMIN’s key weaknesses is its mandate, stating that the mandate is limited with a primary responsibility to monitor the management

of arms and armies.<sup>54</sup> This is arguably the problem with a number of UN missions. While the mission in Nepal is among the weaker UN missions, the majority of mandates do not seem to be extensive enough. The UN lacks the power to implement measures, which would really make a difference. UNMIN’s progress has also been impeded by the continuing lack of support from both India and the UN Security Council. India in particular has been reluctant to allow UNMIN to broaden its mandate<sup>55</sup>, an act which would undoubtedly have prevented the current stalemate situation. Nepal is a key example of the divisiveness of interference by regional actors when those regional actors have vested interests in the peace process.

Interestingly, Suhrke argues that UNMIN helped move the conflict over the critical hurdle that separated the military from the political arena. She states that only a neutral, third party like the UN could have satisfactorily taken on these functions.<sup>56</sup> This is a key point. Despite its failings the UN is able to make progress in areas in which local and regional actors, due to their own vested interests and regional tensions, are able to achieve very little. The UN, as an international organisation with an international staff is neutral and is thus able to approach peacekeeping from a non-partisan perspective, making it the most effective organisation, in terms of peacekeeping, that exists today.

It seems clear that despite past failures, UNMIN remains the best placed organization in terms of peacebuilding in Nepal. India’s political agenda and the mission’s weak mandate have hindered the

<sup>52</sup> United Nations Security Council. *Report of the Secretary-General on the request of Nepal for United Nations assistance in support of its peace process*. 13 July 2009. p.2.

<sup>53</sup> United Nations Security Council. *Report of the Secretary-General on the request of Nepal for United Nations assistance in support of its peace process*. 13 July 2009. p.9.

<sup>54</sup> International Crisis Group. 2009. *Nepal’s Future: In Whose Hands?* Asia Report No. 173. Kathmandu/ Brussels. pp. 28 - 29.

<sup>55</sup> Suhrke, Astri. 2009. *UN Support for Peacebuilding: Nepal as the Exceptional Case*. Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute. p. 29.

<sup>56</sup> Suhrke, Astri. 2009. *UN Support for Peacebuilding: Nepal as the Exceptional Case*. Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute. p. 15.

UN's ability to make significant progress in recent months. Without a broader mandate and a boost in capacity it is unlikely that advances will be made before the end of the mission's mandate in January 2010. Even if those conditions were to be met, six months will not be a sufficient time period to turn

matters around. Instead of the six month mandate extensions that have been taking place, UNMIN's mandate should be extended for one year. This would serve to increase both the mission's credibility and to enable more effective mission planning due to the more realistic timescale.

## V

# The Question of Sovereignty

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One of the key discussion points relating to peacekeeping and peacebuilding is sovereignty. Suhrke argues that nationalist reactions are familiar in all peacekeeping operations. Referring to Nepal, she states that nationalist reactions “limited UNMIN’s political room for action, and, when backed by the Indian government for other reasons, blocked the possibility for increasing international assistance at a juncture when the peace process appeared to stall.”<sup>57</sup> She also argues that Nepalese ownership weakened the peace process, citing Nepal as a definitive example of national ownership having a negative rather than a positive impact on peacebuilding.<sup>58</sup> A similar argument could be made when considering the case of Timor-Leste. The UN’s inability to impinge on national sovereignty with regard to issues relating to justice and human rights has seriously impeded progress towards stability.

The drive to retain full sovereignty during peace operations makes successful implementation of UN mandates impossible. The UN is present because local efforts to resolve conflicts and to build peace have failed. It is therefore essential that the UN is given the necessary scope to implement its own policies in a bid to stabilize the countries in which it operates. The restrictions placed upon the UN by governments in the name of sovereignty prevent the UN from achieving its objectives. A key example of this is the case of the African Union/ United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). The Sudanese Government’s insistence on

being centrally involved in all decisions relating to UNAMID proved to be a severe hindrance to the effective implementation of the mission. Wiharta states that “in no other peace operation in recent history was the host government given so much influence.” She adds that the Sudanese Government’s aim was apparently to weaken UNAMID.<sup>59</sup> This suggests that the UN’s attempts to promote inclusiveness and local ownership actually served to enable the Sudanese Government to impede the UN’s ability to fulfill its mandate. This has undoubtedly also been the case in other countries hosting UN missions.

Krasner supports this view, arguing that conventional sovereignty does not work. He advocates the implementation of shared sovereignty whereby “individuals chosen by international organizations, powerful states or ad hoc entities would share authority with nationals over some aspects of domestic sovereignty” would be a useful policy option.<sup>60</sup> He suggests that shared sovereignty could be established through treaties or through unilateral commitments.<sup>61</sup> A key objection to shared sovereignty is the question of how to convince states to accept such an agreement. Krasner argues that political leaders might accept shared sovereignty in order to secure external resources, to encourage the departure of occupying forces or to attract voters. He goes on to state that shared

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<sup>57</sup> Suhrke, Astri. 2009. *UN Support for Peacebuilding: Nepal as the Exceptional Case*. Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute. p. 47.

<sup>58</sup> Suhrke, Astri. 2009. *UN Support for Peacebuilding: Nepal as the Exceptional Case*. Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute. p. 48.

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<sup>59</sup> Wiharta, Sharon. 2008. Planning and deploying peace operations in *SIPRI Yearbook 2008: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*. p. 107.

<sup>60</sup> Krasner, Stephen D. 2004. Sharing Sovereignty: New Institutions for Collapsed and Failing States. *International Security*. Vol. 29 (4). p. 89.

<sup>61</sup> Krasner, Stephen D. 2004. Sharing Sovereignty: New Institutions for Collapsed and Failing States. *International Security*. Vol. 29 (4). p. 108.

sovereignty institutions would require external enforcement or adequate domestic support in order to be durable.<sup>62</sup> Even with these incentives it seems unlikely that the concept of shared sovereignty will be popular in countries hosting UN peace operations. Mohamed, on the other hand argues that Liberia, Timor-Leste, Kosovo and Somalia are just some examples of cases where “the UN has discarded the mantle of blind adherence to the principle of nonintervention and has taken action.”<sup>63</sup> It seems clear however that while the UN may have stepped away from the extreme stance which led to catastrophes like the genocide in Rwanda, it has not gone far enough in terms of moving towards assuming a more proactive peacekeeping and peacebuilding role. This is highlighted by the stalemate situation in Nepal and the lack of progress on Security Sector Reform in Liberia. The justice and human rights situation in Timor-Leste also reflects this.

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<sup>62</sup> Krasner, Stephen D. 2004. Sharing Sovereignty: New Institutions for Collapsed and Failing States. *International Security*. Vol. 29 (4). p. 119.

<sup>63</sup> Mohamed, Saira. 2005. From Keeping Peace to Building Peace: A Proposal for a Revitalised Trusteeship Council. *Columbia Law Review*. Vol, 105(809). p. 819

## VI

### Alternatives to UN led missions

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The UN missions discussed above face several common challenges. This isn't necessarily a negative factor as the fact that missions face the same obstacles across the board should in theory make it easier for the UN to combat them. Yet the obstacles described above are almost impossible to overcome. This is because they are not merely matters of policy, which can be resolved by policy reform. One of the greatest problems facing the UN is in fact financial. There can be no doubt that additional funding is required, but the question of where it should come from remains. The same applies to personnel issues. Additional qualified personnel will not simply materialize, the personnel question is a long-term issue. Finally, there is the issue of cooperation between the UN and the countries, which host the missions. In many cases, a major societal change is required in order to bring about the stability and development, which the UN is working for. This cannot be achieved in two or three years. It is therefore possible to improve the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping missions through policy measures to a certain extent, but obstacles to successful implementation will remain for the foreseeable future.

This raises the question of whether there are any alternatives to the UN. The European Union (EU) has launched a number of peacekeeping missions in recent years. These include EUFOR Tchad/RCA<sup>64</sup> and the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM). It is however worth questioning whether the EU can really be more successful on the peacekeeping front than the UN. If the UN faces resentment in parts of the world it is likely that the EU will be resented too. In the case of EUFOR Tchad/RCA for example, the force was associated with France, the former colonial power and

perceived as a government ally by some rebel groups.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, the EU has little experience of planning and conducting peacekeeping operations as it only deployed its first missions in 2003.<sup>66</sup> The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is also leading a number of military operations, most notably in Afghanistan and Iraq. The military alliance's first intervention was in the Balkans in 1995. NATO also provides support to the AU mission in Somalia (AMISOM) by providing airlift assistance to AU peacekeepers.<sup>67</sup> It is important to note that while the EU and NATO are both regional organizations and should technically be looked at in the same context as other regional organizations like the AU and ASEAN, unlike their counterparts these organizations largely operate outside of their home region. For the purposes of this paper they must therefore be considered as international actors, as that is the role they play when they launch missions in other continents.

Another alternative to the UN is a 'small country' initiative. Particularly interesting is the possibility of the Scandinavian countries playing an even greater role in peacekeeping and peacebuilding than they do today. This solution is worth considering because besides being economically and politically stable, they have none of the vested interests in the rest of the world, which shape so much of Western policy. Moreover, they already have experience of conflict resolution and peacekeeping due to their

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<sup>64</sup> Known in English as the European Union Force in Chad and the Central African Republic.

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<sup>65</sup> Wiharta, Sharon. 2008. Planning and deploying peace operations in *SIPRI Yearbook 2008: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*. p. 110.

<sup>66</sup> Wiharta, Sharon. 2008. Planning and deploying peace operations in *SIPRI Yearbook 2008: Armaments,*

<sup>67</sup> See [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_52060.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_52060.htm)

significant efforts in conflict mediation and the large number of troops they contribute to international peacekeeping and peacebuilding initiatives. While Nordic attempts to resolve the conflict in Sri Lanka failed, Finnish parties played a significant role in resolving the conflict in Aceh. This increased their credibility on the international stage. A military cooperation between the Nordic countries already exists. NORDCAPS was established in 1997 and supports UN led peacekeeping operations. It also supports missions led by other organizations. The Nordic countries also have a Nordic Battlegroup, which is one of eighteen European Union Battlegroups. As yet neither of these organizations has undertaken their own peacekeeping initiative, acting instead in support of larger international powers. It would however be worth evaluating the possibility of NORDCAPS leading their own mission. Would this be counterproductive or could such a mission be more successful than larger coalitions like the UN and the EU?

It is also necessary to consider the role that regional organisations can play in peacekeeping and peacebuilding within their member countries. While the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has traditionally shied away from involvement in internal conflicts, the organization could play a significant role in bringing about and sustaining peace in the Southeast Asia region. Indonesia proposed a Southeast Asian Peacekeeping Force in 2004 but the plan has yet to come to fruition.<sup>68</sup> The African Union is already engaged in peacekeeping. It deployed its first peacekeeping mission to Burundi in 2003 and a subsequent mission was deployed to Darfur in 2004. It currently has a mission in Somalia, the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM).<sup>69</sup> The Economic Community of West African States

(ECOWAS) has also been engaged in peacekeeping. They established the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), the military branch of ECOWAS in 1990. ECOMOG troops undertook, with varying degrees of success, peacekeeping operations in Liberia in 1990, Sierra Leone in 1998 and Guinea-Bissau in 1998. ECOMOG troops remain on standby for deployment at short notice.<sup>70</sup>

The danger of having too many parties involved in the peacekeeping process is that resources end up being spread too thinly. If the EU for example, contributed the resources used to finance and staff its own peacekeeping missions to the UN efforts, then the UN would arguably be more effective. This is again highlighted by the situation in Chad, where there is both an EU and a UN presence (United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad - MINURCAT). Often missions' mandates tend to overlap and rather than cooperating to maximize the effectiveness of the peacekeeping effort, missions fail to communicate and thus duplicate the same work in the best case and in the worst case actually end up competing against each other. If there are to be a number of different peacekeeping efforts, then the various parties involved in the process must learn to collaborate effectively to ensure a streamlined approach to stabilization and nation-building.

Organisations like the EU and NATO are hindered by the fact that they are not representative. They act on behalf of a group of developed nations, many of whom are indirectly responsible for the conflicts that they are now helping to resolve. The UN is more representative and despite claims that the UN is largely led by US policy and that the Security Council is outdated it is the one organisation, which represents 192 nations and therefore the

<sup>68</sup> See <http://www.aseansec.org/afp/20.htm>

<sup>69</sup> Murithi, Tim. 2009. The African Union's foray into peacekeeping: lessons to be learnt from the Hybrid Mission in Darfur. *Journal of Peace Conflict and Development*. Issue 14. p. 2.

<sup>70</sup> See <http://www.sec.ecowas.int/sitecedao/english/peace.htm>

least likely to adopt partisan policies. Regional organisations also have a part to play in keeping the peace, especially as they often have strong cultural ties with the parties involved. This can however also be a hindrance and as such an international presence in most conflict zones is to be desired. Another argument against the involvement of regional organisations in peacekeeping is that there is a disparity in the number of resources available to different regional bodies and that this could lead to a “de facto class system” in regional responses.<sup>71</sup> Wulf argues that regional organizations’ ability to be effective peacekeepers and peacebuilders is hindered by five weaknesses. He states that a lack of common values, in particular political differences is one of these obstacles. He adds that contested sovereignty, overlapping responsibilities and lack of capacity along with the problem of dominant regional powers all prevent regional organizations from taking on a more proactive role in post-conflict environments.<sup>72</sup> This is in keeping with the arguments presented above. It therefore seems clear that an improved UN approach to peacekeeping and peacebuilding is favorable to the alternative options discussed above.

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<sup>71</sup> Cockayne, James and David M. Malone. 2005. The Ralph Bunche Centennial: Peace Operations Then and Now. *Global Governance*. Issue 11. p. 337.

<sup>72</sup> Wulf, Herbert. 2009. Still under Construction. Regional Organisation’s Capacities for Conflict Prevention. INEF Report. pp. 7-11.

## VII

# The Road Ahead

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It seems clear that regardless of geographical location, current UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions face very similar challenges. There are differences between missions due to mandates, capacity and the dimensions of the conflicts from which each country is emerging. However, the similarities outweigh these differences and thus a general study of the efficacy of UN led missions provides an interesting insight into the obstacles facing these operations today.

In view of the criticism faced by the UN regarding its peace operations, alternatives to UN led missions have been considered in this paper. It seems clear however that the UN is still the most effective leader of peacekeeping initiatives in the world today. This is largely due to the fact that in complex post-conflict situations there will never be a perfect solution. Resource shortages are unlikely to be a short-term problem and mistakes will always be made in high-pressure situations, regardless of who is responsible for leading missions. Moreover, regional missions are often tainted by the vested interests of the organisation or the member countries leading the missions while the EU and NATO are frequently seen as imperialists due to the fact that several of their member countries have histories as colonisers. The mistrust brought about by such misperceptions seriously hinders these organisations' ability to lead peace operations effectively. The UN has over 60 years of experience in this field making them by far the most experienced peacekeepers and peacebuilders in the world today.

Yet, the UN is also tainted by its failings. The question of how the efficacy of the UN missions can be improved remains. Listed below are a number of policy recommendations detailing how the

effectiveness of the individual missions discussed in this paper can be improved. These recommendations are followed by a number of general recommendations detailing how the UN approach to peacekeeping could be amended in order to increase the UN's credibility in the eyes of those countries hosting UN missions and to ensure a greater mission success rate.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### In Timor Leste

Greater collaboration between UNMIT and Timorese government agencies is essential if the UN's Medium Term Strategy objectives are to be achieved. This is particularly important in so far as the issue of corruption is concerned. Corruption has a debilitating effect on all aspects of government and thus renders it extremely difficult for UN peace missions to fulfill their mandates.

It is vital that the UN takes its mission beyond Dili. Stability will not be established if the poorest rural areas do not benefit from the UN presence in Timor-Leste. The poorer communities are more likely to become disaffected with the government if their needs are not met so it is essential that they receive support and rehabilitation where necessary.

Increased cooperation between UNPOL and the PNTL is a key factor in the success of UNMIT. The PNTL's failure to cooperate with the UNPOL to date has seriously impeded progress towards a complete handover of policing responsibilities to the PNTL.

Despite the government's reluctance to pursue the issue of persecuting those responsible for violence in 1999 and 2006, it



is essential that UNMIT continues the drive for an International War Crimes Tribunal to bring those responsible for crimes against humanity to justice. These will serve to restore faith in the government and in the UN, providing the people of Timor-Leste with the opportunity to lay the past to rest knowing that justice has been served.

More effective UNPOL-UNPOL cooperation is necessary if UNMIT is to succeed in bringing about police reform. UNPOL officers cannot serve as effective mentors and advisors if they do not have an in-depth understanding of the situation on the ground. It is therefore necessary for UNPOL to ensure that there is a handover period, during which outgoing officers can brief incoming officers on the latest developments.

### **In Liberia**

It is important that the Liberian government undertakes steps to follow up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations. UNMIL must provide the support necessary to ensure that this process runs smoothly. Without such support there is a danger that the process will become sidelined and that the years spent investigating crimes against humanity will have been wasted.

There must be greater emphasis on Security Sector Reform especially with regard to the police. This is essential if the Liberian government is to be successful in combating the alarming number of serious crimes taking place in Liberia at present.

### **In Nepal**

The UN must continue to provide support to the government of Nepal to ensure that the target deadline for the drafting of the new constitution is met. Stability in Nepal will not be achieved until such time as the new constitution is in place. Delays on this front have been seriously hampering the peace process.

## **GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

Mission staff must play a proactive role in achieving benchmarks and objectives set out in mission strategies and mandates. Passivity greatly increases the risk of mission failure.

The UN needs more representative and diverse peacekeeping forces. The emphasis on recruiting peacekeeping troops almost exclusively from developing countries has in some cases led to poorly equipped and undertrained peacekeeping forces. This trend must be reversed and developed countries must be encouraged to provide troops, despite their many non-UN engagements.

Greater cooperation between UN missions and other peacekeeping forces is vital for the success of UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding. It is essential that there is as little overlap as possible between the work of UN missions and the work of other peacekeeping forces in order to ensure maximum efficiency.

## VIII

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Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)  
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