Re-viewing United Nation Peacekeeping: A Case of Africa

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Abstract

Since its inception UN has actively participated in the conflict resolution in different part of world though peacekeeping with the help of member states. Its mandates for the promotion of peace in post WW-II era has earned it many time phrases and many time heralded as unnecessary forceful intervention by the affected states. Nevertheless, UN peacekeeping operations has always been seen as an important tool in the establishment of normalcy in conflicting states weather it in intra or inter-state turmoil.

Africa has been affected by many various kinds of severe violent conflicts not only during cold war but also in post cold war era. Its violent ethnic conflict and other vicious social upheavals has jeopardised the development agenda of Africa. UN has played an important role through peacekeeping operations in Africa. However changing nature of UN peacekeeping operations has raised many challenges and its transformation from traditional one to more robust mission also constantly spawn many questions regarding its principle of peacekeeping

Thus this paper will try to analyses and re-view the peacekeeping operation with instances from African continent. It will also raise some concerns as how far it realises in its agenda for peace through active and passive operations.

Keywords: United Nation, Peacekeeping, Africa, Conflicts, Robust Peacekeeping

Introduction

Since the onset of UN in 1945, pivotal objective of the organisation is to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" and one of its main purposes is to maintain international peace and security. Although, there is no explicit references or provision for 'peacekeeping' in the UN Charter but it has evolved into a pertinent tool for realisation of its purpose. Although concept of UN peacekeeping has been developed as a temporary basis but it has passed many phases over the last 70 years. It embarked upon during the Cold War years as circumvent for the defence of people not to wage war but to prevent fighting between the belligerents. Peacekeeping operations have been deployed by the United Nations since the 1950's, as a part of UN collective security system. Traditionally, purpose of peacekeeping missions is to give support to ceasefire or peace agreement and in principle, peacekeepers are not supposed to do any combat activities.

UN Charter gives primary responsibility to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the maintenance of international peace and security. Its authority to organize peacekeeping operations drives form Chapter VI and VII of the charter and Article 1(1) of the UN Charter, which empowers UN organs to maintain and restore international peace and security (Article.1 (1), UN Charter, 1945). The Security Council primarily responsible for maintenance and restoration of peace and security, however, UNSC often adopt different ways of method for achieving peace including establishment of peacekeeping operations.

Contingent involves in peacekeeping operations whether military, police or Civilian, are expected to act accordance with international human rights law and Peacekeepers should ensure that they do not become perpetrators of human rights violators or implicitly party to conflict. They should have understanding of human rights violations and able to respond appropriately within the

limits of their mandate and their ability. If there is some evidence of abuse of human rights by the United Nations peacekeeping personnel in the dealings with colleagues or with local people in their public as well as private place should be held accountable.

Since its inception in 1950s nature of task taken by UN for peacekeeping has been changed in a significant way with the shifting pattern of conflict in order to address the emerging demand of peace and security threat. Although every UN Peacekeeping operation is different and has distinct character but there is a degree of evenness in the types of mandated tasks assigned by the UNSC.

What is Peacekeeping?

Before going into the detail review of UN Peacekeeping operations, it is pertinent to clarify some related terms often conflates in the literature of peace and conflict resolution. **Conflict prevention** attributes to the structural and diplomatic measures to cling intra/interstate turmoil and disputes from latent to covert violent conflict. Generally, it is crafted on early warning system, information gathering networks and analyses of malaise factors that have potential to spawn conflicts. It may also be realises through preventive deployment or confidence building measures (UN Peacekeeping: Principles and Guidelines, 2008). However on other hand, **Peacekeeping** is a notion to preserve the peace, no matter how venerable. It is done in a place where fighting has been stopped and there is a need of assistance in implementing agreements spawn by groups. Earlier it was basically done through military model of observing cease-fires and deployment of military contingent between the two fighting groups after the abrogation of violence. However over the period it has incorporated more complex way of peacekeeping involving not only military but also police and civilian persons for more sustainable peace.

Peacemaking often covers measures to address those conflicting situations which are in progress. It often done through diplomatic action in order to bring hostile groups towards negotiation table and ameliorate charged situation for agreement. Peacemakers may also be envoys, governments, group of states, regional organizations or the United Nations. Again, **Peace enforcement** however, is a strong notion where with authorisation from UNSC, range of coercive measures, such as use of military force is often used. Such actions are authorized to restore international peace and security in situations where the UNSC in his inference considered the presence of a threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression. In this situation UNSC may also collaborate or take help with other appropriate, regional organizations and agencies for enforcement. (UN Peacekeeping: Principles and Guidelines, 2008)

Whereas **Peacebuilding** embark on those measures which helps in curtailing the risk of lapsing of peace agreements by building and support in enhancing national capacities at various levels for conflict management, which eventually making a ground for sustainable peace and development. Peacebuilding is a long term and dynamic process. It starts with addressing the root causes of structural violence in an inclusive context. It seeks to enhance the capacity of the State and consequently increase the legitimacy of governmental activities.

With the end of cold war and at the same time escalation of intra-state asymmetric violent conflicts all over the world particularly in Third World, nature of Peacekeeping has also been moulding in accordance with these new emerging situations. The boundaries between conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and peace enforcement have become increasingly blurred, as seen in Figure 1. It is no more limited to one dimensional activity. Apparently it also raises many challenges and pertinent question related to its legitimacy and set principles for operation. However, UN peacekeeping operations also deployed military persons to support the implementation of its mandates and often in recourse perform more active role in peacemaking efforts. Similarly, UN peacekeeping operations force at tactical level with the consent of UNSC as to defend their persons and approved mandate. It is evident here that while 'robust'

peacekeeping requires use of force at the tactical level but with the consent of the host authorities or the main parties to the conflict, while, peace enforcement may include use of force at the strategic or international level, which is not allowed normally for member states under Article 2 (4) of the Charter unless approved by the UNSC (UN Peacekeeping: Principles and Guidelines, 2008).

Figure 1: UN DPKO, Capstone Doctrine

2008
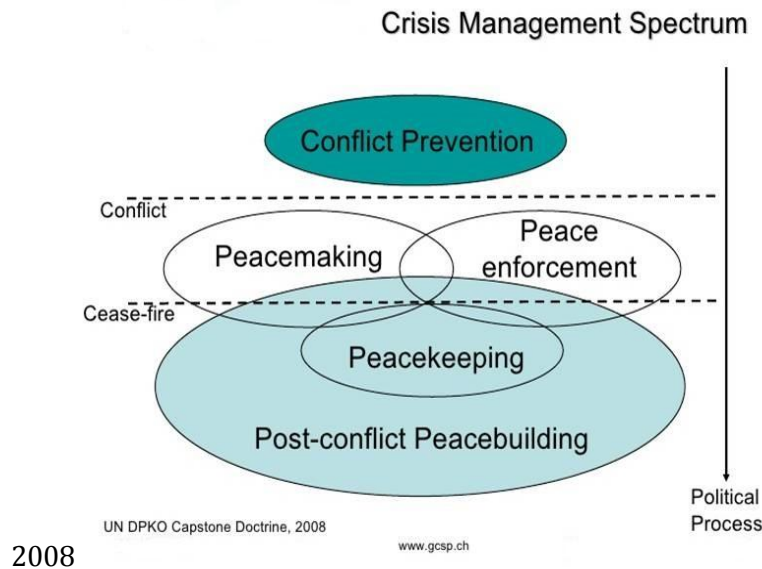
Principle for Peacekeeping

Although the practice of United Nations peacekeeping has evolved significantly over the past six decades, three basic principles have traditionally served and continue to set United Nations peacekeeping operations apart as a tool for maintaining international peace and security:

- Consent of the parties
- Impartiality
- Non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate

Peacekeeping: From Traditional to Multidimensional

Although not explicitly mentioned in Charter, it began in 1948 when the first United Nations military observers were established for West Asia. During the Cold War period, UN Peacekeeping was limited to maintaining cease-fires and stabilizing situations on the ground, so that efforts could be made at the political level to resolve the conflict by peaceful means. Most of the longstanding peacekeeping operations could be put under this traditional category. These kind of traditional UN peacekeeping operations are deployed mainly as non interventional measure for creating conducive environment for managing conflict and settlement. It was mainly military in character and done with the help of Observation, monitoring and worked as a buffer zone for all conflicting parties. Monitoring and reporting done by the peacekeepers about groups if there were any non commitments shown by any parties. Traditional peacekeeping operations ensure the fermented party that the other party will not seek to exploit the cease-fire in order to gain some advantage. In other word, traditional peacekeeping operations do not take pain to resolve the conflict.

Second phase of peacekeeping started with the end of Cold War. Change in world scenario also impacted the United Nations peacekeeping operations. This period also witnessed in the decline in inter-state conflicts. However on the other side, internal armed conflicts escalated all over the world but mostly confine to global south. These changes perpetuate a new phase of multi-

dimensional United Nations peacekeeping operations. It often worked in place where there was no 'peace to keep'. In this phase some multi-dimensional UN peacekeeping operations was deployed because of demand generated from national authorities in order to support in the formation of legitimate government but without presence of any formal peace agreement among fermented groups. In some cases, UNSC also authorised multidimensional United Nations peacekeeping operations for a brief period for legislative and administrate functions of the State, in order to support the transfer of authority in case of partition state, or to establish administrative structures that may be absence previously. Multi-dimensional UN peacekeeping operations works in a much more challenging environment as due to civil or ethnic war, society is divided along ethnic, religious and regional lines and grave human rights abuses were committed during the conflict. It is argues that Multidimensional peacekeeping helps in filling the security vacuum that often created in a post-conflict situation and ensures a safe environment for humanitarian and developmental works.

These internal asymmetric armed conflicts often inflict large civilian casualties. It also generates Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees in a significant numbers. Thus, multi-dimensional UN peacekeeping operations have now mandate to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence with the help of all elements of peacekeeping i.e., military, police and civilian keepers. Contrary to traditional notion of UN peacekeeping operations, multidimensional operations generally play a direct role in resolving the conflict.
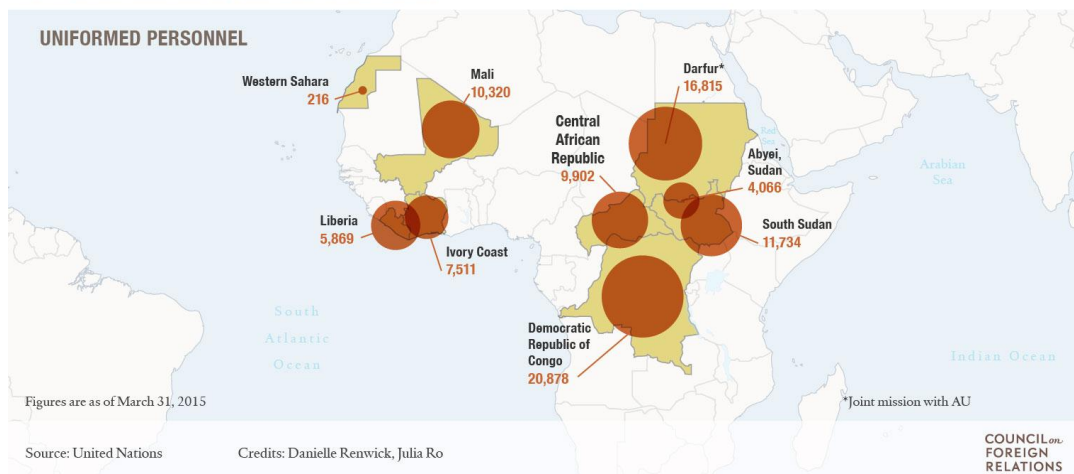

Figure 2: Council for Foreign Relations

UN Peacekeeping Operations in Africa

(A) 1990-2000

During 1991-2000, there was significant deployment of UN peacekeeping operations. 36 of the 54 peacekeeping operations set up between 1948 and 2000 were established after 1991. It was attributed due to escalation of conflicts particularly in Balkans and Africa. The number of operations increased to 18 by the middle of 1994 but further went down to 15 by the end of 2000. During the 1990s the deployment of uniformed peacekeepers also fluctuated. At the beginning of the decade there were relatively low levels of uniformed deployments with a total strength of about 10000**.** Their numbers increased and reached to some 78000 in 1993. This was largely the result of expansions in the UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) and the United Nations Protection Force in the former Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) (United Nations Department of Public Information, 2001).

However, Situations in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Somalia in particular had given a new role to peacekeeping forces. In the former Yugoslavia and Somalia combat conditions with high hostility

towards the UN led to the limited use of enforcement action in accordance with Chapter VII of the UN Charter (Riza, 1995, p.18). Furthermore, UNPROFOR was the first operation which included infantry battle groups with high-intensity combat operations. It was the clear case of departure from traditional peacekeeping operations. Further, multinational forces were also started to use attack helicopters and armoured fighting vehicles to disarm rival factions (ibid, p. 24). Nevertheless due to severe setbacks since 1993 in Somalia, Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, UN in many ways retreat from its earlier vision for peacekeeping given in 'an agenda for peace' by secretary general of UN. Furthermore, experiences from Somalia have persuaded US to curtail its contributions to peacekeeping operations particularly with regards to Africa.

UN peacekeeping operations in number further dropped to 16 by the end of 1995 as compared to 17 at the end of 1994. This was because of the termination of three large operations, namely UNOSOM II, the UN Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) and the UN Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL). Similarly, the numbers of uniformed peacekeeping personnel had also dropped sharply. From 29000 in 1996 to curtailed further to 12000 till the middle of 1999. However this trend was again reversed late in 1999 with the establishment of peacekeeping operations in Kosovo, East Timor and Sierra Leone.

(B) Post 9/11

Out of fifteen missions deployed in 2001, four were deployed in Africa, two in Asia, five in Europe and four in the Middle East. According to the UN Department of Public Information, a total of 37719 uniformed UN peacekeepers were deployed on 1 January 2001. This means that there had been an increase in the number of uniformed personnel in UN peacekeeping operations since the sharp decline in 1995. Moreover UN's peacekeeping budget was decreased by the end of 1990s, was increased again and reached to nearly US$3 billion in the budgetary cycle 2000/01 (United Nations Department of Public Information, 2001). Deployment of 13000 peacekeepers in Sierra Leone in 2004 also reveal that after the failure of Somalia and Rwanda in 1990s, retreated major power further return to the Africa. In many ways this mission has showed many successes and led to peace process of once war-ravaged country's diamond-mining industry that had fuelled the conflict (Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, 2002).

By the year 2008, the numbers of UN peacekeepers were further increased. 20 UN peacekeeping operations were administered on four continents. The budget for peacekeeping grew to nearly US$7 billion in the 2007/08 period. Africa remained the major arena for UN peacekeeping operations. 10 out of 20 operations were in Africa. Focusing on Africa also increase in spending of the bulk of the UN's peacekeeping budget of nearly US$7 billion in the 2007/08 period in African peacekeeping operations.

A total of 90429 uniformed UN peacekeepers including 76529 military personnel, 11218 police officials and 2682 military observers were deployed on 31 January 2008. These figure showed in enhanced sense of international peacekeeping responsibilities. Out of total budget, US$1.28 billion was alone kept for Darfur only (United Nations Department of Peacekeeping, 2007). It is evident that increase in peacekeeping operation in Africa could be because many of the operations in eastern and central Europe specifically former Yugoslavia were terminated. As, de Coning pointed out that this trend in shift in the political will of the international community to foster peacekeeping operations in Africa is more or less concerns as after 9/11, it is argues that failed states are ideal breeding grounds for international terrorists. De Coning also argues that there is a kind of informal division in the pattern of contribution to operations whereby most Western countries contribute to NATO or EU operations in Europe and the Middle East while most UN peacekeeping troops are from countries in the developing world (Coning, 2006, pp. 3-4).

FIGURE 3: NUMBER AND TYPE S OF PEACE OPERATIONS IN AFRICA, 1988–
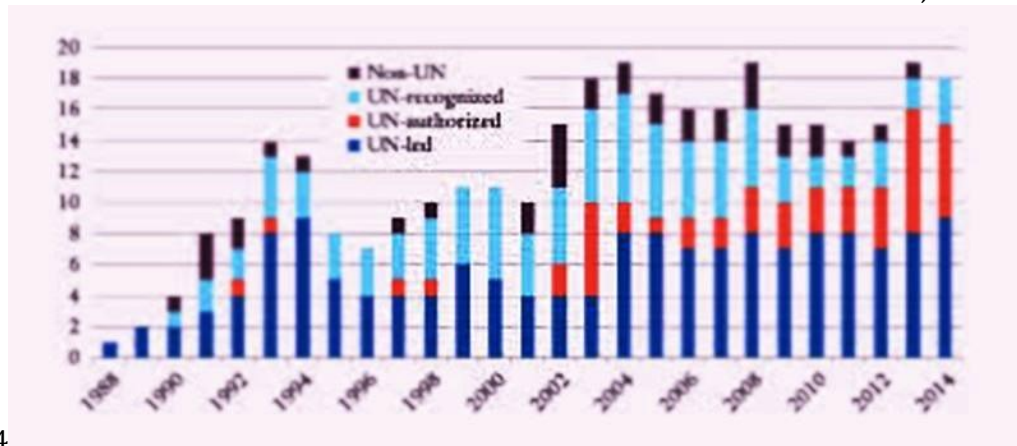
2014

Source: A. J. Bellamy and P. D. Williams, "Trends in Peace Operations, 1947–2013" in The Oxford Handbook of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, ed. Koops et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

Resent Trends in Peacekeeping in Africa

With slowly withdrawn of large scale operations from Kosovo, Timor-Leste, and Liberia and transitioning from classical to peacebuilding activities and global financial crisis of 2008 presented ever increasing pressure on international peacekeeping, for reduction in budgets and curtail tasks. Experiences from the mission in Iraq and Afghanistan also add a discontent over large-scale and extended international interventions. However this trend was not lasted for long. Deployment of 12,000 troops and police to Mali and 10,000 to the Central African Republic (UNSC Resolution S/RES/2100, 2149), revive the peacekeeping operations after the financial crisis. This enhanced peacekeeping missions further significantly change the nature of UN peacekeeping, i.e., from traditional and multidimensional peacekeeping, to enforcement peacekeeping (Peter, 2015, p.353).

Now the targets are more or less non-state actors who have little or no international legitimacy due to their dangerous track records of abuse of human rights and war crimes. Consequently no peace agreements with them are sought before peacekeepers are deployed. As it is argues that UN is increasingly confronting groups such as (similar to Qaeda and the Taliban) Al-Shabaab, M23, Boko Haram, and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, thus reluctance in large scale intervention by the western powers instead conducting more on a smaller scale to manage these asymmetric conflicts.

The most significant change in UN peacekeeping is the nature of targeted combat operations and its shift in the approach from defensive to offensive peacekeeping. It is seen in case of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where the Security Council authorized the intervention of infantry combats within an existing UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) mission. This is the first ever offensive' combat force in UN peacekeeping (UN News, 23 March 2013). Objective of brigade was to 'neutralize and disarm' the Tutsi March23 (M23) militia in the eastern parts of the DRC. UNSC further broaden the resolution and allow the UN peacekeepers to assist Congolese forces in fighting all armed groups, including Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). This is the first time in the process of UN peacekeeping that the Security Council came out with a list of enemies. In other words, UN is explicitly engaged in a battle alone with the Congolese government. Interestingly, this was the same government that the UN and other international actors have repeatedly criticized for abuses by its military against civilians (Peter, 2015, p.354).

However this trend has not been applied explicitly to other places for example, the UN operation in Mali, does not have a mandate for offensive as the mission in the DRC. There are many difficulties in imitating the trend for instance, Secretary-General has raised its concerns about the inability of UN troops to engage in desert combat and also somewhere objection raised by the newly emerging states of Africa and Asia for allowing such mandate (ibid.). Similarly, there has increasingly in collaboration with regional organisations such as ECOWAS in DRC and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) with UNSC as a political mission with a mandate to support the government and peacekeepers. Thus organising mission in such a way has greater implication in a sense that even if when UN is not directly involve in deployment, it is supporting regional organizations and hence indirectly active in action.

Again in the recent trends in UN Peacekeeping mission, not only actively engaging in combat mission but also providing assistant in state building process of the concern state.   For example, UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) is supporting the government in the development of a federal system (UN Security Council, Res. S/RES/2102). However supporting a particular state authority even without any comprehensive peace agreement will raises the question of rationality in terms of excluding regional actors with interest in the conflict but also create doubts on becoming UN peacekeeper as a political tool. In the African context, borders were arbitrarily drawn by colonial masters and cross-border interests evidently visible. Whereas UN peace operations as a rule have a single-state mandate, the conflicts in Mali, Somalia, the DRC, the CAR, Sudan, and South Sudan, are all regional conflicts. Their neighbouring states are part of the conflict dynamics (Peter, 2015, p. 356).

Change in the nature of peacekeeping also affecting on the contribution to UN peacekeeping mission. Ever increasing rely on regional contributions also motivated as many African states are willing to contribute troops in robust operations as they are showing concerns about the effects of repercussion of fluid conflicts to their security and political interests, for example, largest troop contributors to the Mali mission are Chad, Burkina Faso, Niger, Togo, and Senegal, all regional states (www.un.org). Similarly, in the DRC, the primary contributors to the intervention brigade are South Africa, Tanzania, and Malawi, while the rest of the MONUSCO mission is composed mainly of South Asian troops.

Similarly, the UN-supported African Union mission in Somalia consists mostly of regional troops from Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. Such a composition has already raises some difficulty as it has seen with Kenyan peacekeepers profiteering in the local charcoal trade and Ethiopian troops, which have a long history of invasions of Somalia, being extremely unpopular among the local population (Peter, 2015, p.356). Again, Chadian contribution in African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) has been highly unpopular due to Chad's perceived backing of the Muslim rebel group Séléka, which overthrew the CAR government (ibid).

Above trend clearly demonstrating the fact that the present trends in peacekeeping is mostly conducting in an area where there is no peace to keep. Nevertheless, UNSC is willing to use peacekeepers in high risk areas. Works of Peacekeepers also immensely expanded not only from protection of states to disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), which is mostly done after the peace agreement signed (UN Guidelines IDDRS).

Another changing nature of peacekeeping operation is that UN mission is not afraid of using those tactic and equipment which were earlier not allowed and considered as a breach of sovereignty. The UN has advocated the use of surveillance drones in the eastern DRC, on the border between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, in South Sudan, and in Mali (Karlsrud and Rosen, 2013, pp.1-10). The Brahimi Report also advocated for the incorporation of field intelligence in operations so that they could better respond to complex situations (UN Brahimi Report, par. 51). However these recommendations were also faced some opposition from member states. Although UN has always used some intelligence and information from other sources but open incorporation of strategic

intelligence through drones, intelligence, and strategic communication into UN peacekeeping missions is a new trend.

Accessing the UN Peacekeeping

Consent is most important principle of UN peacekeeping operations while deployment by the main parties of the conflict. It differentiates it from enforcement modal. As Capstone Doctrine argues, "In the absence of such consent, a United Nations peacekeeping operation may become a party to the conflict; and being drawn towards enforcement action, and away from its intrinsic role of keeping the peace" (UN Capstone Doctrine, p.32). Evidently, in the recent trend in peace operations such as DRC, Mali, and Somalia, peacekeepers are helping the state's government in defeating one of the parties to the conflict. But in most of these cases, state government lacks the desire ability to defeat them by themselves. On the other hand groups like, Al-Shabaab in Somalia, al-Qaeda–affiliated groups in northern Mali, LRA, the FDLR, and M23 militias in the eastern DRC also lacks legitimacy as a participants to the conflict in the eyes of world community consequently their consent is not sought. But the lack of legitimacy among interveners does not mean a lack of legitimacy among the local population or a lack of political agency.

Secondly, it is expected that UN peacekeeping missions will implement mandates without any prejudice or favour to any party. It means impartiality is a crucial for the consent and cooperation of the main parties, but it is not neutrality. As evidently seen new peacekeeping operations are not fully being impartial to all important parties to the conflict. In this context, the lack of consent makes it impossible for these operations to be impartial even in principle. Besides this, many new missions comprise troops from the contribution made by regional states that are part of the conflict dynamics. The Great Lakes region, the Horn of Africa, and the Sahel have long been recognized as regional conflicts and involvement of these players without considering their interest may hamper the sprite of mission. Thus it is not clear whether troops participating in these missions are actually uphold the peacekeeping mandate or to protect immediate interests of the states contributing them.

Furthermore, the use of force is an important part of the mandate now. Although UNSC has cleared that use of force is an "exceptional basis and without creating a precedent or any prejudice to the agreed principles of peacekeeping." (UNSC Resolution-2098) On depletion of the principle of no use of force Peter argues, that is why UNSC is more and more rely on the collaboration and comfortable in relying on regional groupings and interested parties to perform these tasks, even if the UN mission is directly supporting them (Peter, 2015, p. 360).

There are many repercussions that have been arising from the being defensive to offensive. An offensive mandate also exposes other parts of the peacekeeping mission for example, humanitarian aid. UN peacekeeping has been continually moving toward greater complexity. New mission mandates now working in a very broad range of issues involving political, security, humanitarian, refugee, gender, and other related sectors. Offensive activities could have negative effects on other parts as well as these workers as not combatant and hence vulnerable to attacks. UN political support to controversial governments and robustness of operation further politicise international peacekeeping. If UN peacekeepers will take a position for one side in a conflict, eventually to a large extent it affects conflict and its political dynamics. Consequently it delegitimizes the claims of others that might be not very conducive for sustainable peace.

New peacekeeping process makes UN as a player in the conflict. Asymmetric conflicts perpetuated by non-state actors lacks the legitimacy, but this does not be presented as an excuse for exclusion of these groups in the peace process. Not addressing the grievances of all stakeholders of conflicts may derail or impasse the peace process as it may lack ground realities. These armed groups may have very little legitimacy in front of outside world but they also sometime enjoy the popular supports from common people because they often their articulations includes real concerns and grievances of local people.

Conclusion

Peacekeeping over the period have been changed a lot. Concept has been mixed with other activities of UN and other international organisation. UN peacekeeping crossed the classical line of definition and often conflates with other robust operations. Mixing with the peace building and peace enforcement raises many challenges however considering the present trends in the internal asymmetric conflicts, it makes very difficult to change the current mandates of peacekeeping in the near future. Nevertheless, for a sustainable peace UN peacekeeping missions' dilemma with it principle and practices should be address as an essential elements for the development of trust and establishment of process for reconciliation. Thus following the current inconsistency would ultimately destroy the reputation of UN peacekeeping and undermines future deployments.

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