

Chapter 20

Peacekeeping and Post-War Violence

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AMISOM – African Union Mission in Somalia

DDR – Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

ECOMOG - Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group

FPU – Formed Police Units

IPLUs – Individual Police Units

MINURCA – United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic

MINUSCA – United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Central African Republic

MINUSTAH – United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti

MONUC - United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo

MONUSCO - United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

UN – United Nations

UNAMSIL – United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

UNMISET – United Nations Mission of Support to East Timor

UNPOL – United Nations Police

Introduction

Contemporary UN missions' goal is not limited to reducing ongoing violence, but also entails supporting and securing peace-building processes in the aftermath of wars. However, the difference between in-civil war and post-civil war phases is not limited to differences in the intensity of violence and insecurity. Put otherwise, while it is true that peacekeepers operate in active conflict more than they used to do in the past, post-civil war settings present important and distinct challenges for blue helmets. In fact, post-war violence 'transmutes and reappears in different forms – i.e. criminal violence, youth violence, domestic violence – permeating social life to the point at which perceptions of post-conflict insecurity render peace as a paradox' (Kofi Annan Foundation 2018, p. 20).

This chapter moves for the observation that UN peacekeepers operate in post-conflict settings that are, in practice, just post-war rather than truly post-violence settings. We know that violence is persistent and lingers in the aftermath of a civil war. At the same time, this does not make the post-war setting a simple continuation of the civil war – it presents its own specific challenges that are not trivial to the approach and success of UN missions. In fact, there is evidence that peacekeepers curb violence that lingers in the post-war phase as well (Hultman et al. 2016; Kathman and Benson 2019), so this violence does not pose major problems to the mission. As argued in this chapter, the post-war challenges peacekeepers face are not simply related to the lingering presence of violence linked to the past civil war.¹ This chapter highlights and focuses on two main changes in the dynamics of violence that peacekeeping missions need to adjust to in the post-war phase, namely *(i)* the emergence of new violent actors missions are not designed to tackle, and *(ii)* the risks of violent urban disorders involving civilians.

First, post-war violence can take new forms, the most prominent and common being criminal violence. Criminal violence is strongly associated with the presence and competition among criminal groups. Guatemala is a commonly cited example of a country that experienced more violence after rather than during the civil war. The conditions that sustained war economies remain in the aftermath of the civil war, with the additional advantage of a weak central authority and a more predictable environment. In the context of the Colombian peace process, the combination of these two factors was described as territorial peace without territorial governance (Eaton 2021).² The latter is particularly important because illicit markets

necessitate some degree of stability to function. Sometimes criminal groups buy protection from other criminal actors (Gambetta 1996), but the end of the conflict itself significantly contributes to reducing the risks of disruption. Furthermore, criminal groups can also seek ways to recruit among “violence professionals” when non-state armed groups are being demobilized, disarmed but unsuccessfully reintegrated back to their communities and the legal economy.³ In some cases, the wartime networks are purportedly criminalized by former commanders who have accumulated “criminal capital” (Nussio 2018), and are converted to criminal purposes (Daly et al. 2020). Historically, peacekeepers rarely have had mandates that enabled them to tackle criminal actors directly, thus ultimately leaving weakened post-war state authorities alone in fighting criminal violence. UN deployments may provide the needed security space for criminal activities and even create opportunities for criminal entrepreneurs within so-called peacekeeping economies. The resulting competition among criminal groups tends to produce much higher levels of homicidal violence.

Second, the post-war setting involves some degree of political contention, especially around first elections. Interestingly, not only the timing but also the geography of violence changes in the post-war phase. As noted by Elfversson et al. (2019), post-war violence tends to concentrate in urban spaces. Cities become important political spaces in the aftermath of wars for several reasons. For example, opposition parties or former-militant groups willing to participate in elections mostly recruit in urban settings to reach more people, thus making cities an arena for political competition. Urban areas also often host high numbers of forcibly displaced people as well as marginalized groups living in slums. Finally, peacekeepers are often deployed in urban spaces or in their proximity, and it is not rare for the local population to organize and protest against the UN presence or activities, demanding the UN to leave.⁴ Hence, cities’ transformation into “hubs for different forms of contestation”, violent and nonviolent, is peculiar to the post-war settings (Sampaio 2019, p. 1). Research shows that peacekeepers may also enable and foster participation to peaceful demonstrations in the post-war phase (Belgioioso et al. 2021), but managing urban unrest and public disorder has become an increasingly relevant challenge peacekeepers face in post-war urban settings.

The UN approach to peacekeeping does not seem to respond particularly well to these post-war challenges. To be sure, peacekeepers are able to maintain peace between former belligerents (Hultman et al. 2016). However, blue helmets are ineffective at reducing violence perpetrated by non-state armed actors *beyond* former belligerents (Bara 2020) and

by criminal actors (Di Salvatore 2019). While peacekeepers keep performing well against the violence they were originally deployed to curb, in the post-war setting they are unable to face the post-war violence that takes different forms.

This chapter proceeds with a more in-depth discussion of the challenges posed by new forms of violence in the post-war setting, with a particular focus on criminal violence and urban unrest.⁵ These two types of violence are not unique to the post-war setting, but the relative stability that the aftermath of conflict termination entails (whether durable or not) may in fact favor both the emergence of criminal actors and increasing levels of public mobilization. In addition, the capacity-building effect of peacekeeping that should strengthen state institutions only starts in the aftermath of conflict and even timid results take time. Criminal groups are particularly problematic because of the direct challenge they represent to state capacity. If missions focus on long-term statebuilding without tackling the short-term challenges criminal actors pose to state capacity, this can divert or even subvert statebuilding goals by opening up opportunities for criminal actors to thrive and, possibly, even permeate institutions. Then, the chapter illustrates whether and how the UN reconfigures missions' composition (that is, UN troops vs UN police) and mandates in the post-war scenarios. It concludes discussing the increasingly relevant role of the UN police (UNPOL) as component of peacekeeping operations for maintenance of post-war order, given this unit is better equipped to deal with urban disturbances and criminal violence than regular UN troops.

How Crime Thrives in Post-War Settings

Before understanding why crime and criminal violence emerge in post-war settings, it is important to describe how conflict itself opens up space for crime. Lack of state capacity and the weakening of a state's monopoly of violence are ideal conditions for the emergence of new criminal groups and for the flourishing of existing ones. While civil wars destroy physical infrastructures and human capital upon which the formal economy is based, some actors still profit from the war economy. To be sure, Goodhand (2004) argues that the war economy is based on three different sets of informal economies, namely the combat, the shadow and the coping economies. The fundamental difference across these economies is that the combat economy serves the purpose of sustaining the political struggle of insurgents, often at the expenses of poor populations who strive to survive with alternative coping mechanisms (for example, relying on remittances and subsistence agriculture). Shadow

economies, however, mostly involve those who profit from the conflict and the conditions it has created. Thus, shadow economies rely largely on illicit activities that are facilitated by the absence of state control. In the case of Afghanistan, for example, the shadow economy was dominated by the opium economy and cross-border smuggling. The case of drug production and smuggling in the Afghan war economy is a good example showing how the shadow economy interacts with the combat and the coping economies: drugs smuggling was one of the numerous illicit activities used to financially support the conflict and, at the same time, poor farmers converted or leased their lands for poppy cultivation in order to survive (Goodhand 2004, p. 161).

Although there is a multiplicity of non-state armed actors involved in criminal activities, including rebel groups, it can be argued that a fundamental difference exists between those actively fighting the government and those who prioritize business and profit. While the former usually aim at overthrowing and replacing the state, economic entrepreneurs involved in illicit activities (i.e. criminal actors) prefer to operate in under-governed rather than ungoverned spaces (Clunan and Trinkunas 2010). Hence while criminal groups benefit from state absence, they cannot operate in unpredictable environments where anarchy and violence pose a challenge. A bare minimum level of stability is necessary for criminals. In fact, more structured and organized criminal groups are sometimes able to provide that security to themselves, and also to sell it to other groups and the local population. For example, mafia-like criminal groups have the provision of protection as their distinctive feature and main source of profit (Gambetta 1996; Varese 2006). Most criminal groups, however, do not have structures and resources to simultaneously carry out their business and protect themselves from external threats. In most cases, they either need more stable environments or they need to get protection from another, more powerful group.

Why do post-war settings experience levels of criminal violence higher than the civil war violence? The immediate aftermath of a civil war may provide exactly the ideal conditions for criminal groups to thrive as, first, the state is still weak, hence unlikely to be able to persecute and punish and, second, large-scale violence ceased (at least in the short-term). These factors are associated with lower costs for crimes. In addition to lowering costs, it should be noted that post-war settings provide very little opportunities for legal livelihoods, especially for former combatants. In fact, former combatants are the most vulnerable to criminal networks as the lack of marketable skills may push them to reinvest their expertise

in violence for criminal purposes (Muggah 2009; Patel et al. 2009). Former high- and mid-ranking commanders of rebel groups are also likely to re-mobilize wartime networks for criminal purposes (Daly et al. 2020; Nussio 2018; González and Dorussen 2020). Besides inducing perceptions of insecurity, the flourishing of criminal groups and the competition over illicit markets actually increases levels of criminal violence and, relatedly, homicide rates. While not all criminal groups interact with each other using violence, this is in fact the most likely form of competition especially when groups lack structure, strong territorial control, and are mostly business-oriented formations with opportunistic memberships (Abadinsky 2007; UNODC 2005).

Intuitively, one would expect peacekeepers' military presence to deter all armed non-state actors, including rebels and criminal groups. However, the picture is more complex and, in fact, peacekeepers' capacity to effectively deter criminal violence is quite limited. Peacekeeping missions may inadvertently create conditions that are even more conducive to criminal violence (Di Salvatore 2019). Three main mechanisms plausibly explain this unexpected and undesirable outcome. First, moving from the assumption that criminal groups require intermediate stability or protection, UN troops may exactly provide them with this as blue helmets successfully curb rebel-perpetrated violence (Di Salvatore and Ruggeri 2017; Hultman et al. 2014; Ruggeri et al. 2017). Second, peacekeepers' presence is associated with the emergence of so-called peacekeeping-economies – informal economies based on black markets that are fueled by UN staff involvement (Andreas 2008) and demand for sex workers, resulting in more transactional sex and human trafficking (Bell et al. 2018; Jennings and Nikolić-Ristanović 2009).⁶ Hence, peacekeeping economies are ripe with new business opportunities for criminal groups, who will compete violently to dominate or access them.

While creating these favorable conditions for criminal entrepreneurs, peacekeeping missions can do very little to directly target them. There have been only two cases where missions were authorized an executive mandate by the Security Council, namely a mandate that allowed them to carry out policing and law enforcement tasks. These are usually considered prerogatives of host states. Not only do missions rarely have executive mandates that would allow them to deter criminal actors, but host states also lack sufficient capacity to establish effective rule of law. Civil wars curtail state authority and reach, which is why UN missions often have mandates to support states in reforming and rebuilding their security sector.⁷

However, this is a lengthy process that, ultimately, leaves governments unable to guarantee minimal levels of order and criminal groups unchallenged by both the state and the peacekeeping mission. Nonetheless, even if most missions lack executive powers, they can help states in fighting criminal violence. In fact, while the primary responsibility for law and order remains with the sovereign state, its police forces are assisted or trained by UNPOL. The UNPOL includes both Individual Police Units (IPUs) and Formed Police Units (FPUs), each carrying out activities that contribute to reducing homicide rates (Di Salvatore 2019). UNPOL carries out high-visibility patrolling (FPUs) and community patrolling (IPUs) that signal presence and may act as deterrent force; UNPOL also works on building capacity of national police to conduct operations against criminal groups, thus acting as indirect incapacitation force. As I discuss in the next section, all this suggests the UNPOL potential to play a crucial role in post-war settings, probably more prominently than currently done. Missions with more significant UNPOL contingents are better equipped to deal with the post-conflict challenges, not only because they can contribute to reducing criminal violence in the aftermath of civil wars, but also for to managing urban disorders that require capacity to de-escalate and manage crowds.

Maintaining Public Order in Post-War Cities

While it has been noted that trends in population growth and urbanization have forced conflicts to move to the urban space (Kilcullen 2013), cities remain important settings in the post-war context as well, not least because they are hubs of political, military and symbolic power (Büscher 2018). Hence, post-war cities often experience violence in the post-war phase that is a legacy of the civil war (for example, involving the same actors and unsolved grievances) but also violence that is either perpetrated by other rebel groups or by non-rebel violent actors such as criminal actors. In addition, as cities become the arena for the political competition of first post-war elections, urban locations are also likely to be theatres for both violent and non-violent contestation by ordinary citizens (that is, riots and protests). This section does not focus on how peacekeeping activities are shaped and challenged in urban settings⁸, rather how the post-war context magnifies the importance of cities and fosters forms of collective action that peacekeepers are ill-equipped to deal with. While the issue of criminal violence has been already discussed, this section focuses on another challenge peacekeeping missions face in the post-war setting – urban unrest.

Post-war settings are commonly associated with higher levels of contention especially when elections are held for the first time (Flores and Nooruddin 2012). The aftermath of civil wars presents the possibility for citizens to participate in the political development of their country, not least because of the expectation that violence has stopped, and a peace process has started. The legacy of the civil war itself and the impact of past violence seems to be associated with higher levels of political participation. Contrary to what one would intuitively expect, exposure to violent conflict does not discourage political participation; in fact, analyses of survey data show that individuals that experienced or witnessed more violence during the civil war are more likely to vote and participate in community life (Bellows and Miguel 2009; Blattman 2009), and this effect is more pronounced in post-war settings (De Luca and Verpoorten 2015). However, there are different avenues for citizens to express their preferences and to participate outside of election cycles. Protests becomes the primary mobilization form for citizens to express their dissent toward peace agreements or ongoing negotiations that are not inclusive (Dudouet and Lundström 2016).

Thus, high levels of participation in public demonstrations as a form of political participation and expression of dissent are not unusual in post-war settings. Of course, protests do not necessarily involve or turn violent. In fact, when violence actually ceases and perceptions of physical security are enhanced, citizens are more likely to join peaceful demonstrations as the cost of such mobilization is reduced. Nonetheless, the normalization of violence established through the experience of the civil war increases the risk that even peaceful protests may turn violent. Indeed, research shows that while physical security matters for the feasibility of non-violent mobilization, the promotion of non-violence as a tactical innovation for expressing dissent is also an important enabling factor for peaceful activism. In a global analysis of post-war societies between 1990 and 2011, Belgioioso et al. (2021, p. 12) argue and show how peacekeeping missions can exactly provide ‘enhanced public security from large-scale conflict and state repression, coupled with promotion of norms of nonviolence’ that enable peaceful demonstrations.

However, the challenge for peacekeepers is not only the promotion of non-violence as a norm but also the actual management of public order when demonstration occurs. Public order management and crowd control require specific training that substantially differs from military training. Notably, the aim of public order management is not at all secondary to other mission goals as it ultimately aims at ‘[facilitating] the population’s exercise of fundamental

rights without disturbance or unjustified hindrance and to reconcile the right to peaceful assembly with public safety (UN DPKO and DFS 2015, p. 22). In absence of peacekeeping missions, these functions are carried out by the national police. When peacekeepers are deployed, a mission's contingent may include FPU's that are specifically trained for public-order management. FPU's are expected to mostly support the national police, although they may carry out executive functions independently. As in the case of criminal actors, policing is arguably a key state function, and the involvement of external actors in this specific domain can be considered an example of shared sovereignty (Ciorciari 2020). But putting aside the controversial issue of sovereignty, what makes public order management so problematic for peacekeeping missions? First, there are different types of public gatherings and peacekeepers need to be able to discern a crowd from a mob, the latter being more difficult to manage than the former because it exhibits elements of agitation (from physical violence against individuals to looting of private property). Second, when dispersal of the gathering is necessary, peacekeepers may need to use coercion. This is, in principle, the last resort and the level of force deemed appropriate in these circumstances is supposed to be minimum. Third, some individuals or groups may intentionally provoke violence, and the role of peacekeepers in these scenarios should be to contain escalation. As FPU's receive training on these matters, a policy implication deriving from this would suggest the need to refocus missions toward UNPOL contingents in the post-war setting. This does not mean taking away resources from the UN troops, but at least to consider a prominent role for UNPOL at the strategic (that is, mandate) and operational level.

The impact that urban disorders may have on post-war security should not be underestimated. In 2003, UNMISSET was planning to downsize its police and troops levels. When civil unrest started erupting in Dili and surrounding areas, the former Secretary General Annan urged to delay the downsizing as the scale of civil disturbance was threatening 'the fragility of what has been achieved early'.⁹ Indeed the missions had made significant progresses on security in East Timor, and a survey revealed that, overall, the local population had positive opinions on the contribution of the mission (Dorussen 2015). But the fragility of those achievements became evident as civil disturbances reached worrisome levels. The difficulties in managing public order feature in several accidents involving peacekeeping personnel, thus ultimately eroding trust toward the mission and its perceived legitimacy. A notable example is the lack of response from MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) during protests

against the extension of the mandate of President Kabila. Amnesty International reported that the national security forces confronted peaceful demonstrators “using unnecessary, excessive and sometimes lethal force” against them (Amnesty International 2017). The organization also condemned MONUSCO for not adequately protecting civilians (Amnesty International 2017). In other instances, UN peacekeepers themselves have been involved in the killing of protesters during violent unrests. In Haiti, the killing of a protester by MINUSTAH resulted in other protests demanding the UN to leave the country (BBC 2010). Similarly, in Central African Republic demonstrators not only demanded the same after MINUSCA killed people protesting against the mission, but also laid the corpses of the victims outside UN’s headquarters in Bangui (The Telegraph 2018). The cases of MINUSTAH and MINUSCA also illustrate an additional challenge missions need to face, namely, how to manage protests that are directed against them. In Beni (DRC), citizens had been protesting against MONUSCO and its inaction in protecting them against rebels’ violence, in accordance with its mandate. In November 2019, protesters managed to storm the MONUSCO headquarters in Beni, set vehicles on fire and looted the compound (Al Jazeera 2019).

The criticality of public order in post-war urban settings appears even more concerning when we examine patterns in existing data on attacks against peacekeepers (Lindberg Bromley 2018). These attacks are, of course, a subset of events involving interactions between citizens and peacekeepers and do not allow to establish the extent to which peacekeepers fail or succeed at ensuring public order. They also are a subset of urban unrest instances, which do not always involve peacekeepers as targets. Furthermore, the data only includes sub-Saharan countries from 1989 to 2009. Keeping these caveats in mind, two points are worth highlighting. First, more than 8 percent of attacks against peacekeepers that can be attributed to any actor or group involves mobs or civilians.¹⁰ Seven out of twelve countries in the sample have at least one instance of an attack against blue helmets involving civilians or a mob. Second, there seems to be an asymmetry in the lethality of the encounter when this is initiated by civilians instead of rebel groups. More specifically, the data records more than two civilian deaths for each peacekeeper’s death¹¹, with the mission side often reporting zero fatalities. In comparison, rebel fatalities are twice as high than civilians, but the key difference is that there are numerous events where deaths are only reported for the mission. Certainly, attacks against peacekeepers perpetrated by organized non-state armed actors have different features that makes them more lethal and efficient at crippling missions, compared

to violence that may well be spontaneous and unorganized. Not to mention that rebels are likely to directly target peacekeepers with the premeditated intent to kill them. The point that this comparison tries to highlight concerns the importance that tactics of de-escalation and public order may play in contemporary peacekeeping operating in urban settings, and the reputational costs at stake for the UN when missions fail at this.

In sum, the last two sections have argued that post-war settings are pernicious to UN peacekeeping effectiveness not only because of the continuation of conflict-related violence, which missions are prepared to tackle, but also because of additional public security challenges related to crime and urban disorders. But while there is scholarly evidence supporting this position, one may wonder whether the UN, and the Security Council in particular, envision different roles and functions for UN missions operating in post-war settings. For example, we would not expect the UN to withdraw its military simply because a peace agreement has been signed, but we would expect to see changes in the mandates authorized by the Security Council. The next section explores this point by asking to what extent the post-war settings make any difference to the design of UN peacekeeping missions.

UN Peacekeeping in Post-War Settings

This section describes and compares the configuration of UN peacekeeping missions during civil wars and in peace times along two key dimensions, namely *(i)* the composition of the mission in terms of personnel types (UN troops and UN police) and *(ii)* the composition of the mission's mandates, more specifically its number of tasks and the prevalence of peacebuilding or security-related tasks.¹²

Figure 20.1 illustrates the composition of UN mission personnel measured as average number of UN troops, average number of UNPOL (total and by type), and the ratio between UNPOL and UN troops. The averages are shown for conflict years (in dark gray) and peace years (in light gray) in African countries from 1999 to 2017 in order to include the most recent generation of peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, FPU were deployed in 1999 in Kosovo for the first time, hence earlier statistics on UNPOL would not allow any disaggregation.¹³ The data on mission personnel is from the International Peace Institute database (IPI 2020).

[Figure 20.1 about here]

Not surprisingly, Figure 20.1 shows that missions operating in conflict years have approximately 700 more UN troops than those operating in peace years. There is important variation within-periods, with missions such as MINURCA, UNAMSIL and MONUC/MONUSCO deploying more than 10 000 soldiers in peace years. Indeed, keeping the peace does require the presence of a sizeable contingent that deter spoilers and signal commitment to the peace process by the international community. Similarly, the size of UNPOL is on average lower in peace years. However, it is clear that the decrease in UNPOL presence is mostly due to reduced presence of IPUs, while FPU (that is, armed, specialized police units) remain similar in size before and after conflict. FPU's relative prevalence thus makes UNPOL more militarized in peacetimes than in wartimes. Even though it is difficult to tell what may be driving this increase, it is possible that FPU in particular are considered a more important type of personnel to deploy for activities carried out in the post-war setting, and for this reason should be a key component of the UNPOL total personnel. FPU are very specialized armed units carrying out specific tasks, so it is reasonable to speculate that their relevance in the post-war phase is not just a desirable policy, but already a reality in UN peacekeeping. Finally, it is also useful to compare how many UNPOL are deployed for each UN troop during and after civil wars. Interestingly, this figure provides additional nuance to the previous two plots as it shows a striking increase in the ratio of UNPOL to UN troops in peace times. On average, the ratio of UNPOL to troops doubles, and again it is interesting to see how this varies across missions. For example, toward the end of its mandate, UNMIL had more than 700 UNPOL deployed along with 1800 UN troops, thus having more than 25 percent of its personnel from police units.

Are the changes in deployed personnel also linked to substantial re-orientation of missions' goals? How do mandates change between conflict and peace periods? Figure 20.2 uses new data on UN peacekeeping mission mandates to visualize changes in the total number of tasks that requires a mission to assist the government, the ratio between assistance and monitoring tasks and the ratio between peacebuilding and security-related tasks in African missions from 1999 to 2017. The data is from the Peacekeeping Mandate dataset (Di Salvatore et al. 2022).

[Figure 20.2 about here]

First, it seems that the overall number of tasks included in a mandate are higher in the post-war phase. Relatedly, the mission is requested to perform slightly more assistance than

monitoring tasks by the Security Council after the conflict. This is in line with the expectation that UN missions support the peacebuilding phase and do not only act as stopgaps for violence. Accordingly, we would also expect to see changes in the orientation of mandated goals, not only in the level of engagement of the mission. In other words, peacekeepers should not simply play a more active role by assisting the government, but also do this in capacity and institution-building domains. If this is the case, mission mandates should be more focused on peacebuilding tasks than on security tasks as civil wars terminate.¹⁴ From Figure 20.2, it is difficult to assess the extent to which this is a valid claim. There does not appear to be a clear difference between the ratio of peacebuilding-to-security tasks between conflict and peacebuilding years. In absolute terms, in-conflict mandates have 7.5 peacebuilding tasks, against 10 for mandates in post-war years. On the other hand, security tasks are, on average, 3.7 during conflict and 4.7 during peace.

In sum, patterns in the data suggest that UN peacekeeping slightly differs when operating in active civil wars and in their aftermath, though most adaptation seems to take place at the level of deployment. Missions' overall strategic goals as set up in their mandates do not change significantly, neither in the way the mission is expected to engage with the government (assisting vs monitoring it) nor in the specific policy areas it is requested to operate (security vs peacebuilding). The fact that some missions still perform reasonably well in managing criminal violence and public disorders may be the result of an operational adaptation that, however, does not directly benefit from strategic reorientation of the mandate. Possibly the starkest difference in war and post-war missions is the composition of their personnel, more specifically the increasing ratio of UNPOL to UN troops. Indeed, the role of UNPOL within UN missions has become much more relevant since the creation of the UN Police Standing Capacity. Not only the absolute number of UNPOL has increased steadily since 2005, but so has the ratio of UNPOL to troops. It is not the case that missions are simply getting larger – more UNPOL are in fact being deployed to each mission. Proportionally, there are fewer IPU's but the number of FPU's does not change much in peace times. Overall, these trends illustrate that the way post-war insecurities are tackled in UN peace missions does not conform with policy suggestions following existing research. In other words, whether UN missions are currently equipped and mandated under the best circumstances to tackle post-war violence remains very debatable.

Conclusions

This chapter builds on the idea that post-war phases are rarely devoid of violence and that the forms violence takes in these settings may be particularly challenging for UN peacekeeping missions. I identified and discussed two main challenges UN peacekeeping are often unprepared to face in post-war settings, namely rising level of criminal violence and urban disorders, that is, protests and violent contestation that can also target peacekeepers themselves. I explained how these forms of violence are not unique to the post-war settings but can be exacerbated in these transitional phases. Then, I have illustrated the extent to which UN mission compositions and mandates differ between conflict and peace times, finding more evidence indicating a possible operational adaptation in types of deployed personnel, more specifically with a greater focus on UNPOL (FPUs in particular) than regular troops.

There is an important connection to draw here between the evolution of peacekeeping and the encouraging findings of recent research on its impact on post-war settings. UNPOL is becoming a force distinct from UN troops, with its specific role, pre-deployment training and professional standards (Greener, 2014). One may wonder whether this policy shift is desirable or ultimately uninfluential for missions' performances. As mentioned, research shows that the higher the number of UN troops deployed, the lower the risk of conflict reoccurrence (Hultman et al. 2016). Notably, though, other personnel types, such as UNPOL, are reported to have no discernible effect on post-war violence. However, two important findings qualify this important result. First, when we distinguish violence perpetrated by actors that were initially involved in the terminated conflict from violence perpetrated by other rebel groups, UN troops can only reduce the former (Bara 2020). Violence that is perpetrated by actors not directly targeted by a mission's mandate, including gangs or rebel groups that were not former belligerents, remains within the responsibility of the state. According to Bara, UNPOL's role in capacity-building and in filling public security gaps explains its ability to curb post-war violence. She also argues that the lack of clear guidelines on how UNPOL should implement its mandated functions may in fact enable it to be more flexible in addressing complex post-war dynamics compared to UN troops.¹⁵ Second, when we consider violence perpetrated by actors proliferating in the post-war phase, such as criminal actors, UNPOL again performs better than UN troops against these potential peace spoilers. Di Salvatore (2019) posits that UNPOL is needed to tackle criminal violence not

only because its functions involve public order but, more importantly, because UNPOL counterbalances the increase in criminal violence that UN troops' activities (for example, DDR and stabilization) may inadvertently sustain. Hence, when we consider organized violence perpetrated by non-state actors, there is a clear policy implication based on research that UNPOL plays a central rather than supporting role to troops and should be the focus of UN operations in post-war settings. Regarding its support for maintaining public order more generally, unfortunately we lack evidence on potentially violent interactions between peacekeepers and citizens protesting against the government or the mission itself. While UNPOL is found to be an important transmission channel for non-violent participation (Belgioioso et al. 2021), the extent to which they should be tasked with protecting demonstrators and managing crowds in urban settings is open to future research. As Hills notes, FPU's may indeed work well at controlling crowds and also improve perceptions of how local police is performing by supporting them; however, for their constabulary nature, FPU's "are paramilitary and their composition and operations blur police/military boundaries" (Hills 2009, p. 80), which should invite a more careful reflection of the consequences of militarizing UNPOL in post-war societies where the demilitarization is ongoing (Greener 2014). This is not only important to safeguard peacekeepers' perceived legitimacy among the population, but also to support successful transitions from the civil war to a truly post-violence phase.

Notes

[Please place endnotes to Chapter 20 here]

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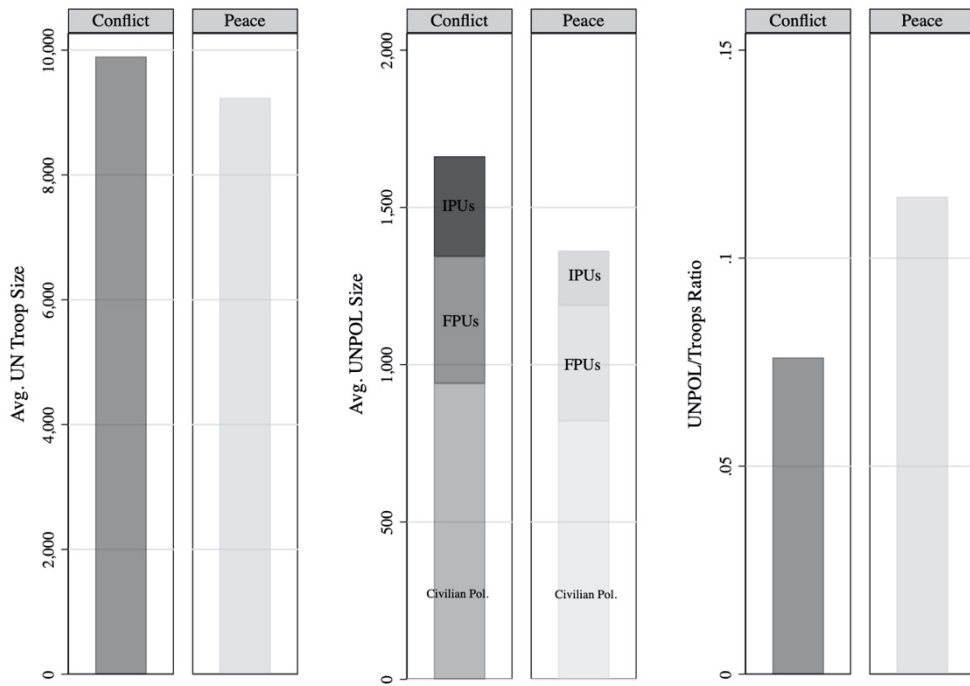


Figure 20.1 UN peacekeeping personnel types before and after peace

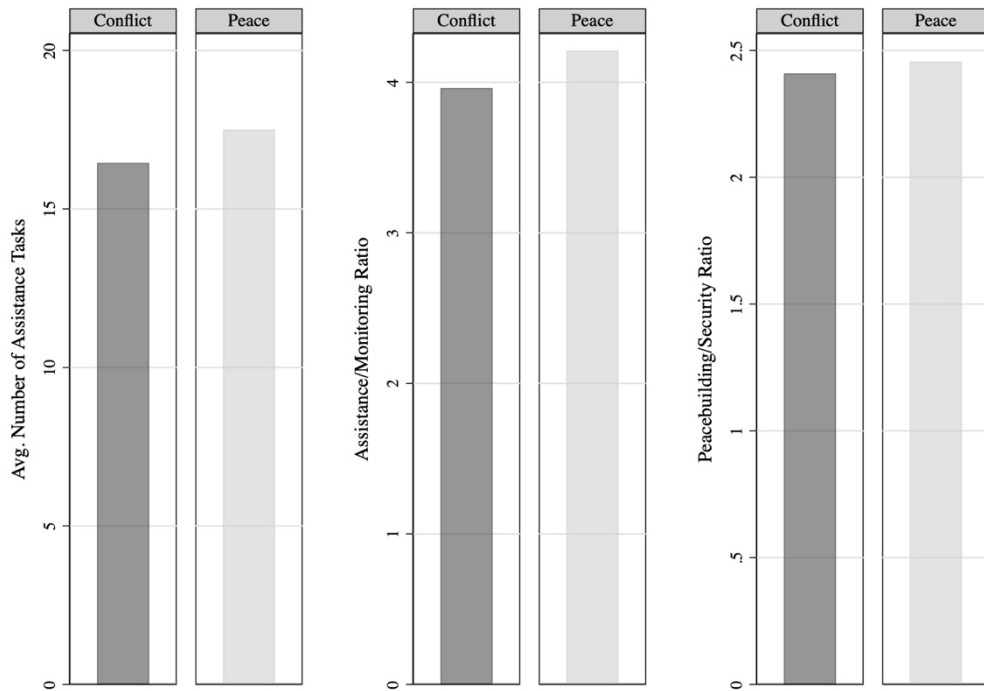


Figure 20.2 UN peacekeeping mandates before and after peace

¹ Post-war violence can also be perpetrated by non-state armed groups that pursue political goals but were not involved officially in the previous conflict. Bara finds that these groups are more difficult to tackle for peacekeeping missions, even though they heighten post-conflict insecurities and disproportionately target civilians (Bara 2020).

² I am grateful to Han Dorussen for suggesting a parallel with the concept.

³ In the case of Colombia González Peña and Dorussen (2021) show that participation to reintegration programs reduce the impact of crime that may be associated to (directly or indirectly) former combatants.

⁴ See Chapter 22 (Dorussen and de Vooght) on the local perception of peacekeeping in this Handbook.

⁵ I exclude electoral violence here as this is thoroughly discussed in Chapter 16 (Smidt) of this Handbook.

⁶ Andreas (2009) illustrates how the relationship between the UNPROFOR and illicit activities in Bosnia was in fact symbiotic rather than predatory in the sense that some missions' goals were, to some extent, served by the existence of illicit exchanges. Notice, though, that Andreas' argument focuses on illicit markets (which civilians could access for survival) rather than criminal actors.

⁷ See Chapter 10 (Blair) in this Handbook on security sector reform and rule of law promotion in peacekeeping.

⁸ For a discussion of how cities make some activities operationally more challenging to carry out for peacekeepers, see for example Elfverson et al. (2019).

⁹ Kofi Annan, cited in: <https://reliefweb.int/report/timor-leste/citing-security-needs-annan-calls-hold-un-force-cutbacks-timor-leste>

¹⁰ More specifically, 54 events are attributed to civilians or mobs out of 648 events where the attacker is not coded as “unknown”.

¹¹ This ratio excludes one important outlier, that is the event involving ECOMOG in Sierra Leone in 1999 which resulted in the death 182 civilians. When this is included as well, the ratio of civilian-to-peacekeeper deaths is 4.6, hence even higher than the ratio involving non-civilian actors.

¹² Also see Chapter 5 (Bove et al.) in this Handbook.

¹³ Notice also that before 2009, the statistics for UNPOL are not available by IPUs and FPUUs but only as ‘civilian police’.

¹⁴ I follow the distinction defined in UN training manuals and used in Blair et al. (2021). The following are identified as security tasks: disarmament and demobilization, reintegration, control of small arms and light weapons, demilitarization, arms embargo assistance, civilian protection, ceasefire assistance, and peace deal assistance. Peacebuilding tasks are defined as: police reform, military reform, justice sector reform, transitional justice, prison reform, border control, demining, natural resource management, extension of state authority, democratization, electoral assistance, voter education, political party assistance, civil society assistance, media assistance, assistance to reconciliation processes, economic development, humanitarian relief, public health, refugee assistance, and legal reform.

¹⁵ For a discussion on the need for UNPOL to have more clear doctrinal guidance, see Sebastián (2015).