The Global Peace Operations Review is an interactive web-portal presenting in-depth analysis and detailed data on military peacekeeping operations and civilian-led political missions by the United Nations, regional organizations, and ad-hoc coalitions. The web-portal is a product of the New York University Center on International Cooperation (CIC) and a continuation of its long-standing print publications the Annual Review of Global Peace Operations and the Review of Political Missions.

Providing the most comprehensive overview of multilateral contributions to peacekeeping, conflict prevention, and post-conflict peacebuilding, the Review aims to initiate and inform discussions on the comparative advantages and appropriateness of different missions, and through constructive analysis to further strengthen existing partnerships necessary for them to succeed.

Through the Country & Regional Profile pages, the Review provides background information and regularly updated key developments on peace operations and the contexts in which they operate. The analysis is further enhanced by the provision of detailed data on each of the UN’s peace operations, and headline data on missions fielded by regional organizations and ad hoc missions, which can be accessed in full through the Data & Trends section. Data on non-UN peace operations was compiled by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). For more details, please see our Data guide. The Strategic Summary provides an overview of main developments in mission settings over the past year and presents analysis on trends and the impact these may have on shaping peace operations of the future. Thematic essays presented in the In Focus section unpack issues critical to peace operations, providing analysis and guidance on possible approaches.

The Library section enables readers to download full text .pdf files of past editions of the Annual Review of Global Peace Operations (2006-2012) and the Review of Political Missions (2010-2012). For those interested in conducting their own analysis using the data generated for these publications, we have provided spreadsheets of all the statistics used to compile these reports.

Scope of the Global Peace Operations Review

The Review covers more than one hundred multilateral peace operations active in the previous year including missions fielded by the UN, AU, EU, ECOWAS, OSCE, OAS and coalitions. It uses a broad definition of peace operations that includes multilateral and ad hoc military and police missions, as well as civilian led political missions. Neither type of mission has a simple definition. Alongside more straightforward peacekeeping missions, the Review, mindful of the need for peace operations to adjust to the changing nature of conflict, also includes peace enforcement operations that employ the use of force and engage in active combat.

Under political missions, we include multilateral civilian-led missions that have political engagement in the form of launching and supporting political processes at their core. This includes, for example, the EU’s Special Representatives and the African Union Liaison Offices that support the implementation of peace agreements and accompany political processes. We have excluded missions, such as EU delegations and other liaison offices that may engage in political activities, but as their core function serve more as regular diplomatic or developmental presences. Along the same reasoning, we have also excluded election observer and human rights monitoring missions.

Disclaimer

The Center on International Cooperation is solely responsible for the content of this publication. Any errors of fact or analysis, and any and all judgments and interpretations about missions and operations discussed herein, are those of CIC alone.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Thematic Essays

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partnering for Sustainable Peace in Liberia</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda Lucey and Liezelle Kumalo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restructuring the UN Secretariat to Strengthen Preventative Diplomacy and Peace Operations</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Cliffe and Alexandra Novosseloff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustaining Peace and Peace Operations Mandates: The Liberia Transition</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gizem Sucouglu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Commentary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The World’s Deadliest U.N. Mission</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Sieff and Richard Gowan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia’s Journey to National Ownership</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda Lucey and Tafadzwa Munjoma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost in Transition: No Change for Women’s Rights in Liberia</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liezelle Kumalo and Muneinazvo Kujeke</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Peacebuilding is Local</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joëlle Jenny</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Peacekeeping in South Sudan: A Kiwi Comes to Juba</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megan Roberts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Liberia is at a pivotal point in its transition to a peaceful democracy. In October 2017 the country will have its first ‘open seat’ elections. The incumbent, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, will step down and hand over power to the leader of one of the 22 political parties that are currently participating in the election. Moreover, despite security fears for the elections, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has downsized from over 15,000 military troops in 2007 to around 1,000 soldiers in 2016 (see Figure 1). It will continue to draw down in 2017 in recognition of Liberia’s growing ownership of its own transition. The country has made steady progress in transitioning from decades of civil conflict into a new democracy. It has instituted a number of legal reforms, national strategies and peacebuilding activities to address the root causes of violence. Liberia has been receiving support from the United Nations’ (UN) Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) since 2010, but its institutions still need to be supported to consolidate their democracy gains. The 2015 review of the UN’s peacebuilding architecture argued that, for the peacebuilding components of peace operation mandates to be more effective, there must be better coordination between the UN Security Council Summary Liberia is going through an important period in its transition, with elections in October 2017 and the final drawdown of the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping mission in March 2018. Despite having made significant strides towards sustainable peace, the country still has a number of urgent peacebuilding priorities that need to be addressed.

This policy brief is based on field research carried out in November 2016. It makes targeted, practical recommendations to the UN Peacebuilding Commission on enhancing its support to Liberia, drawing on a wide range of partnerships with other internal and external peacebuilding actors. Partnering for sustainable peace in Liberia (UNSC), the PBC and UN Country Teams. It also stated that the PBC could play an enhanced role in advising the UNSC on the diverse range of views from the full spectrum of international peace, security and development tools and actors, and in developing practical and context-specific solutions. Finally, the PBC could be instrumental in bringing together various stakeholders, both from New York and from the field, to mobilise peacebuilding support to conflict-affected countries. What does this mean in the case of Liberia? Noting the numerous peacebuilding actors (including national, regional, subregional and international organisations) involved in Liberia’s efforts to sustain peace, this policy brief makes practical recommendations on how the PBC, particularly its Liberia Configuration, can enhance its role in the country. Liberia has instituted a number of legal
reforms, national strategies and peacebuilding activities to address the root causes of violence Statement of Mutual Commitment on peacebuilding in Liberia is signed by the government of Liberia and the PBC. This paper is part of a broader project called ‘Enhancing African responses to peacebuilding’, made up of a consortium of three partner organisations – the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) and New York University’s Center on International Cooperation (CIC). It is one of a series of products derived from research carried out from 2–10 November 2016 in Monrovia with 36 stakeholders from 22 institutions.

It takes its point of departure from the Statement of Mutual Commitment (SMC) on peacebuilding in Liberia, signed in April 2016 by the government of Liberia and the PBC. This statement is particularly important, as it is the most comprehensive document confirming the Liberian government’s peacebuilding priorities, namely security sector development, rule of law, national reconciliation and a peaceful and inclusive society. Cross-cutting issues such as decentralisation and empowering youth and women were also noted. This paper first looks at those of Liberia’s national frameworks relevant to peacebuilding. It then examines the engagements of multiple peacebuilding actors in Liberia, with a particular focus on the roles of African regional, subregional and bilateral organisations. It also unpacks principles as to why they may hold an advantage in certain peacebuilding activities. Finally, the paper explores how the PBC can develop context-specific solutions to Liberia’s peacebuilding priority areas, making use of partnerships.

DOWNLOAD THE FULL PAPER PARTNERING FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN LIBERIA

This publication was made possible in part by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
February 14, 2017

Restructuring the UN Secretariat to Strengthen Preventative Diplomacy and Peace Operations

Sarah Cliffe and Alexandra Novosseloff

Form should follow function. Which form best fits the United Nations should be driven by which functions that need to be strengthened.

Since 1945, the United Nations has helped support many successful peace processes and protected millions of civilians around the world. Peace operations deliver results: research estimates suggest that the presence of a UN peace keeping mission can reduce the risk of relapse into conflict by 75 – 85 percent;¹ and that larger deployments diminish the scale of violence and protect civilians in the midst of fighting.² Peace operations can be highly cost effective, with one General Audit Office assessment finding the cost to be roughly half of what a bilateral stabilization operation would cost.³ Different types of peace operations - from mediation and special envoys through to multidimensional peace-keeping and specialized justice and emergency health missions - have helped end long running conflicts and prevented violence from escalating or recurring in situations as diverse as Burkina Faso, Cambodia, the Central African Republic, Gabon, Guatemala, Guinea, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Namibia, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste.

Yet in 2017 the UN’s peace and security pillar faces deep challenges. Three reviews in the past two years have highlighted serious inadequacies in UN peace and security responses at large. Many of the recent challenges are due to real world shifts in the nature of conflict and geopolitical dynamics – the tragedy of Syria, renewed fighting in Yemen and South Sudan, continued crisis in Libya, difficulties in preventing a political and humanitarian crisis in Burundi, longstanding missions that are struggling to deliver sustainable peace in DRC and Haiti, and newer missions in Mali and CAR where geography creates sustained cross-border security risks. These situations are also affected by divisions amongst Member States that have prevented agreement on action in some cases. Part of the weaknesses, however, are managerial and structural. The sense of urgency pervading Member States at the UN, together with a new Secretary-General who has signaled his determination to reform this area, provides the opportunity to take a more fundamental look at what would give the UN’s peace and security pillar the right form to deliver the functions that it is called to serve, now and in the future. The purpose of this report is to analyze options for organizational restructuring in the UN’s peace and security pillar. It focuses on headquarters structures since this has been identified as a primary source of overlap and competition: the purpose however is to deliver better results in the field, from prevention through crisis management to post-conflict recovery. It does not cover wider reforms across the UN’s three pillars, which are supported in other CIC work streams.⁴

Following an introductory section, Section II traces the history of UN peace and security structures since the UN’s founding (see Box). The UN has had no shortage of reform in the past, each designed to address specific weaknesses or new demands. Cumulatively, however, these changes have resulted in a structure that is no longer fit to fulfill the functions needed. Section III argues that current problems include:
Operational challenges of large missions overwhelming a broader “culture of prevention” – despite achieving impressive preventative results in regions such as West Africa, the UN’s resources are often so overstretched in backstopping their larger field operations that there is little space to work on preventing future crises;

- Fragmentation of the system as a whole into silos, which undermine coherent action on prevention, peacebuilding and peacekeeping;

- Lack of a clear political strategy in peace operations that would help societies find sustainable solutions to crises;

- Insufficient authority and resources to galvanize system-wide action on peacebuilding;

- Competition between the departments of political affairs, and peacekeeping, in part due to the fact that both departments have become both political and operational: consequent delays in mission start-up and inability to deliver a spectrum of “right fit” operations and smooth transitions;

- Multiplicity of UN actors and fragmented initiatives for political, security and justice institutional support, although helping build these national institutions is key to preventing conflict onset and recurrence;

- A disconnect between operations and support;

- Inappropriate personnel and fiduciary procedures, and an administrative culture not conducive to dynamic field operations in the context of limited resources.

Section IV starts to look at possible solutions. From the outset, the report recognizes that changes in the UN’s organigram are not the only – or even necessarily the most important – changes needed. Most fundamentally, without strong leadership and management that ensure departments work together, and Member States support for new approaches, no organizational structure will deliver. Within these limits, Section V considers the options for organizational structures laid out in the box below. A broad range of models is included, for different reasons. Some have been proposed by different reviews, such as a second Deputy Secretary-General and strengthening the political/operational delineation. Some are common currency in the corridors of the UN, such as merging the departments of political affairs and peacekeeping. Some are options indicated by basic principles of organizational design, such as the models that reorganize on a form versus function basis. The report considers the pros and cons of each of these. Section VI underlines the importance of budget, fiduciary and human resource issues and considers options to strengthen this area. In line with much prior work, the report identifies a need for: (i) a unified budget process and rules for all large missions in the field, and; (ii) appropriate fiduciary and human resource procedures, designed for field missions operating in uncertain and insecure environments. Budget design more closely driven by political strategy and including a variety of inputs – a better balance between posts and non-personnel costs – would also be desirable to improve the link with results on the ground. These are longstanding, acknowledged problems: the report tries to present some newer ideas to address them. On the budget side, in addition to grandfathering the scale of assessments for SPMs in a unified account, the report asks whether it would be worth Member States considering a systematic comparison of the UN’s budget spend in similar categories (e.g. operational versus non-operational) across the UN’s three pillars. More factual information may be a way to avoid past debates about whether “too much” is currently given to peace and security, to human rights or to development (see box). On the procedural side, the report
asks whether, rather than continuing to make small proposals for improvements to Member States as has been the case in the past decade, it might be desirable for Member States to consider a comprehensive proposal on a set of procedures designed specifically for field operations.

**THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT IS TO ANALYZE OPTIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL RESTRUCTURING IN THE UN’S PEACE AND SECURITY PILLAR. THE GOAL IS TO DELIVER BETTER RESULTS IN THE FIELD, FROM PREVENTION THROUGH CRISIS MANAGEMENT TO POST-CONFLICT RECOVERY.**

Section VII recommends the following practical considerations for policy makers:

**Form should follow function.** Which form best fits the organization should be driven by which functions that need to be strengthened. For example, a strong focus on global preventative diplomacy might argue against strengthening geographical departments that could become silos of their own, preventing effective diplomatic outreach to actors in different regions. Equally, if it is important to ensure space for the primacy of politics and preventative diplomacy, this may argue against merging these functions with the day to day running of large field missions.

**Span of control matters.** Merging a greater number of functions always increases the possibility for synergy. However, it also increases the span of control that any one manager is required to cover – requiring for instance one USG to remain on top of many different functions and a much larger human resource and budget responsibility than his or her peers. This is a primary drawback to the “fusion” models.

**The larger the change, the greater the efficiency cost.** Changes in responsibilities, reporting lines, accountabilities and physical location all require effort from management and staff, and a necessary time period to settle into new roles. Some of the models described here – for instance the regional model or political-services model – require more change than others. Such a reorganization takes time and consumes a great deal of bureaucratic energy. There are however also opportunity costs in avoiding fundamental change when it is needed, and good change management can mitigate the disruption to activities.

**Political feasibility matters.** More major changes in relation to current structures or budgets are perhaps more likely to create divisions amongst Member States in the relevant governance committees. In addition, some of models described might bring incidental but important political pressures: concentration of too many sensitive files under a single USG, threatening the position of a USG role that has for some time been held by a powerful Member State or Member State grouping, as in the fusion models, or spurring pressure to appoint USGs from particular regions in the geographical model. If there is doubt about the surrounding Member State dynamics in 2017, following an option where the change is not too significant in relation to current structures may make sense.

**Budget and fiduciary issues are linked to the effectiveness of restructuring.** Most of the models discussed in this paper (with the exception of the second DSG) would not necessarily require additional resources. But it would be difficult to realize the best results from organizational change unless resources were reallocated to reflect new functions. The politics of gaining consensus on budget issues will also therefore need to be taken into account.
Any restructuring has second round effects. PBSO’s creation was not accompanied by much analysis of the adjustment needed to DPA or DPKO’s activities or the processes followed by country teams; DFS’s creation did not lead to adequate changes in DM’s role to realize the desired result. Not all of these effects can be identified upfront, but it is useful to identify the more major implications and set in place a follow up process to work these through.

These are models with elements that can be combined in practice. This paper looks at the series of models listed above as contrasting organizing ideas. In practice, ideas from more than one may be combined, and the paper gives examples.

Noting that no organigram is perfect, the report does not argue that one option must be better than all others. None of the options presented can work without effective management and governance arrangements. Indeed, whatever way departmental boxes are organized, there will a need for horizontal coordination arrangements and each option will require different coordination permutations. It does however conclude that for several of the models examined, the cons appear to quite significantly outweigh the pros. These include the addition of a second DSG which could increase bureaucratic layers and perpetuate silos; the fusion models which would create significant span of control problems; the regional model which would involve opportunity costs in global preventative functions, high temporary efficiency costs and difficulties in adapting over time; and the option of integrating peace-building under DPA which could face resistance because of the implied loss of a cross-pillar peace-building approach. Conversely the paper argues that the political-operational and political-services model, as well as bringing peace-building closer to EOSG, have more pros than cons and are probably feasible options to consider. These options also appear to fit well with a “form follows function” principle, by reflecting the key functional priorities recently endorsed by Member States. These include the primacy of politics (by strengthening a department focused on political strategy for peace operations and preventative diplomacy) and diminishing silos (by considering ways to draw together departments working on the same area of specialized services to national counterparts). What is eventually proposed might also combine some of these elements. For example, a strong political-operational delineation of functions could be combined with a stronger center of excellence in institutional support services, focused on serving all departments and linked with the UN development system, as well as with strengthening cross-system prevention and peace-building functions in EOSG.

DOWNLOAD THE FULL PAPER RESTRUCTURING THE UN SECRETARIAT TO STRENGTHEN PREVENTATIVE DIPLOMACY AND PEACE OPERATIONS
ENDNOTES


4See CIC’s website for further details on these work streams.
SUSTAINING PEACE AND PEACE OPERATION MANDATES: THE LIBERIA TRANSITION

Gizem Sucouglu

AT THIS FIRST WORKSHOP, PARTICIPANTS DISCUSSED PRACTICAL WAYS TO IMPROVE THE PEACEBUILDING IMPLICATIONS OF PEACE OPERATION MANDATES, DRAWING ON THE UPCOMING LIBERIA TRANSITION AS A PRIME CASE, UNDER THE CHATHAM HOUSE RULE.

On 14 December 2016, NYU’s Center on International Cooperation (CIC), the Dag Hammarskjold Foundation (DHF) and the International Peace Institute (IPI) organized the first in a series of workshops in support of efforts to better understand and implement sustaining peace.

At this first workshop, participants discussed practical ways to improve the peacebuilding implications of peace operation mandates, drawing on the upcoming Liberia transition as a prime case, under the Chatham House rule.

Participants included member states active in the Security Council and/or the Peacebuilding Commission; experts from different parts of the UN system including the Peacebuilding Support Office; the Department of Peacekeeping Operations; the Department of Political Affairs; the UN Development Program; and representatives from CIC, IPI, DHF, the Institute for Security Studies, and the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

The discussion took place against the backdrop of the transition from the UNMIL mandate, voted on 21 December 2016 at the Security Council.

DOWNLOAD THE FULL REPORT SUSTAINING PEACE AND PEACE OPERATION MANDATES: THE LIBERIA TRANSITION
February 17, 2017

THE WORLD’S DEADLIEST U.N. MISSION

Kevin Sieff and Richard Gowan

LIBERIA MUST DECENTRALISE IF IT WANTS INCLUSIVE, SUSTAINABLE PEACE.

Since World War II, U.N. peacekeepers have been dispatched to 69 conflicts — civil wars, border disputes and failed states. But now they are confronting an unsettling new threat: al-Qaeda.

Here in the vast, lawless desert of northwest Africa, their convoys are being torn apart by improvised explosive devices and their compounds blasted by 1,000-pound car bombs. It is a crisis that looks more like the U.S. ground wars in Iraq and Afghanistan than the cease-fires traditionally monitored by U.N. missions.

In the past four years, 118 peacekeepers have been killed — making the U.N. mission in Mali, known as MINUSMA, the deadliest ever. The bloodshed has raised questions about how an institution developed in the 1940s can serve a world under threat from the Islamic State and al-Qaeda. The issue is especially potent given the expectation that U.N. peacekeepers will eventually go to places such as Syria and Libya.

“We are trying to learn these lessons here, rather than in Iraq, Libya or Syria,” said Dutch Col. Mike Kerkhove, commander of the U.N. intelligence unit in Mali. “This is not the end of this type of mission. It’s the beginning.”

In 2012, Islamist radicals linked to al-Qaeda hijacked an uprising by ethnic Tuareg people and went on to seize cities across northern Mali, holding on for nearly a year until they were forced out by a French military intervention. When 11,000 U.N. troops arrived in 2013, they were meant to protect a fledgling peace deal and train the Malian army. But Islamist extremists regrouped across the region. It did not take long before the militants started targeting peacekeepers, whom they dubbed “Crusader occupation forces.”

The United Nations was remarkably unprepared for the threat. Most of its troops from Africa and South Asia brought tanks and vehicles that were easy targets for explosives, unlike U.S. mine-resistant vehicles. The U.N. compounds, dotted with metal storage containers turned into offices and bedrooms, had flimsy perimeter security and were vulnerable to the massive car bombs used by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the regional affiliate of the extremist group. For a while, U.N. forces didn’t have a single attack helicopter.

“We weren’t ready for these challenges,” said Mohamed El-Amine Souef, a native of the Comoros Islands who is the top U.N. official in Gao, a city in northern Mali. Last year, Souef’s compound was struck by a suicide bomber, the shrapnel battering his front door.
But the United Nations’ dilemma goes beyond a lack of preparation or anti-terrorism equipment. At its New York headquarters and around the world, diplomats are debating: Should U.N. forces be engaged in counterterrorism at all?

“It’s time for us to realize that this kind of front-line role is central to the future of the United Nations,” said Peter Yeo, a senior official at the U.N. Foundation, a Washington-based nonprofit organization that supports the goals of the world body.

Yeo and others argue that without a counterterrorism capability, U.N. peacekeepers can’t operate productively in many of the world’s war zones.

But critics say that such a role would violate the peacekeepers’ core principle of impartiality and ultimately make them less effective.

“Peacekeepers are only meant to use deadly force to protect civilians or to stop spoilers from threatening a peace process, not to pursue any group’s military defeat,” said Aditi Gorur, director of the Protecting Civilians in Conflict program at the Stimson Center, a Washington-based research center.

If peacekeepers had a more aggressive counterterrorism mandate, she and others argue, that could hurt the United Nations’ ability to mediate between warring groups, which sometimes include violent Islamists.

Already in Mali, the International Committee of the Red Cross has described the United Nations as a “party to the conflict.”

In the slide-show presentation he shows to visitors at his base in Bamako, the capital of Mali, Kerkhove includes an aerial photo taken last year of a compound that appeared to be used by a terrorist group. When he received the photo, Kerkhove debated what to do.

The men inside might be planning an assault on U.N. personnel, he thought, or a strike against civilians. Over the past two years, extremist groups have used Mali as a staging ground for attacks on luxury hotels, beach resorts and restaurants in West Africa. In 2016, al-Qaeda and its allies and affiliates launched at least 257 attacks in the region, according to the Long War Journal. But Kerkhove knew that the nearest battalion of U.N. troops, from Senegal, didn’t have the weapons or air support to engage in a fight with transnational terrorists. Ultimately, U.N. forces decided not to approach the compound.

The Mali mission is the only one of the 16 active U.N. peacekeeping operations that authorizes troops to deter and counter “asymmetric threats” — that is, terrorist groups — that could harm its work or civilians. Last year, the U.N. Security Council said the mission should become “more proactive and robust” — language that some read as encouraging more offensive operations.

“We need to be able to hit the terrorists where they are, before they hit us,” said Souef, the U.N. official in Gao.

But peacekeeper that they don’t have the tools to deal with armed extremists.

“We are gathering the intelligence, but we lack the forces who can act on that information,” said Swedish Lt. Col. Per Wilson.

Richard Gowan, an expert on U.N. peacekeeping at New York University’s Center on International Cooperation, said that U.N. missions lack the resources and doctrine for counterterrorism work. He noted that even well-equipped Western military forces were outmaneuvered by terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan.
“It is reasonable to ask why on earth the Security Council thinks that a U.N. force can do any better in Mali, even with European reinforcements,” he said.

Over the years, the United Nations has increasingly had to confront the scourge of terrorism. Militants blew up its political assistance office in Baghdad in 2003, killing 22 people, including the U.N. envoy, Sergio Vieira de Mello.

But the Mali mission marks the first time a significant peacekeeping contingent has been sent to help a state regain control over areas contested by terrorist groups.

In a review in 2015, a panel of U.N.-appointed experts said that peacekeeping forces were “not the appropriate tool for military counterterrorism operations.” But it noted they do deploy in areas threatened by armed extremist groups “and must be capable of operating effectively and as safely as possible therein.”

On their patrols through the sandy side streets of Gao, an ancient city along the Niger River lined with mud-brick houses, U.N. convoys are greeted by throngs of residents. The locals always have the same complaint, said Senegalese Capt. Diagne Meth, standing outside his armored personnel carrier during one patrol: “They want us to do more.” Specifically, he said, they ask for more offensive operations, targeting radical Islamists as well as criminal groups.

“But I have to tell them, 'That's not what we're here to do,'” Meth said.

ready, the United Nations has tried to adapt in Mali. It has a fleet of surveillance drones. It has the first U.N. intelligence cell, a Bamako-based unit with analysts spread across the country. It has counter-IED specialists. It also has thousands of European troops, including large contingents from Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden, with soldiers experienced in fighting in Afghanistan.

Other U.N. missions have evolved in recognition of new threats. In Congo in 2013, for example, the United Nations launched its first brigade designed for offensive operations.

But the terrorism threat in Mali sets it apart.

“Sending out a patrol might work to deter an armed group in the Congo from engaging in violence, but it has the opposite effect in Mali, where terrorists are specifically trying to target peacekeepers,” said Gorur, of the Stimson Center.

More than a year and a half ago, Mali’s government signed a peace deal with separatist rebels in the north from the Tuareg and Arab communities. Authorities hoped the radical Islamists who had once aligned themselves with the local rebels — and later fallen out — had been driven away. But today, the terrorists appear stronger than ever.

The French military continues to conduct its own counterterrorism mission across northwest Africa, including in Mali. The United Nations shares information with the French if it is deemed useful for protecting the lives of troops.

On Jan. 18, Islamist extremists drove a truck laden with explosives into a compound in Gao where the United Nations was protecting Malian forces. Seventy-six men — from national forces and armed groups that had joined the peace process — lost their lives in the blast. (No peacekeepers were killed.) The attack was claimed by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, which said it involved one of its allies, al-Mourabitoun.
The explosion was staggering, but so was the lack of security at an installation ostensibly protected by peacekeepers. Three days before the attack, a visiting Washington Post reporter saw only a few Bangladeshi peacekeepers sitting inside a personnel carrier outside the compound. Terrorist groups had already struck U.N. facilities in the city several times, but the base was protected by only a flimsy metal gate.

Souef, the U.N. official, acknowledged that his own compound in the city was vulnerable.

"We shouldn't be living in a place like this," he said.

This article was originally published by the Washington Post on February 17, 2017.
February 10, 2017

LIBERIA'S JOURNEY TO NATIONAL OWNERSHIP

Amanda Lucey and Tafadzwa Munjoma

LIBERIA MUST DECENTRALISE IF IT WANTS INCLUSIVE, SUSTAINABLE PEACE.

In October 2017, Liberia will hold what is expected to be a hotly contested election. The leaders of 22 political parties will be vying to replace President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Africa's first democratically elected female leader.

As Liberia gears up for the election, much debate has been generated around the successes of her administration and the delivery of promises made. During her two terms at the helm, Sirleaf has made substantial efforts to ensure sustainable peace. However, for these efforts to continue enjoying a chance of success, they need to be country-owned: not just by the national government, but also by an inclusive social compact between the government and its society.

One way to achieve this is through a reinvigorated process of decentralisation. Liberia has a number of policies, reforms and agendas in place to ensure this happens. Why is decentralisation important, and how can it be achieved?

Decentralisation involves transferring power to local government structures to allow for more context-specific governance, as well as transparency and accountability. In this way, it also enables more representative ownership in decision-making structures.

Inclusive national ownership is widely acknowledged to be vital in peacebuilding processes. As noted by the 2015 UN Peacebuilding Review, inclusive national ownership means that peace cannot be imposed, but must be built by domestic stakeholders. This goes beyond the strategies and priorities of national government to being broadly shared across all social divides. A wide spectrum of political opinions and domestic actors must be heard – particularly from women and youth. True national ownership is about people owning the solutions and national processes.

The 2003 Comprehensive Peace Deal ended a 14-year-long protracted civil war in Liberia and paved the way for the 2005 presidential elections. Post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding efforts in Liberia hinged on addressing the root causes of the unrest.

In 2005, the country established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to confront the complex and brutal legacies of the past. The subsequent report, released in 2009, attributed the causes of the conflict to poverty, corruption, broad inequalities, land tenure and violations of economic, social and cultural rights. It made strong recommendations for the decentralisation of political and economic power.

As noted by the report, Liberia harbours a history of exclusion, which stems from the official settling of freed slaves from the United States in Liberia as early as 1822. These former slaves became the elite and fostered a culture that excluded native Liberians.
also caused a disconnect between the decision-making processes led at the national level, and the community-level, traditional processes on the ground. Monrovia holds all core functions of the government institutions, and there is no real cohesion with the greater part of Liberia in the 15 counties.

There have been attempts to decentralise government services and institutions in order to increase national ownership. However, these efforts have, at times, focused more on deconcentration (which means localising services, while decision-making remains at national level), rather than a true process of decentralisation, which allows a broader decision-making process through localised policies.

To facilitate the process, Liberia has established several County Service Centres – a one-stop shop where documentation-related services including permits, licences and certifications are offered at the same value and cost as in Monrovia. The four County Service Centres that are currently operating have reportedly provided services to some 22,363 people over a period of seven months. Yet limited resources have once again hindered full implementation. Furthermore, these centres do not allow greater participation in localised government structures. As such, these efforts demonstrate attempts at deconcentration, rather than decentralisation.

The Liberian government has recognised the need for decentralisation as a means to achieving real ownership of the country’s peacebuilding process. This is encapsulated in the Agenda for Transformation 2012-2017; a five-year, consensus-driven and country-specific development plan. Here, the agenda specifically states: ‘The Government will recast its relationship with citizens, and all government functions will be geared to provide services to the population.’

In 2010, the government of Liberia approved The National Policy on Decentralisation and Local Governance, a 10-year road map that calls for political, fiscal and administrative powers to be decentralised and transferred to local governments. This was followed by the Decentralisation Implementation Plan. Despite these policies, the process of decentralisation has been hindered by a lack of political will, limited human and financial resources, and most importantly, the need for constitutional reform and a local government act.

To finance the rolling out of the decentralisation agenda, revenue collection and expenditure must be managed efficiently. In this regard, however, the political will to divert resources to local government remains a challenge. Human resources and institutional capacity are needed to enhance the implementation and efficiency of services. Further, the exact roles of sub-national and national levels of government should be clarified.

If Liberia is to achieve truly inclusive national ownership, the government must make decentralisation a priority. In this regard, it needs to expedite the legal reforms initiated through the constitution review process and the draft local government legislation. It is the government’s responsibility to ensure that adequate resources have been catered for in the national budget.

There is more to decentralisation than providing resources through basic services: it speaks to developing a social compact between the government and its society to ensure ownership of all solutions in moving the country forward. This will necessarily involve dialogues with communities to formulate shared visions of local governance. Decentralisation is vital for Liberia, and if sustainable peace is to be achieved, it must be given priority.

This article was originally published by ISS Africa on January 18, 2017
Tafadzwa Munjoma is an Intern with the Peace Operations and Peacebuilding Division of ISS Pretoria | Twitter: @TapiwaMunjoma

Amanda Lucey is a Senior Researcher with the Peace Operations and Peacebuilding Division of ISS Pretoria | Twitter: @luceyamanda

This ISS Today was made possible in part by a grant from Carnegie Corporation of New York. The statements made and views expressed are solely the responsibility of the authors.
LOST IN TRANSITION: NO CHANGE FOR WOMEN’S RIGHTS IN LIBERIA

Liezelle Kumalo and Muneinazvo Kujeko

DESPITE HAVING A FEMALE PRESIDENT, LIBERIAN WOMEN REMAIN UNDER-REPRESENTED IN DECISION-MAKING FORUMS.

When Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected in 2005, she became Liberia and Africa's first female president. This gave the continent hope about the empowered role of women in socio-economic and political spheres.

However, in Liberia, women are yet to take their rightful and equal place in society, and Johnson Sirleaf's presence has not translated into Liberian women rising from the grassroots to be equally represented in decision-making forums. In October 2017, a new government will be elected and Johnson Sirleaf's term will come to an end.

During Liberia's civil war, women emerged as the flag bearers of peace through the 'Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace' initiative at the climax of the 14-year conflict. Through their collective action, women were instrumental in ensuring that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2003) was signed, which was crucial to paving the way to sustainable peace.

However, despite this prominent role in driving peace, greater empowerment for women on the ground is yet to happen. The Liberian National Gender Policy in 2009 noted that women were lagging behind in development, and that gender disparities and imbalances were evident in everyday life.

Although women account for 54% of the labour force, they remain severely marginalised, and lack the means to ensure a sustainable livelihood because they are underpaid and work within the informal sector. In terms of illiteracy rates, women account for 60%, and the maternal mortality rate in the country is very high when compared to global figures. Furthermore, 48% of Liberian girls fall pregnant before the age 18, which contributes to high levels of unemployment among young women.

Sexual and gender-based violence and exploitation is also very high in the country, especially among young girls. Sexual violence was rampant during the war, and 13 years later, rape and sexual violence remain a major problem.

In 2009, the Liberian government developed a four-year National Action Plan to respond to the recommendations of the United Nations resolution 1325, which pertains to women in peace and security. Yet four years on, little has been implemented.

This is partly because the Gender Policy has not been consistently integrated into national legislature. For instance, the Inheritance Law of Liberia states that a young girl is eligible for marriage at 16 years old, whereas the Penal Code of 2005 stipulates that the age of consent is 18. These pieces of legislation are therefore at odds with one another, and implementing them consistently is not possible.
Research carried out by the Institute for Security Studies in Monrovia in November 2016 identified additional challenges. These included awareness-raising and educating the public on these new laws, as well as negative cultural traditions that are at odds with human and women’s rights.

It is clear that much progress remains to be made to improve gender disparity and place women rights at the forefront of policy development.

Current trends don’t bode well.

During the 2011 elections, there seemed to be a growing aversion to appointing women in positions of political leadership. The percentage of women in the National Legislature dropped from 14% to 11.8%. The number of women in the Senate dropped from five to four, while the number of women in the House of Representatives dropped from nine to eight.

Two out of nine women representatives of the 52nd Legislature were re-elected, and an additional six women were newly elected.

A total of 33 female lawmakers lost their seats in the elections, indicating a deteriorating situation where female politicians were losing momentum within their counties. Currently, women hold only one in nine Parliamentary seats.

Liberia is currently listed at number 149 out of 193 on the global ranking of women representation in Parliament. Some of the African countries that do notably better are Rwanda, which is first on the list and Senegal that is seventh.

However, ensuring women empowerment requires more than just adopting quota systems for women in power. If Liberia is serious about addressing inequality, it must first address the social and cultural impediments that prevent women from developing a career and obtaining gainful employment. Civic education implemented at the end of the war in various counties has not yet yielded positive results, due to entrenched traditional norms.

As the 2017 elections approach, successfully improving gender equality in Liberia will require a two-pronged approach.

First, women on the ground must be empowered. Women in leadership positions must identify the challenges that stand in the way of empowering women at the grassroots level.

Women’s representation in governance structures is important for long-term transformation. Greater attention must be paid at the grassroots level, where young girls must be given the opportunity to complete secondary education. This will require working with the local population to address cultural barriers. International partners can also work with government to offer scholarships to help young girls in furthering their education.

The Liberian government can also work with other African countries that will educate Liberian women in their countries and provide mentorship. This in turn will help develop beneficial experience-sharing among states.

Secondly, the government of Liberia can support women’s organisations financially to mobilise and regularly meet, which would enable them to find solutions that are specific to their communities. These conversations should then feed into the national discussion to ensure that women’s voices are heard at the highest decision-making tables.
The impact of Liberian women on ensuring peace in the country cannot be underestimated. Through their collective action, a 13-year era of peace has been achieved. The same collective action is now needed to ensure that women's needs are not ignored during this election year.

This article was originally published by ISS Africa on February 8, 2017

*Muneinazvo Kujeke* is an Intern with the Peace Operations and Peacebuilding division, ISS Pretoria

*Liezelle Kumalo* is a Researcher with the Peace Operations and Peacebuilding division, ISS Pretoria | **Twitter:** @KumaloLiezelle

This ISS Today was made possible in part by a grant from Carnegie Corporation of New York. The statements made and views expressed are solely the responsibility of the authors.
February 7, 2017

ALL PEACEBUILDING IS LOCAL

Joëlle Jennyw

PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY CAN ACHIEVE PEACEFUL TRANSITIONS WHEN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER TO DELIVER CONSISTENT MESSAGES, ALIGNING ALL ENGAGEMENT BEHIND THE OVERARCHING GOAL OF SUSTAINING PEACE.

On his first day as Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres issued an Appeal for Peace. As conflicts and crises wreak havoc across several continents, who would disagree with his call upon all—citizens, governments, leaders—to overcome their differences and put peace first?

Yet as crises around the world continue to demonstrate, peace can prove fiendishly elusive. Ambitious state building agendas have fallen well short of their unrealistic expectations. Large-scale interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq or South Sudan have not delivered peaceful states. Nor have international efforts turned Mali, the Central African Republic or other conflict-affected countries into stable and prosperous countries. Supporting peaceful and accountable states takes time, is difficult and often suffers setbacks. Often, the lack of progress has been blamed on “insufficient ownership” of the peace building process by local actors. The problem is that local ownership cannot be generated from the outside. Ultimately, it depends on the political calculations made by local leaders, based on their values and interests.

True, there have been significant successes. Most recently, the peaceful transition in the Gambia has demonstrated what preventive diplomacy can achieve when the international community comes together to deliver consistent messages, aligning all engagement behind the overarching goal of sustaining peace. Somalia, for all its problems, has made notable progress toward greater stability.

But where the liberal agenda has consisted in determining from the outside the best path for a country, it has seldom worked. This is not because democratic values are flawed—on the contrary, democracy remains the most successful political system—but because of a failure to adequately take into account the specific historic, socio-economic, political and behavioral realities in each individual country, and the limits of the ability of external actors to drive societal change. Ultimately, the fate of countries is in the hands of their elites - not only those nationally in charge in governments, but elites at all levels of society. Nudging them toward peace must start by understanding what incentives they have to either drive or block change. This means redoubling efforts to engage with all actors on the ground, aligning all instruments behind the single goal of supporting sustainable peace, and accepting that not all change is possible at the same time. Where efforts have been most successful has been when they have focused on building existing local capacities for peace.
RETHINKING PEACE

All societies have mechanisms that enable them to manage conflicts through peaceful means, be they formal, such as the justice system or Parliaments, or informal, often rooted in culture and tradition. Institutions play a critical role in this, as has been widely acknowledged since the publication of the World Development Report of 2011. But institutions are made of people, and on the whole people make decisions that are informed by their personal needs, values and interests and those of their closest constituencies. The processes by which interests either converge or clash are by nature political.

Structural vulnerabilities matter. Yet many structurally fragile countries never experience violent conflict. Poverty or inequalities alone do not explain conflicts; economic shocks, environmental pressures, external influences and changes in the distribution of power are examples of factors that also play an important part. Ultimately, the key determining factor often proves to be the choices that leaders and opinion-formers make in responding to these events.

Dignity, fairness, identity and religion are powerful factors, easily manipulated by charismatic leaders at all levels of society to pursue personal gains. Fear also plays an important part. Milosevic in the former Yugoslavia, or the genocidaires in Rwanda, used incendiary rhetoric based on fear and de-humanization of “the other” to fuel violence. As Clausewitz put it, “war is the pursuit of politics by other means.” Honor, or esteem, underpin many of the choices that individuals and groups make. Real or perceived fears, injustices or humiliations often fuel divisive narratives of “us” versus “them” that are used to stoke up violence. Perceptions tend to matter as much as facts, a phenomenon of growing importance in the age of social media.

Because conflicts are about rewriting the rulebook and changing the balance of power, all interventions to address conflict drivers affect power relationships. In this context, recognizing who stands to lose from stability and identifying the positive incentives that might nudge them toward a stable, violence-free political equilibrium is central to driving incremental change. Violence and exclusionary politics always serve the interests of some groups, including sometimes of those in government, especially when rent-seeking opportunities arise for insiders. In many states, the distribution of power is not regulated by formal institutions, but by networks of relationships; in such instances, bargains and transactions are driven by mutual dependency. Building sustainable peace therefore starts with understanding who are the key leaders at all levels of society, what are the interests of their constituencies, and where possible, engaging them on their terms, painstakingly investing in building relationships and tailoring engagements to each individual context. It also means being prepared to engage with highly controversial leaders.

Because conflicts are about rewriting the rulebook and changing the balance of power, all interventions to address conflict drivers affect power relationships. Deciding where to build a new road, how to increase the educational levels of girls and women, how to strengthen the rule of law, how to improve access to the health system for marginalized groups: no decision on assistance programs is politically neutral. The upshot is that development can make a significant contribution to addressing structural vulnerabilities – provided its impact on power relations is fully integrated in program design, under the explicit objective of building sustainable peace.
Monetary or programmatic incentives will not overcome resistances if the key leaders perceive change to be against their vital interests; nor will development assistance achieve sustainable outcomes unless these outcomes are in the direct interest of local leaders. Creating the incentives for difficult reforms thus means recognizing the temporal context in which interventions take place. The two fundamental questions that peacebuilders should ask themselves when violent conflicts loom are: what are the changed circumstances at that particular moment that tipped the hitherto balance, and in whose interest is it to change thereafter, given the new circumstances?

ADOPTING POLITICALLY SMART, LOCALLY LED PEACE BUILDING

The core focus of preventive and peace building action should be to strengthen endogenous capacities for the peaceful management of change at all levels of societies, based on a thorough and regularly updated analysis of the actors, their motivations, the conflict drivers and trends, and of how external interventions impact on those drivers. Empirical research has demonstrated that politically smart, locally led aid yields better and more sustainable outcomes. Such approaches are based on, “iterative problem-solving, stepwise learning and brokering relationships to discover common interests.” Yet while international actors have come to recognize the central role of politics in development and peace building, they have found it hard to move from thinking politically to working differently.

New approaches to sustainable peace will require that external actors “abandon practices that assume progress to be simple, predictable and deliverable from the outside.” Building sustainable peace is less an activity in its own right, than a way of using diplomatic, development and security assistance to support local actors and institutions, both formal and informal, that enable the peaceful management of conflicts. One of the implications is that peace building does not necessarily require additional funding; what it needs most is a conflict-sensitive way of spending funds and of engaging with local actors on development, human rights and peace and security issues.

Deciding how best to support the delivery of security and justice, for example, must start from an understanding of what are the sources of security and justice that people trust and consider legitimate, rather than automatically assigning these functions to the state. Where informal mechanisms prevail, it means helping to gradually institutionalize them and progressively bringing them in line with universally recognized human rights, rather than seeking to impose externally devised “solutions” that are ill-suited for the context and that will be perceived as going against the interests of the local elites.

This approach can be summarized as:

- Start from the problem, not from the solution: invest in participative analysis; adapt analytical frameworks to take better account of how individual and collective behavior develop in each specific context, and what are the incentives and disincentives for change;

- Understand politics: apply new analytical frameworks to understand networks of power in a society and how change happens at the local, national and regional level; pay particular attention to horizontal inequalities between groups, and to outside influences;
• Embrace complexity: beware of short-term solutions that may in fact undermine long-term outcomes; conduct joint analysis and programming bringing together the human rights, development and peace and security “pillars” of international action, aligning them behind the single goal of supporting sustainable peace.

This has implications for how international actors organize themselves to support prevention and peace building, including:

• Free-up the time of front-line delivery staff so that they can invest in building relationships with local leaders at all levels of a society; empower and enable staff through training, access to small-scale flexible funding and revision of their terms of reference to underline the political nature of their work;

• Put in place working methods and information management systems that break vertical and horizontal silos between human rights, development and peace and security actors; ensure that crucial knowledge of local circumstances, often acquired by front-line staff working for “technical” agencies, feeds back into political and programmatic decisions at headquarters;

• Create systems to recognize and mitigate against our own biases; the most effective mechanisms are to ensure that a diversity of voices are heard, and that planning assumptions are regularly revisited against evidence of what is actually happening on the ground.

The Secretary-General has appealed to all of us to overcome our differences and put peace first. This is a call for humility and resolve—the humility to acknowledge the limits of influence that external actors have, and the resolve to help countries build their own social and political infrastructure that enable the peaceful management of disputes.

Joëlle Jenny is a fellow at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University and the former director for Security Policy and Conflict Prevention at the European External Action Service.
January 13, 2017

UN PEACEKEEPING IN SOUTH SUDAN: A KIWI COMES TO JUBA
Megan Roberts

Today, South Sudan faces intertwined security, political, economic, and humanitarian crises.

The following is a guest post by Megan Roberts, associate director of the International Institutions and Global Governance program at the Council on Foreign Relations.

January 2017 David Shearer of New Zealand will take the helm of South Sudan’s beleaguered peacekeeping operation (the UN Mission in South Sudan, or UNMISS). Outgoing UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon tapped Shearer, a former New Zealand MP, as his special representative to oversee one of the United Nations’ most expensive missions, composed of nearly fourteen thousand uniformed personnel and two thousand civilians.

Shearer assumes leadership at a dangerous time for the world’s youngest country. Ushered into independence on a wave of optimism five years ago, South Sudan quickly descended into violent conflict, first against Sudan and then later into a civil war that began in 2013. Under significant international pressure, President Salva Kiir and his main rival, Riek Machar, agreed in August 2015 to a regionally-brokered peace agreement, which introduced a tenuous power-sharing arrangement. In a sign of just how fragile the truce was, Machar was not sworn in as vice-president until he returned to South Sudan eight months later.

Today, South Sudan faces intertwined security, political, economic, and humanitarian crises. In July 2016, the capital of Juba erupted into violence, dealing what may be a fatal blow to the peace process. Machar again fled the country and shortly after, Taban Deng Gai, formerly the opposition’s chief negotiator, was sworn in as the new vice-president. The move, which international actors accepted for pragmatic reasons, has sidelined much of the opposition. Denied a means to engage politically, those still loyal to Machar are now likely to advance their objectives through violence.

As the dry season begins, ominous warning signs point to renewed clashes, including in areas previously unaffected by conflict. Government and opposition groups are recruiting fighters and stocking up on arms in what combatants increasingly see as an existential conflict. Intertribal incitement has escalated. The United Nations has warned of the potential for genocide. President Kiir has proposed a national dialogue. In other circumstances, this could help deescalate the conflict. But the UN has warned that the deteriorating security environment will not allow for an inclusive process.

As with previous rounds of fighting, civilians will again be in the crosshairs of attacks by both government and opposition. Aware of the danger, more than one million South Sudanese have fled to neighboring countries. Those who stay face record levels of food insecurity. The risk of famine looms.
UN peacekeepers have struggled to maintain order in the face of repeated cycles of violence in South Sudan. UNMISS was initially authorized in 2011, with a mandate to help build the capacity of the new government and protect civilians. As civil war consumed the country in 2013, civilians sought protection from the warring parties on UN bases. The Security Council responded by restructuring the peacekeeping mission to place priority on the protection of civilians.

The mission has struggled with the enormity of the task, however, and its troops have repeatedly failed to implement their mandate. According to one inquiry into clashes at a protection site in Malakal in early 2016, UN troops abandoned their posts or refused to engage combatants in a number of instances, endangering civilians. A second investigation into violence that erupted in July 2016 detailed a “chaotic and ineffective response,” including abandonment of posts and instances of failure to protect civilians. In response, Ban Ki-moon took the unusual step of firing the mission’s Kenyan force commander, drawing the ire of the Kenyan government, which announced its intent to withdraw all of its more than one thousand peacekeepers from UNMISS.

Peacekeepers should not be given a pass for failing to implement their mandate, particularly when they abandon posts, putting civilians at risk and undermining the credibility of their mission. But some perspective is in order: With the August 2015 agreement in tatters, UN peacekeepers in South Sudan are being asked to keep peace where there is none to keep.

Nor is there any consensus among regional and international partners on where to go from here. Despite dire warnings from Ban Ki-moon and the head of UN humanitarian affairs, the Security Council recently failed to agree on implementing a long overdue arms embargo, unable to garner the nine needed votes (China and Russia were among those who abstained). Though a belated step, such an embargo could have stemmed the violence while symbolizing the council’s unified effort to bring peace to South Sudan. Regional powers, with competing interests in South Sudan, are also divided on how to proceed.

In practical terms, UNMISS is nowhere near large enough to fulfill its mandate. Three years after civil war erupted, peacekeepers are still sheltering more than two hundred thousand civilians in porous protection camps. In the wake of the violence of summer 2016, the Security Council authorized the deployment of a 4,000-strong protection force, to be drawn from countries in the region, with a mandate to facilitate free movement in Juba, protect the Juba airport, and protect civilians, UN staff, and humanitarian workers. The national government consented to the force under regional and international pressure, but it has since obstructed efforts to deploy it. As signs point to potential genocide, the United Nations has warned that its peacekeeping mission lacks “the appropriate reach, manpower or capabilities to stop mass atrocities.”

The government of South Sudan has also placed restrictions on the ability of previously deployed UNMISS forces to move freely about the country, hindering the mission’s ability to implement its mandate—and violating the status of forces agreement signed by the government and United Nations. In his last report on UNMISS to the Security Council, Ban Ki-moon warned that this “barrage” of restrictions was paralyzing the mission. Government forces regularly harass UNMISS staff and the mission itself came under fire during the July 2016 violence. Attacks on UN personnel by government troops increased in the months after.

All of this comes as the United Nations, United States, and African Union Commission are undergoing leadership transitions. Meanwhile, UNMISS itself has been without a leader and force commander since November. This leadership vacuum, which coincides with the onset of the dry season, is likely to tempt combatants to try to reshape realities on the ground and strengthen their bargaining hand.
All this presents quite a challenge to the new UN secretary-general, Antonio Guterres, who took office on January 1, and David Shearer, his man in Juba. Having already served the United Nations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Lebanon, Shearer faces what may be his toughest post yet. As head of UMISS, he will need to assess how he can support resuscitating a moribund political process in South Sudan, as well as assisting an inclusive national dialogue if one is forthcoming. He will also need to rapidly assess the capacity of the mission to carry out its mandate, as well as accelerate implementation of the recommendations stemming from the two 2016 inquiries on mission performance. His priorities must include ensuring that all personnel understand the UNMISS mandate and conducting regular scenario-based exercises, so that staff are equipped to protect civilians and know how to respond when the mission comes under attack.

For Guterres, who has made conflict prevention a core theme of his tenure, the task may be even harder: persuading an often fractious Security Council—including an incoming, nationally focused U.S. administration—that it must ramp up the United Nations’ presence in South Sudan or risk massive loss of life.

*This commentary originally appeared in the Council on Foreign Relations blog The Internationalist on 5 January 2017.*

*Megan Roberts is the associate director of the International Institutions and Global Governance program at the Council on Foreign Relations | Twitter: @MeganMRoberts1*
Restructuring the Peace and Security Pillar of the UN Secretariat

Sarah Cliffe and Alexandra Novosseloff

The report identified that there are many operational challenges of large missions overwhelming a broader “culture of prevention.”

The United Nations’ peace and security pillar has prevented the recurrence of conflict and protected civilians in many countries around the world. However, the peace and security architecture now faces deep challenges, with three reviews in 2015 pointing to the need for organizational reform. In one of his first decisions, the new Secretary-General António Gutteres tasked an Internal Review Team (IRT) to make recommendations on organizational change, following the recommendations of the high-level independent panel on peace operations, the advisory group of experts on peacebuilding and the 1325 review. As an interim measure, he gave initial instructions on the co-location of regional groupings of Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the creation of an Executive Committee (EC) in his office.

Against this background, the Center on International Cooperation (CIC) has produced a report entitled “Restructuring the UN Secretariat to Strengthen Preventative Diplomacy and Peace Operations” that analyzes managerial and structural challenges at UN headquarters that reduce performance on the ground, and assesses options for organizational change. On February 21st, the findings of this report were presented by Sarah Cliffe and Alexandra Novosseloff at a recent IPI closed-door roundtable event on “Restructuring the Peace and Security Pillar of the UN Secretariat” held under Chatham house rule.

The report identified that there are many operational challenges of large missions overwhelming a broader “culture of prevention”; the fragmentation of the system and of UN actors into silos, which undermines coherent action; the absence of clear political strategies to guide peace operations and enable sustainable solutions to crises; the lack of authority and resources for peacebuilding; competition between the departments of political affairs and peacekeeping operations; the multiplicity of UN actors and fragmented initiatives for political, security and justice institutional support; and the disconnect between operations and field support.

The paper presents four clusters of options for restructuring: (1) dedicated management options (e.g. second Deputy Secretary-General); (2) fusion models (e.g. merging DPKO/DPA and/or DPKO/DFS); (3) form-follows-function models (e.g. clearly delineating political, operational and “institution building” functions); and (4) peacebuilding options (e.g. integrating peacebuilding more closely with other EOSG cross pillar functions). The authors underlined that no one model is perfect, with competing pros/cons and various levels of political feasibility associated to each. The authors also described the paper’s analysis of budget issues and of practical policy considerations in selecting the most appropriate option.
Participants agreed with the paper’s conclusions that strong leadership and management are key factors to implement reform of the peace and security pillar. The authors noted that, in consultations on the paper, there had been general agreement on this, but that on the other hand when asked whether stronger leadership and management was enough to resolve the problems without organizational change, the clear conclusion was “No. The structures also need to be improved to deliver the functions needed.” Participants further stressed the need to overcome silos and to ensure coherence among departments to bring an end to the competition between the departments of peacekeeping operations, political affairs and field support, in particular; as well as to better link the capacities of agency, funds and programmes with those of the peace and security pillar, as has been done in the global focal point for police, justice and corrections. The “static” UN work culture and its rigid rules and procedures were also mentioned; participants called for greater flexibility in order to adapt to the realities missions are confronted with on the ground. They stressed the need to rebalance the relationship between the Security Council and the Secretariat and to ensure timely and effective information-sharing.

The responsibility of Member States on the Security Council, particularly the P5, and their relation to the UN Secretariat was also discussed. The Council is often paralyzed and fails to take necessary action because of division amongst its members. This is particularly true in the case when preventative action is required, as was the case in Burundi. Among the participants, there was a broad consensus on the need to shift the UN’s work to more upstream conflict prevention.

Lastly, the need to change the way the budgets are negotiated was strongly acknowledged by all participants, as well as the need for a better strategic discussion between the Secretariat and the members of the Fifth Committee prior to the negotiations. The strategic budget analysis in the report was noted as useful, and participants felt that this type of more strategic-level analysis is urgently needed for the next budget discussions.

Participants welcomed strong leadership and direction from the office of the Secretary General and encouraged the work of the Internal Review Team (IRT) on the Secretariat’s Peace and Security Architecture due to report in June 2017. They however cautioned that reform will require the sustained support from a broad range of Member States at a time when there is pressure for budget reductions from major financial contributors.

The roundtable event was moderated by Arthur Boutellis, Director of the IPI Brian Urquhart Center for Peace Operations.

DOWNLOAD THE FULL REPORT RESTRUCTURING THE UN SECRETARIAT TO STRENGTHEN PREVENTATIVE DIPLOMACY AND PEACE OPERATIONS
RELATED PUBLICATIONS

THE FOLLOWING RELATED PUBLICATIONS MAY BE FOUND ON THE GLOBAL PEACE OPERATIONS REVIEW SITE

PARTNERING FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN LIBERIA

Targeted, practical recommendations to the UNPC on enhancing its support to Liberia

RESTRUCTURING THE UN SECRETARIAT TO STRENGTHEN PREVENTATIVE DIPLOMACY AND PEACE OPERATIONS

A extensive study in Restructuring the UN Secretariat

SUSTAINING PEACE AND PEACE OPERATION MANDATES: THE LIBERIA TRANSITION

A series of workshops in support of efforts to better understand and implement sustaining peace
FEATURED DATA

TOP 5 UNIFORMED PERSONNEL CONTRIBUTIONS TO UN PEACE OPERATIONS (JANUARY 2017)

Top 5 Uniformed Personnel Contributors to UN Operations, January 2017

- Rwanda: 6,126 (17%)
- Bangladesh: 6,895 (19%)
- Pakistan: 7,136 (20%)
- Ethiopia: 8,301 (23%)
- India: 7,762 (21%)

Top 5 Total Contributions: 36,720. All Contributions Total, Jan 2017: 100,231.

UNIFORMED PERSONNEL CONTRIBUTORS BY INDONESIA TO UN OPERATIONS (JANUARY 2017)

Uniformed Personnel Contributions by Indonesia to UN Operations, January 2017

UNAMID (DR Congo)
1,118

UNIFIL (Lebanon)
1,296

Others
458


Global Peace Operations Review
MAJOR UNIFORMED PERSONNEL CONTRIBUTORS BY INDONESIA TO UN OPERATIONS
(2006-PRESENT 2016)
MAJOR UNIFORMED PERSONNEL CONTRIBUTORS BY GHANA TO UN OPERATIONS
(2006-PRESENT 2016)

Uniformed Personnel Contributions by Ghana to UN Operations, January 2017

- UNMISS (South Sudan): 1,029
- UNIFIL (Lebanon): 871
- MONUSCO (DR Congo): 487
- Others: 472

UNIFORMED PERSONNEL CONTRIBUTORS BY GHANA TO UN OPERATIONS (JANUARY 2017)

Major Uniformed Personnel Contributions by Ghana to UN Operations, 2000-present

- Total Contributions
- MINURCAT (Chad)
- MONUC/MONUSCO (DR Congo)
- UNAMID (Sudan)
- UNAMSIL (Sierra Leone)
- UNIFIL (Lebanon)
- UNMIL (Eliberia)
- UNMIS/UNMISS (Sudan/S. Sudan)

The Global Peace Operations Review has received generous support from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, French Ministry of Defence, German Federal Foreign Office, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.