Burundi Short Mission Brief

I. Activity Summary: The UN and AU in Burundi

Overview

The African Union, and later the United Nations, each deployed a peacekeeping mission in Burundi in the early 2000s to facilitate and later maintain the tenuous peace brokered by international negotiating teams between the many parties involved in the 12-year (1993-2005) 18-belligerent civil war. Burundi is often cited as a case of successful cooperation among UN and AU missions, African states with interest in the outcome of the conflict (especially South African and Tanzania), and existing local and international peacebuilding and development operations. The mission is credited with preventing the conflict in Burundi from escalating to nation-wide massacres and genocide (like its neighbor Rwanda) and ensuring a successful democratic power transition. However, while it was largely successful, there are still many lessons to be learned from this mission, the AU's first major peacekeeping operation and the AU's most successful mission to date.

Background

Burundi has a history of ethnic-based tensions between Hutus and Tutsis. In 1993 the Burundian military assassinated the country's first democratically elected president, Melchior Ndadaye, during a coup. This sparked the 12 year conflict that was characterized by a multiplicity of regional actors that largely broke down along ethnic lines (Hutu vs. Tutsi), but was as much about accumulating political and economic power and securing spoils as true ethnic grievances. In the lead-up to the assassination, tensions had been growing between the Tutsi minority and the Hutu majority. Burundi's military was Tutsi-dominated, while presidents were always members of the FRODEBU party (Front pour la Democratie au Burundi, associated with the Hutu ethnic group). Ndadaye's assassination spurred revenge attacks by Hutus on Tutsis across the nation, to which Tutsis responded in kind.

After Ndadaye's death, the UN established an office in Bujumbura (the UN Office of Burundi, or UNOB) in November 1993 to facilitate the return to constitutional rule. Complicating things further, in April 1994, Ndadaye's successor, President Ntaryamira, was killed along with Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana when the Rwandan president's plan was shot down (which precipitated the Rwandan Genocide). Burundi and Rwanda are similar in ethnic makeup and historical tensions, and the joint assassination (suspected orchestrators of the attack include then Hutu extremist group leader Paul Kagame and the Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF)) multiplied the effects and further fueled tensions in both countries.

The next president, Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, was also a FRODEBU member. He attempted to institute a political power-sharing agreement (the Convention of Government), which was seen by members of his party as too conciliatory with the Tutsi-dominated military and did not include any of the emerging armed groups, and by Tutsis as not adequately considering Tutsi rights. In 1994, CNDD-FDD (Conseil National pour la Defense de la Democratie- Forces pour la Defense de la Democratie) split from FRODEBU to form a rebel group dedicated to violent opposition, operating out of Eastern Congo. In 1996, a military coup led by the Tutsi-dominated UPRONA (Union Nationale pour le Progres) party ousted Ntibantunganya and installed President Pierre Buyoya.
Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement

The Regional Peace Initiative on Burundi, was created in 1995 to seek a peaceful settlement. It was comprised Burundi, Uganda, Rwanda, and DRC, with Tanzania as the mediator. However, after Buyoya's coup, the Regional Initiative member states, along with Kenya, Ethiopia, and Zambia, as well as Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) began levying sanctions – an arms embargo on the country and visa bans for those undermining the peace process – and regional donors froze all but humanitarian aid. The sanctions, though initiated by the Regional Initiative, were coordinated at OAU summits, and "a regional sanctions coordinating committee (RSCC) was established to monitor the sanctions’ effects and humanitarian impact."

While the political conflict was underway and being negotiated, the militant wings of various parties waged war on each other and the population on the ground. Combatants targeted civilians, including carrying out mass atrocities such as the massacre of over 150 Congolese Tutsi refugees in 2004. Both government and rebel forces recruited and deployed child soldiers and used sexual violence with impunity as a weapon of war.

Late in 1996, Buyoya lifted the ban on political parties and began negotiating with the CNDD. However, experts disagree on whether the sanctions were successful in compelling Buyoya to negotiate. He conceded to negotiations after the effects of the sanctions had begun to improve, indicating that the harmfulness of the sanctions was not the impetuous for his concession. Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere facilitated all-inclusive talks beginning in June 1998 (18 parties in total), which continued on and off for the rest of the decade under the auspices of the Regional Initiative. When Nyerere died in 1998, former South African President Nelson Mandela took over the role of facilitator, seeking to position South Africa as a leader in African peace and security issues, which brought even more international attention to the conflict. After many rounds of negotiations, the process successfully came to a close with 13 parties signing the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement on August 28, 2000, while 6 Tutsi parties "signed with reservations." The international clout provided by Mandela added to the belief within the signing parties that their needs and interests would be provided for through power sharing and elections. The fact that a regional body successfully led the peace process, with political support from the AU and UN makes this a rare success story of "African solutions."

The Agreement created a transitional power-sharing period, which was to be followed by elections no later than October 2004. However, despite the ceasefire, violence continued, multiple parties still refused to sign, and attacks on civilians continuing after the Agreement. After intense diplomatic regional intervention (the Regional Initiative), South African peace-brokers finally succeeded in bringing the Transitional Government of Burundi (TGoB), led by President Ndayizeye, and the rebel Forces CNDD-FDD, to agree on and sign the Global Ceasefire Agreement on 16 November 2003. Sticking points in the negotiation process had been political and military power-sharing agreements regarding military and gendarmerie composition as well as the DDR process. Through two weeks of intense negotiation, supported by regional heads of state and a team of experts providing even-handed proposals, the parties finally came to an agreement.

Over the course of the conflict, the Burundian military and numerous Tutsi and Hutu armed groups killed an estimated 300,000 Burundians and displaced more than 500,000.

African Mission in Burundi (AMIB)

While the Arusha Agreement in August 2000 had called for a UN mission, continuing violence let to a subsequent ceasefire agreement in December 2002, which called for an initial AU mission that would transition into a later UN mission. Due in part to UN inability to participate (the UN was already engaged in major peacekeeping efforts in DRC, Sierra Leone, and East Timor), and in part to African willingness
and strong support from South Africa, the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) deployed in April 2003 despite the lack of a comprehensive ceasefire. The AU’s Central Organ for the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (MCPMR) mandated the mission on April 2, 2003 to operate for a period of one year with the possibility of extension.

Becoming involved in the Burundian conflict when Nelson Mandela was appointed facilitator in 1998, South Africa already had 700 troops in the country (the South African Support Protection Detachment) when the AMIB mission was mandated, so it was relatively easy for South Africa to re-hat those troops as part of the AMIB mission. Due to funding issues, Ethiopian and Mozambican troops, which were supposed to deploy alongside South African troops in April, did not deploy until September and October 2003.

The mandate of AMIB was to "oversee the implementation of ceasefire agreements, support demobilization, disarmament and re-integration (DDR), prepare the ground for a fuller UN peacekeeping operation and promote political and economic stability." However, that mandate overlooked issues of limited AU DDR capacity and more importantly that the fighting in many areas was ongoing, so that DDR was not yet a realistic option. It also focused on ensuring safe return for Hutu leaders (CNDD-FDD) involved in the negotiations and peace process, a politically sticky mission due to CNDD-FDD’s major role in the conflict. AMIB established a Civil Military Coordination Center (CIMICC) to facilitate cooperation between the AU mission and UN and international humanitarian agency operations in Burundi. The CIMICC, though not perfect in its operations, worked reasonably well and is a potential model for UN/AU missions in the future.

AMIB’s mandate was weak in regards to its ability to use force. It did not have the financial or personnel capacity to complete its DDR mission, took far longer to deploy than planned, and only partially achieved its mandated tasks. Despite its challenges in effectively implementing its mandate (especially regarding DDR), and overall lack of capacity and adequate funding, the mission is credited with establishing a level of stability that enabled the UN to deploy its own mission. Throughout its mandate, AMIB coordinated closely (“strategic-level AU-UN engagement for the mobilization of resources, as well as in-theatre administrative and logistical assistance from the UN system”) with UN headquarters and the UN mission operating at the time in the Democratic Republic of Congo. AMIB’s mandate ended on May 31, 2004, once it had contributed to creating conditions suitable for the deployment of the UN mission, with its 2,612 of its troops being reasonably successfully "re-hatted" in blue helmets and serving as the initial personnel for the UN.

AMIB was made up of 3,335 people total (including both civilian and military components). Over the course of its mandate, 3,128 troops and 43 observers were deployed. The mission cost $134 million USD total. It was led by South Africa, and included troops from South Africa (1600), Ethiopia (980), and Mozambique (280). Burkina Faso, Gabon, Mali, Togo and, Tunisia, contributed military observers.

United Nations Mission in Burundi (ONUB)

The Global Ceasefire Agreement signed in November 2003, in addition to the first eight months of AMIB’s operation, created the stability necessary for the UN to consider deploying a peacekeeping mission. After a few delays within the Security Council and also due to two reconnaissance missions to determine whether the country had achieved a level of peace to make peacekeeping possible, UN Security Council Resolution 1545 mandated the UN Mission in Burundi (ONUB) on May 21, 2004 and deployed beginning June 1, 2004.

Before the mission was mandated, an Advanced Team deployed in late May to begin preparations, most notably to "re-hat" AMIB troops with blue helmets, and also to absorb UNOB staff into the new mission. ONUB, a Chapter VII mandated mission (meaning it was mandated to use force, relevant in cases of armed groups continuing to fight despite the ceasefire), worked closely with the transitional administration in the
time of its deployment, from June 1, 2004 to December 31, 2006. ONUB's primary tasks were to monitor the ceasefire, carry out DDR, monitor illegal arms flows into and out of the country, contribute to a successful electoral process, and provide advice and assistance to the transitional government. With the mission's support, Burundi held its first democratic elections in 12 years in 2005, with the CNDD-FDD party winning the presidency. The mission, better funded and staffed than its AU predecessor, and also operating in much more stable conditions, demobilized 22,000 ex-combatants, including 3,000 children and about 500 women.

At the request of the new government, which saw the UN as interfering, the mission's mandate expired in 2006. The UN established an integrated office in UN SC Resolution 1719 (2006) to follow ONUB’s departure. The BINUB (Integrated Bureau of the UN in Burundi), headed by a Special Representative to the Secretary General, was a reduced version of ONUB, designed to coordinate UN activities in Burundi and support the Burundian government in statebuilding and reform efforts for an initial period of one year. BINUB also planned to continue DDR efforts and the promotion of human rights.

ONUB Mission Statistics

Authorized Strength:

- Maximum 5650 military personnel: 200 observers; 125 staff officers; and 120 UN police personnel
- 434 international civilian personnel
- 170 UN Volunteers
- 446 local civilian staff

Peak Strength:

- 6520 total
- 5665 uniformed personnel: 5,400 troops; 168 military observers; 97 police.
- 316 international civilian personnel
- 383 local civilian staff
- 156 UN Volunteers

Fatalities (24 total):

- 21 military personnel
- 1 police
- 1 international civilian personnel
- 1 local civilian personnel

Total estimated expenditures: $678.3 million.

In September 2004, the major contributing countries were:

- Ethiopia: 862 (857 troops, 5 military observers)
- Mozambique: 230 (227 troops, 3 military observers)
- Nepal: 862 (859 troops, 3 military observers)
Pakistan: 1196 (1191 troops, 5 military observers)

South Africa: 1086 (1083 troops, 3 military observers)

Other contributing countries included Algeria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Chad, China, Egypt, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, India, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Namibia, Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Spain, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uruguay, Yemen, and Zambia.

Police personnel were contributed by Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Turkey.

II. Key Issues, Dilemmas, and Lessons From Burundi

AMIB

1. Inadequate Resources and Funding

AMIB took a long time to deploy projected troop levels — Ethiopian and Mozambican troops deployed five months after the mission was mandated due mostly to funding and capacity constraints. The AU decided to have troop contributing countries (TTCs) pay for the cost of their own deployments. This meant that Mozambique and Ethiopia were unable to deploy until they could find foreign backers, with the US and UK stepping in to fund their troops. Donations from African countries were scarce, and eventually the EU volunteered to pay for food supplies for the 200 ex-combatants disarmed by AMIB. South African troops had to operate on their own at the beginning of the mission, until US and UK funding to Mozambique and Ethiopia could support the deployment of their troops. And even when fully deployed, the troop levels did not adequately correspond to the mission components AMIB was tasked to perform. Securing a country still very much at war would require more than the 3,128 troops assigned to the mission, not to mention their additional tasks of managing a massive DDR process and ensuring political stability. This meant that, among other things, AMIB was unable to complete its DDR mission (it had planned for disarming 300 combatants a day but only disarmed about 200 total) due to inadequate food and resources to supply disarmed soldiers.

2. Lack of Logistical and Political Support for the Mission

At the meeting that mandated AMIB, only South African, Ethiopian, and Mozambican representatives were present. While other African nations may have rhetorically supported the mission, their actual commitment regarding funding and logistical support was nonexistent. This could be because as the first AU peace operation, countries did not know what to expect and were unwilling to contribute money and personnel to an untested model. An additional concern may have been interference in a sovereign nation; many regional leaders came to power through coups and/or rebellions and thus may not have wanted to set a precedence of interference in another countries' internal affairs. A third reason could simply be capacity — many countries in the region were facing their own internal armed group problems and likely had little leeway to get involved in another country's conflict. Capacity, however, was not limited to financial problems. AU headquarters was not prepared to adequately handle the logistics of a mission, including being unable to efficiently distribute donor funds, a fact that likely deterred international and African support. For example, "it was difficult for the AU to know what the donors contributed with to one given troop contributing country, thus sometimes leading to double reimbursement."

3. Force Security Arrangements
In cases where a mission is deployed before, or during a tenuous, ceasefire, the mission should have the mandate to operate in the ways necessary to ensure security. The mission should undertake the components of DDR simultaneously, and integrated security commands should be developed in a systematic and transparent manner to prevent perceived and actual corruption and political nepotism. Leaving these tasks up to the transitional government enables those in power to further their own interest sometimes at the expense of other political actors.

**ONUB Lessons Learned**

1. **Appearance of Neutrality**

The mission worked closely with the transition government. This was important to its effectiveness from a governance perspective; however, as the parties in the transition government had also been parties to the conflict, the UN's work was perceived as taking sides. The result of this was that the CNDD-FDD was able to position itself as a positive alternative to the fledgling transitional administration. When the CNDD-FDD won the election it was anxious to exert its sovereignty and separate itself from the UN, which resulted "in a demand almost immediately after the inauguration for the UN to draw ONUB down in favour of UN agency activities favouring relief and development." In the future, the UN should dedicate effort to developing relationships with political parties outside of the government (such as, in this case, the CNDD-FDD) to ensure long-term stability and acceptance of the mission. Additionally, missions should consider appointing new senior leadership with each new domestic administration to signal a "fresh start." While this might pose a danger to consistency, it makes it more likely that the new government will be willing to cooperate with the new mission.

2. **Public Perception**

ONUB had a very strong mandate, but the mandate was not strong enough, nor the mission's abilities extensive enough, to achieve the goals of the mission. Due to lack of political will and capacity issues within the mission, it was unable to deliver the complete security its mandate promised. It was supposed to prevent civilian harm, but did not have the intelligence capacities necessary for effective prediction and prevention operations. A strong mandate led to high expectations, and the mission's inability to fulfill those expectations resulted in public perception and credibility problems, as the mission was not always able to guarantee civilian safety. Better coordination between the military was challenging because the Burundian military was also party to the conflict. These issues led many Burundians to see the mission in a negative light, support the CNDD-FDD party in the 2005 elections, and ask for the departure of the UN.

3. **Misconduct**

ONUB deployed at the same time the sexual abuse scandals of the UN mission in the Congo were being exposed. Thus, significant effort was dedicated to keeping the same issues from occurring in Burundi. Senior management convened monthly meetings with high-level mission staff to review issues and coordinate closely with other UN organs in Burundi (i.e. WFP and UNICEF). This proved to be an effective strategy, and shows that "significant senior management attention on an ongoing basis, consistent repetition (and enforcement, as necessary) of the 'zero tolerance' message and work with all of the UN's points of primary interface with the population" can minimize misconduct.

4. **Mission Integration**

ONUB was meant to be an integrated mission, combining civilian and military components, as well as cooperation among the various UN agencies working in Burundi. In actual practice, intra-UN cooperation was not always successful, and the UN's agencies tended to operate in parallel rather than together. This may be because the integration was initiated when ONUB deployed, not when the UN first became engaged.
in Burundi. Thus, DPKO staff led the integration. At the time the concept of "integration" was new, meaning they did not have models or templates to work from. To effectively integrate requires sustained attention from senior management, which was unrealistic in Burundi’s high-pressure context. To improve this in future missions, the mission should be established from the outset by staff from various agencies (ONUB was dominated by DPKO staff), and integrated from the outset before the mission deploys.

5. Timing

One of the major critiques of ONUB was the timing of its deployment. Some suggest that "international stakeholders should consider not just the 'ripeness' of the context for peace but also the countervailing time pressures that a 'late in the day' operation will experience."[38] The UN waited for AMIB to establish a certain level of peace before it deployed, which meant that to make the timelines set in the peace agreements the UN was forced to rush. Because the UN waited so long to deploy, it had too many tasks to complete in too short of a time, delaying the timetable for the election. By waiting for there to be "a peace to keep," the UN has been criticized for not adequately addressing security issues.

III. Burundi Literature Review

Reports/Scholarly Works:

Jackson, Stephen, PhD. "The United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUP): Political and Strategic Lessons Learned." Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum, New York. (July 2006). This paper [written in 2005] begins with a discussion of the dynamics of Burundi’s crisis and its peace process. It continues with a discussion of ONUB’s impact at the political and strategic level, examined through: ONUB’s mandate; the role ONUB played with regard to Burundian political parties and armed groups in the closing stages of the transition; and its performance in electoral organization, the security sector, conduct of UN staff and troops, the mission's internal capacity for strategic analysis, and in mission integration. It concludes with some brief lessons for future peace operations.

Bariagaber, Assefaw. "United Nations Peace Missions in Africa: Transformations and Determinants." Journal of Black Studies, vol. 28, no. 6 (July 2008): 830-849. There are a few mentions of Burundi in this report — most notably in reference to the fact that the UN intervened at a time that was convenient for the UN, siding with the government of Burundi, as well as to the nation-building aspects of the mission due to Burundi's inability to oppose rebel movements.

Curtis, Devon. "The International Peacebuilding Paradox: Power Sharing and Post-Conflict Governance in Burundi." African Affairs, 112/446 (2012): 72–91. This paper concludes "that despite talk of liberal peace, local participation, bottom-up peacebuilding, and inclusive governance, in practice peacebuilding has been expressed as stability, containment, and control. In response to the backlash against the liberal peace model of peacebuilding of the early 1990s, the author suggests alternate perspectives. One alternative perspective on peacekeeping is to emphasize the creation of stable, secure states with well-policing borders, while another is to focus on social justice issues. She explains that powerful Burundians have successfully coopted whatever peacebuilding narrative the international community has preferred for individual benefit. This article provides a good synopsis of the role politics and power (as opposed to the commonly cited ethnicity issues) played in Burundi's history and conflicts.

Rodt, Annemarie Peen. "The African Mission in Burudi: The Successful Management of Violent Ethno-Political Conflict?" Exeter Centre for Ethno-Political Studies, Ethnopolitics Papers no. 10 (2011). This paper evaluates the success of AMIB in regards to fulfilling its mandate, as well as contributing to peace and security overall. It discusses the internal and external/regional affects of the conflict in Burundi, AMIB, and ONUB.

Agoagye, Festus. "The African Mission in Burundi: Lessons Learned from the first African Union Peacekeeping Operation." Conflict Trends, no. 2 (2004). This article provided a detailed summary of the AMIB deployment, as well as very specific lessons-learned relating to deployments in conflict areas.


Relevant Documents, Agreements

**UN Security Council Resolutions**[39]


**Reports of the UN Secretary General**[40]


AU


Peace and Power Sharing Agreements


5. Jackson.


8. Jackson.


15. Curtis 83.


17. Jackson.


African Politics. African Peace

[22] Rodt, 17. Graphic sourced from Agoagye, 11.


[26] "Burundi - ONUB - Background."


[29] "Burundi - ONUB - Background."

[30] Ibid.


[33] Svensson, 14.

[34] Svensson, 18.


[37] Jackson.

[38] Jackson.
