

An Evaluation of Africa's Participatory Experience in United Nations Peace Keeping Operations, 1994-1998

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Abstract

Peacekeeping was pioneered and developed by the United Nations (UN) as one of the means for the maintenance of international peace and security. Governments have increasingly turned to the UN to deal with ethnic and national conflicts that have flared up in many regions of the world especially in the post-cold war era. All member states of the UN ought to share in the burden of maintaining international peace and security financially and in making security personnel available for such purposes. This therefore calls for burden sharing in carrying out this task. The paper analyses the roles played by African states in this burden sharing towards UN peacekeeping operations. It also identified the active participants from Africa and reasons were adduced for such regularity. The paper makes use of primary, secondary and tertiary sources to arrive at its conclusions. It is the conclusion of this paper that African states participate in UN peacekeeping operations and other aspects of burden sharing though at a lower scale. Some active participants from Africa are identified and they do so for the interest of the international community and most especially for their private interest. This explains why most of them participate mainly in African based conflicts due to its spill over quality and also due to their quest for regional or sub regional power status.

Key words: Peacekeeping, burden sharing, peace, security, conflict, regional

Introduction

Peacekeeping Operations derive its legitimacy in Article 40 of the UN Charter[1]. This gives the Security Council the power to call upon parties involved in a conflict to comply with some provisional measures and to take account of failure to comply with such provisional measures. Peacekeeping has always been applied on ad-hoc basis to meet emergency situations[2]. There have been instances where situations of conflict or disputes have occurred but where peacekeeping could not be applied. Such instances often involve super power confrontations such as the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and her current invasion of Ukraine in 2022[3]. However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and international communism, the incidence of super power disagreements over peacekeeping efforts have been drastically reduced. The collapse led to possibilities of unanimity in the Security Council on peacekeeping and other security issues a case in point was the joint action of allied forces against Iraq in 1991.[4]

These peacekeeping operations are financed through the United Nations budget and include troops from many countries. This burden sharing can offer extraordinary efficiency in human, financial and political terms[5]. The contributions from member countries towards peacekeeping can either be through military police personnel, together with civilian staff, and financial support. It is important to note that peacekeeping operations have largely been confined to the third world that include Africa. As such the evaluation of African participation in UN peacekeeping in conflicts within and out of Africa, requires proper appraisal

Over the past years, the international community have continued to strive to respond to crises and conflicts, some of which have brought humanitarian disasters on a massive scale. Ethnic hatreds, once held in check by strong central governments in Central and Eastern Europe, have been unleashed with the breakdown of

communist regimes. Any ensuing civil conflict could spread to nearby states and embroil the world in war unless peace-keeping restore calm and stability.

In Africa, tribalism has resulted in genocide, leading to the diffusion of instability to neighbouring states due to the spill over quality of conflicts. The attendant implications of these crises in the international system is the increase demand for peace-keeping that has currently become one of the major pre-occupations of the UN. This is evident in the fact that from 1988 to mid-1990s, UN peace-keeping expenditures increased over a magnitude from less than \$30 million to more than \$ 3 billion.⁵ This is paid for by UN member states on assessment accounts' charges apportioned among four classes (A-D) of nations as follows;

- The five permanent members of the security council;
- Twenty-two developed countries not in class A;
- Wealthy developing countries.
- Other developing countries

Class 'A' countries pay about 22% more than their regular budget assessment scale, whereas Class 'B' countries pay their regular budget assessment scale. Class 'C' countries, which may be relatively well-to-do, pay about one fifth their regular budget assessment scale, whereas class 'D' countries pay one tenth of their regular budget assessment scale (African countries fall in this latter class).^[6]As a consequence, more than 95% of peace-keeping assessments are levied on class 'A' and 'B' nations.

From 1988-1996, there were twice as many UN peace-keeping operations as in the organisations first three decades.^[7] These missions have increased in complexity by taking on the peace-enforcement and transitional assistance during a return to democracy as was the case with UNOMIL alongside ECOMOC, in the Liberian (1998).

Due to the myriad of problems facing the international system today, peace-keeping is showing signs of increasing importance in the years ahead. As these operations under the UN are currently some-what overstretched, it has become increasingly difficult to find sufficient troops and personnel for the most challenging operations. This is exacerbated by the fact that the organisation is in acute financial crisis due to the failure of nations to pay their peace-keeping assessments on time or at all.

When members fail to pay their assessments in full and on time, troop contributor reimbursements are delayed making it burdensome for some countries to participate in the operations. Recent experiments have demonstrated that Security Council resolutions mandating an operation no longer automatically implies that it will happen as authorized. This is because the availability of troops has become a severe problem. A case in point is Security Council resolution 844 (1993), adopted on the 18th June mandating an increase of 7,600 troops to UNPROFER for the safe areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It took a year for these troops to be made available and deployed.^[8] The 5,500 troops authorized for Rwanda in May 1994 began to arrive well after two months had passed.

Expanded scope or not, the UN cannot function without the voluntary compliance and full and committed participation of its members. It is a truism that states will participate in UN peace-keeping only in limited ways and with constant approval-seeking from their national capitals. Laura Neak ^[9]in her study ask whether participation in peace-keeping results from a state's idealistic commitment to the global community and international peace or from the member's national interest.⁴ By way of preliminary conclusion, she contend that a realist interpretation better explains state's participation. Another study accuses other states of free-riding with the view that the creation of the collective security system makes for the tendency of many nations to use the system without paying or contributing to its costs^[10]. It is against these backgrounds that the participation of African States in UN peace-keeping in terms of personnel contribution to it will be

evaluated.

An Analysis of African Contribution to U.N Peace-Keeping 1994-1998

Much of what has been written about UN peace-keeping has been idiosyncratic and atheoretical. The preferred mode seems to involve single case studies of particular operations or peace-keepers. This dearth of aggregate-level research is curious given the data available from the UN on peace-keeping operations.

The paper examines UN published records to evaluate the participation of African States in UN peace-keeping operations. It also to examine the most regular peace-keepers from Africa within the period 1994-1998. It includes data on sixteen operations all of which appear in (Table I) listed in order of starting dates. For the purpose of this study, the observer missions and peace-keeping missions in the data are not considered separately.

The incidence of state participation in peace-keeping is presented in (Table II), which includes the general incidence of participation of all states involved in UN peace-keeping operations in the period under study. The only African country in the first ten peace-keepers is Nigeria which has a considerable reputation as a sub-regional power of the eight-year long Liberian civil war (1990-1998). Part of Nigeria's international status comes from its activities within the UN.

**TABLE I: UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS THAT INCLUDE
1994-1998**

UNTSO: United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation; June 1948 to date in Jerusalem.

UNMOGIP: United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan; January 1949
to date in India-Pakistan border.

UNFICYP: United Nations peace- Keeping Force in Cyprus, March 1964 to date.

UNDOF: United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, June 1978 to date in Syrian
Golan Heights.

UNIFIL: United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, March 1978 to date in Southern
Lebanon.

UNIKOM: United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission, April 1991 to date in Iraq-
Kuwait border.

MONUA: United Nations Observer Mission in Angola, July 1997 to date.

MINURSO: United Nations Mission for the Referendum of Western Sahara, April 19 to date.

UNPSG: United Nations Civilian Police Support Group, January 1998 to data in Croatia.

UNMIBH: United Nations Missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, December 1995 to date.

UNPREDEP: United Nations Preventive Deployment Force, March 1995 to date in the Former Yugoslavia Republic of Macedonia.

UNMOP: United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka, January 1996 to date in Croatia.

UNMOIG: United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia; August 1993 to date.

MIPONUH: United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti, December 1998 to date.

UNMOT: United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan, December 1994 to date.

MINURCA: United Nations Mission in Central African Republic, March 1998 to date.

Operations concluded before 30th April 1998 are not included here because of unavailable data.

Source: United Nations “Monthly Summary of troop Contributions to Peace-Keeping Operations” (Capt. M. Mete Doganay Mao/DPKO 1998).

Out of the twenty-one countries from Africa that were participating in the peace-keeping operations outlined in Table II, only six of them -Nigeria, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mali and Senegal were involved in more than three operations. As much as ten out of the twenty-one countries were involved only in one operation. This can be explained in terms of the economic backwardness of the most African States[11]. The leading participants from Africa – Nigeria, Egypt, Ghana and Kenya most especially are countries that in African standards are either regional powers or are striving to become regional powers.

TABLE II: THE INCIDENCE OF STATES PARTICIPATION IN THE PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS

Country	Total Operations	Civpol	Troops	Milobs
Russian Federation	13	3	3	7
Sweden	13	4	2	7
Canada	11	3	4	4
Bangladesh	11	2	2	7
Finland	11	3	3	5
Nigeria	11	5	–	6
Poland	11	2	2	7
Argentina	10	3	2	5
Australia	10	2	3	5
Denmark	10	2	1	7
Ireland	10	3	2	5
Pakistan	10	2	2	6
Egypt	9	4	–	5
France	9	2	3	4
Ghana	9	2	2	5
Jordan	9	4	–	5
Ukraine	9	4	1	4

Indonesia	8	2	1	5
Kenya	8	2	1	5
Norway	8	2	2	4
Portugal	8	3	1	4
Uruguay	8	1	1	6
U.S.A	8	3	1	4
India	7	4	1	2
Switzerland	7	2	–	5
Hungary	6	2	1	3
Italy	6	1	1	4
Malaysia	6	3	–	3
Nepal	5	2	1	2
Belgium	4	–	–	4
Brazil	4	1	–	3
Bulgaria	4	2	–	2
Fiji	4	2	1	1
Greece	4	1	–	3
Mali	4	2	1	2
Senegal	4	2	–	1
Turkey	4	2	–	2
United Kingdom	4	1	1	2

Source: Prepared from United Nations (1998, DPKO).

Civpol – Civilian Police Observers

Milobs – Military Observers.

Looking beyond the top ten peace-keepers, the major participants are Western or Western-oriented States with only few from the former Eastern bloc. Many of the others in the table II are states which at various times have attempt to establish themselves as regional and/or non-aligned or rising global powers such as, India, Ghana, Nigeria, Brazil. Thus state participation in UN peace-keeping supports the view that the most likely participants are states that benefit from the status quo, and aspiring “powers” that seek to achieve some relative prestige within the status quo. Thus, participation in UN peace-keeping operations is derived from both an interest in protecting the international system and the participant state’s current or desired position in that system.[\[12\]](#)

From the data, it comes out clear that African countries participate more in peace-keeping operations that are located in Africa than those located elsewhere. Though this can partly be explained in terms of the subsidiarity principle of the UN to always invite countries that are closer to the conflict in order to reduce transportation costs, it can also be explained in terms of the fact that it is in line with the OAU now African union(AU) policy for member nations, to tackle the continent’s conflicts on a permanent, professional, and sustainable basis.[\[13\]](#)

As can be seen in Table III, most of the personnel from Africa participate mainly in African based operations with only some few countries venturing out of the continent. Of the ten countries that participated in only one operation from the African continent, nine-tenth (9/10) of them sent their personnel only to

African based operations. This confirms our position that the geographical location of the operations determines the participation of African countries and also confirms the position that most nations participate in peace-keeping for purely self-interest that may at times corresponds with the interest of the international community. The self-interest explanation of African participation in African conflicts can be that Africa States do so for fear of the conflict spilling over to their own shores[14].

This position is elucidated further in Table IV in which it can be seen that, African countries registered their highest participation in the MONUA mission in Angola. In the mission, a total of twelve states from Africa participated. The next highest operation in which African countries participated in took place in another African country – The Central African Republic. In this operation, the African States constituted seven out of the total of nine participants in the conflict.

Table III: CONTRIBUTION OF PERSONNEL TO UN PEACE-KEEPING BY AFRICAN STATES WITH A VIEW OF THE TOTAL NUMBER SERVING THE AFRICAN BASED OPERATIONS

Country	Total Personnel in the Operations	Total of the Personnel serving in African based Conflicts
Benin	6	0
Burkina Faso	125	125
Chad	124	124
Cote d'Ivoire	233	233
Congo	3	3
Egypt	90	43
Gabon	128	128
Ghana	770	23
Guinea	3	3
Guinea Bissau	7	7
Kenya	38	14
Mali	166	146
Namibia	152	152
Niger	5	0
Nigeria	79	40
Senegal	164	133
Tanzania	3	3
Togo	131	124
Tunisia	17	0
Zambia	185	185
Zimbabwe	34	34

Source: Prepared from UN (1998 DPKO).

TABLE IV: GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE OPERATIONS AND THE PARTICIPATION OF AFRICAN STATES

Operation	Location	Total Participants	Total participants from Africa
UNTSO	Jerusalem	20	0
UNMOGIP	Indo-Pakistani border	8	0
UNFICYP	Cyprus	9	0

UNDOF	Syrian Golan Heights	4	0
UNIFIL	Lebanon	9	1
UNIKOM	Iraq-Kuwait border	33	4
MONUA	Angola	30	12
MINURSO	Western Sahara	27	5
UNPSG	Croatia	22	4
UNMIBH	Bosnia Herzegovina	42	6
UNPREDEP	Macedonia	27	4
UNMOP	Croatia	25	4
UNOMIG	Georgia	21	1
MIPONUH	Haiti	11	6
UNMOT	Tajikistan	12	2
MINURCA	Central African Republic	18	7

Source: Prepared from UN (1998, DPKO).

As to whether African countries participate in UN peace-keeping operations thus, it can be concluded that to an extent, they do. This is in view of the fact that out of the sixteen operations under study, African countries participated in twelve of them. African states thus contribute their own quota to UN peace-keeping operations. This participation is however limited in number and in scope due to the economy of African states and also their foreign policy objectives which make most of them to concentrate their participation mainly on African based conflicts[15]. The economy of African states limits the number of personnel that the countries willing to participate from Africa can send. The economic factor has partly made it that under our period, only twenty-one of the total of about 53 countries in the continent participated in at least one UN peace-keeping operation[16]. In terms of financial contribution towards it, the economy has also further weakened the performance of African States. This is in view of the fact that by 1996, 95.9% of the financial burden of UN peace-keeping was borne by NATO member country and some other European powers including only China and Japan for non-European powers.[17] This means that the third world countries that include Africa contributed only about 4.1% of the UN peace-keeping financial burden.

An Analysis of the Active and Consistent African States in UN Peace-Keeping

This section seeks to isolate the active and consistent African States in UN peace-keeping with an attempt at adducing reasons for their consistency.

Our findings (see Table I) show that under our period, Nigeria, Egypt, Ghana and Kenya were the most active and consistent participants from Africa. This is in view of the fact that they participated in eleven, nine, nine and eight operations each respectively out of the total sixteen. The next two major participants did so in only four operations each -Senegal and Mali; while as much as ten out of the total participants from Africa were only involved in one operation and all the ten but one offered their only participation in an African based conflict.

In a similar study conducted in 1996 by Laura Neak[18] Ghana was the most active African country participating in seven out of the eighteen operations[19]. In view of the fact that Nigeria and Ghana are in the first three African participants in our own study still, it can be said that Nigeria and Ghana, followed by Egypt, and Kenya are the most active participants in UN peace-keeping operations from Africa.

TABLE V: THE INCIDENCE OF PARTICIPATION OF AFRICAN STATES IN UN PEACE-KEEPING

Country	Total operations	Civpol	Troops	Milobs
Nigeria	11	5	–	6
Egypt	9	4	–	5
Ghana	9	2	2	5
Kenya	8	2	1	5
Mali	4	2	1	1
Senegal	4	2	–	2
Tunisia	3	3	–	–
Zambia	3	1	1	1
Zimbabwe	3	1	1	1
Guinea Bissau	2	1	–	1
Togo	2	1	1	–
Benin	1	1	–	–
Burkina Faso	1	–	1	–
Chad	1	–	1	–
Cote d'Ivoire	1	–	–	1
Congo	1	–	–	1
Gabon	1	–	1	–
Guinea	1	–	–	1
Namibia	1	–	1	–
Niger	1	1	–	–
Tanzania	1	1	–	–

Civpol = Civilian police observers

Milobs = Military observers

Source: Prepared from UN (1998 DPKO).

From the table, it can be seen that African States participate more with civilian police and then with military observers than with troops. Out of the twenty-one peace-keepers from Africa, only ten countries participated with troops and only Ghana amongst the ten did so with more than one troop. This can be seen as a matter of pragmatism on the part of African participants since troops are exposed to more risk than observers[20]. Even the active states of Africa can be said to be avoiding this risk that troops are exposed to in peace-keeping missions. Thus as a preliminary conclusion, African States can be said to be virtually free-riders when it comes to contributing troops to UN operations. However, in terms of civilian police and military observers, the active powers have demonstrated that Africa is contributing her share albeit the limiting factor of the poor economy of most African states.

The reason why Nigeria, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya dominate in peace keeping participation from Africa are not farfetched. These countries including South Africa are the leading economic giants of Africa. Within these countries lie the economic and political prospects of Africa.[21] Because of their economic might therefore, these countries possess personnel and equipment that make them adequately prepared to participate on the platform of the UN sponsored peace-keeping operations. These countries have large armed forces that are well trained and internationally acceptable for peace missions based on their previous performances.

Amongst these active participants from Africa are the countries that played a major role in the establishment of the OAU in 1963 – Ghana, Nigeria, Egypt – most especially and has in one period or the other strove to play a leadership role in Africa.¹² Ghana and Nigeria most often develop cold relations due to their contest for dominance in the West African Sub-region^[22]. Because of these contests for major power status, these countries have in order to prove their mettle placed the maintenance of international peace and security as one of their major pre-occupations – if only to demonstrate their might. By so doing these countries have remained active and consistent peace-keepers from Africa.

In Nigeria's case, the objective of playing a leadership role in Africa is part of her foreign policy objectives. Africa thus, being at the centre of her foreign policy pursuits, Nigeria sees it as her duty to participate in the resolution of any conflict that threatens the peace in Africa and the West African sub-region most especially^[23]. This explains the leading role that Nigeria played in Liberia and in Sierra Leone in the 1990s when these two countries were enmeshed in deadly civil wars.

These countries are also active in peace-keeping operations due to the contributor – specific benefits they get from participating in those operations. If for example a supporter nation gains status in the world community from being recognised as a promoter of world peace as is the case of Canada, Denmark, Sweden and Norway for the Western countries and Ghana, Nigeria and Egypt from Africa, then the contributor receives benefits that others do not. If, similarly, a contributor is near to the region of instability (as Nigeria and Ghana were to Liberia) to which peace-keepers were dispatched then nation-specific benefits may stem from the greater reduction in risks that the nation's propinquity confers. The contributor-specific benefits, that most of the active peace-keepers from Africa at times seek, are derived from the political value of doing more than one's fair share for peace-keeping.¹⁴ This is to show that the active participants in UN peace-keeping do so not only for the public good but at times for the private good.

In line with the above position, it has been argued^[24] that some countries including the active ones from Africa contribute to UN peace-keeping operations for crude financial gain.¹¹ According to current sources, the United Nations reimburses infantry troops of participating nations at the rate of \$909 per soldier per month^[25]. Yet many countries, especially developing countries spend a great deal less than that per soldier per month based on overall military expenditures. For example, Nigeria and Egypt alongside Bangladesh and India stood to gain substantially from involvement in the peace-operation in Somalia. This is in view of the fact that these countries spent significantly less than the official reimbursement rates on their troops while Egypt spent \$648 per soldier per month from the official reimbursement rate of \$909, Nigeria spent \$101. It is a truism that for Egypt's participation in "Operation Desert Storm" in 1991, she benefited a debt forgiveness of \$7.1 billion by the U.S.A, debt forgiveness of \$ 7-10 billion by the other allied members and 700 M-60A1 tanks.^[26]

Conclusion

From the analysis above, the one thing that comes out clear is that public interest which is the maintenance of international peace and security for its own sake seem not to contribute for much why the active states from Africa participate in UN peace-keeping. In terms of the magnitude of their participation, in terms of where peace-keeping operations get launched, in terms of their expectations from participating based on their foreign policy objectives, the participation of the active Africa, States in United Nations peace-keeping operations is largely to serve their own interests, though in doing so, they contribute immensely to the system equilibrium. This conclusion echoes Kim Richard Nossal^[27] who posited that the so-called middle powers that include the Nordic countries are no more inclined than other states internationalism as some scholars and their immense participation in peace-keeping seem to portray. Accordingly, the difference between middle powers and other states during the cold war era was that the

position of the middle powers vis-à-vis the great powers presented them with the responsibility for mitigating great power tensions. In the absence of great power tensions, the middle powers will likely pull from internationalism.

Thus, while Nigeria, Ghana, Egypt, Kenya and probably South Africa serve the interest of the international community by participating in United Nations peace-keeping operations, they also serve their private interests. Their level of economy and thus high level of preparedness for UN peace-keeping roles, make it possible for them to tower over less economically viable states from Africa in their participation in the UN operations.

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Foot Notes

[1] United Nations Chapter VII, Article 40 of the UN charter

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- [25] Ibid.
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