Effectiveness and Challenges of the United Nations Mission in Darfur in Addressing Conflict Dynamics in Sudan, 2003-2023

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the challenges faced by the United Nations Mission mitigation of the Darfur conflict between 2003 and 2023. This study was guided by the two complementary theories namely; the just war theory and Responsibility to Protect (R2P) theory in understanding the United Nations humanitarian intervention in the Darfur conflict. This study took the form of an exploratory research design to examine the escalation of violence despite efforts to restore peace and stability in Darfur. To achieve its objectives, this study targeted representatives of regional and international humanitarian organizations in Darfur, Sudan, members of civil society, academicians, government officials, security experts and the Sudanese population living in Kenya. Purposive and snow balling sampling techniques were employed in to identify respondents for field interviews. The main instruments for data collection included structured questionnaires with closed ended questions sand key informant interviews with open ended questions. This study identified patterns and trends that can inform future policy and intervention strategies in Darfur and similar contexts by examining the temporal evolution of the conflict and the corresponding humanitarian interventions. This study highlighted the need for a comprehensive and integrated approach in addressing both the immediate humanitarian needs and the underlying structural factors contributing to the conflict. This study further shed light on the complexities and challenges associated with addressing protracted conflicts like the one in Darfur. The analysis underscored the importance of sustained engagement, long-term development initiatives, and inclusive peace-building processes in achieving lasting stability and justice in conflict-affected regions.

Key Words: Bureaucratization, Humanitarian interventions, Protracted Crisis, Bilateral Aid / Assistance

INTRODUCTION

Humanitarian military interventions involve a state(s) or an international organization(s) using force or threat of it internationally to ensure citizens of the target state are protected from an acute violent emergency. Debates have ranged over the rationale of intervention by third party intervention in civil conflicts within a state that claims sovereignty. Two opposing views emerged on humanitarian intervention. The first viewpoint viewed state' sovereignty and respect for its internal affairs from the realist perspective. From this perspective state sovereignty becomes paramount and only the need for self-defense entitles one state to use force against another (Welsh (2004).The second viewpoint adopts a liberal perspective where it is argued that the values of restoring stability and safeguarding human lives justify international intervention (Rashid, 2012)

The rationale for humanitarian action is entrained in the UN Charter of 1945 which stresses the importance of human rights, outlaws the use of force by one state against another and mandates third parties to intervene in conflict situations that endanger human lives. The UN Charter mandates the international body to intervene in conflicts within states even if this does not respect state sovereignty. The use of force across boundaries is only ever justified in exceptional circumstances. Despite its significance in contemporary international relations, sovereignty is not an unalienable right. A government loses its legitimacy and, hence, it's right to sovereignty if it decides to put its own survival ahead of the security of its own people (Fiott, 2013).

Humanitarian intervention is a concept that involves the use of force or other forms of intervention by external actors to protect or assist a population facing grave human rights abuses or suffering from a humanitarian

crisis. It is often driven by the principle of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), which asserts that states have a responsibility to protect their populations from mass atrocities, and when states fail to do so, the international community has a responsibility to intervene.

In Africa, the African Union (AU) has been actively involved in promoting peace and security through humanitarian interventions. The AU's Peace and Security Council, established in 2002, has been responsible for authorizing and coordinating interventions in response to conflicts and crises in African countries. For instance, the AU has deployed peacekeeping missions in countries such as Somalia, Mali, and the Central African Republic to help stabilize the situations and protect civilian populations. Additionally, regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have also undertaken humanitarian interventions in their respective regions. These interventions have included peacekeeping, conflict mediation, and the provision of humanitarian assistance.

On the global scale, the United Nations (UN) has been actively engaged in humanitarian interventions in Africa. The UN has authorized peacekeeping missions, such as the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), to address conflicts and protect civilians. Additionally, UN agencies, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food Programme (WFP), have provided vital humanitarian assistance in response to crises and displacement situations across the continent.

There have been ongoing discussions and debates surrounding the nature of humanitarian intervention. The inquiry into the appropriate management of United Nations military intervention arose in light of the unsuccessful military interventions in Sudan, Rwanda, and Yugoslavia (Bayo, 2012). The aforementioned issues brought forward a novel notion known as Responsibility to Protect (R2P), which was ultimately endorsed in 2008 at the United Nations World Summit. According to Garwood-Gowers (2016), the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine stipulates that in cases where a state is incapable of safeguarding its population from international crimes in times of conflict, the international community is authorized to promptly intervene in order to rectify the situation and restore order. The idea of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) offers multiple avenues for utilization by the international community in efforts to restore peace and stability. These avenues include the responsibility to prevent, the responsibility to react, and the responsibility to rebuild (Schnabel, 2012).

The prevailing conditions in Darfur, Sudan have given rise to the fourth premise of humanitarian intervention. Teson (2006) posits that the primary objectives of humanitarian intervention are to bring an end to both revolutionary and oppressive governance. In order to establish a state of political stability and safeguard persons from infringements on their human rights, it is imperative to implement humanitarian intervention. However, it is crucial that such intervention is conducted in a rational and justifiable manner (Wheeler, 2001; Jahn, 2015).

The practice of humanitarian intervention has encountered numerous problems in the regions where it has been implemented (Fennimore, 2015). Humanitarian intervention missions in certain countries have effectively resolved conflicts, established security, and fostered stability. The nations that have seen the incorporation of international peacekeeping missions include El Salvador (1991-1995), Sierra Leone (1999-2005), Mozambique (1992-1994), Bosnia (1992-1995), East Timor (1999-2000), Kosovo (1999-present), Althea Bosnia (2004-now), Burundi (2004-2006), and Liberia (1991-2003). According to scholarly sources such as Eland (2015) and Lambert (2011), some instances of humanitarian intervention missions have been deemed unsuccessful. These include the missions in Haiti (1993-2000), Central African Republic (1998-2000), Congo (1999-2000), Afghanistan (2001-present), Darfur (2004-present), and Yemen (2015-present).

The effectiveness of humanitarian intervention is assessed based on several factors, including the quantifiable number of lives preserved from acts of atrocity, the establishment of a calm environment resulting from the military intervention, and the extent to which it has facilitated the reconstruction of civil society and the attainment of political stability devoid of violence (Seybolt, 2007). The United Nations (UN) has been primarily responsible for overseeing humanitarian intervention operations, while national governments and

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have focused on their attempts to influence civil conflicts and promote stability in places affected by conflict (Regan, 2000).

Scholars have immensely examined the challenges facing the UN humanitarian intervention measures in different regions in Africa. Ali (2019) focused on evaluating the effectiveness of the UNMISS mission in South Sudan. Inyang et al., (2022) examined the case of humanitarian intervention in Nigeria, specifically focusing on internally displaced people (IDPs) in Benue State from 2018 to 2021. Wekesa, (2013) documents of poverty, inequality, access to resources, social cohesion, and local governance structures as constraints facing UN humanitarian intervention measures in Somalia. Koddenbrock,(2015) identifies access constraints, security threats, coordination challenges, and the impact of local dynamics on humanitarian operations as challenges facing the UN humanitarian intervention in the DRC. Mena & Hilhorst, (2022) investigated how past decisions, policies, and practices influence current approaches to humanitarian action, highlighting the challenges and opportunities for breaking out of entrenched patterns of response. In light of the above background, this study specifically examined the effectiveness and challenges faced by the UNMID in implementing its mandate in Darfur between 2003 and 2023.

Statement of the Problem

The United Nations spelled out various rules that govern regional organizations that may intervene in another country in trying to solve a humanitarian crisis. The African Union's Constitutive Act Article 4 (h) emphasized on the right of the Union to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity. Additionally, Article 4 (j) stated the right of Member States to request intervention from the Union in order to restore peace and security. This is some of the rules that governed and intervention in Serbia and the UNAMID intervention in Sudan. Despite the fact that there have been various humanitarian interventions in Darfur Sudan, the country is engulfed in protracted conflict. Evidence in Darfur suggest that security implications resulting from the 2002 conflicts saw diseases, starvation and violence accounting for an estimated 350, 000 deaths, 200, 000 refugees displaced to Chad, and in the first five months of 2013 about 300, 000 people were displaced (Okereke, Ugochukwu & Agbai, 2016). The evidence further shows that in the period 2003 to 2005 an estimated 500,000 and 2,000 people were killed and villages were destroyed respectively. Similarly, the evidence observed that the population was hit by hunger and malnutrition due to destruction of farmers' livelihoods destruction. This raises questions on the effectiveness of UNMID humanitarian intervention measures. This study examines the effectiveness and challenges faced by the UNMID in implementing its mandate in Darfur between 2003 and 2023.

Objective of the Study

This study examined the effectiveness and challenges faced by the UNMID in implementing its mandate in Darfur between 2003 and 2023.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars have contributed to the effectiveness and challenges facing humanitarian interventions measures in Africa in the Third World. Ali (2019) focused on evaluating the effectiveness of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). The study examined various aspects of UNMISS mission in South Sudan. The findings of this study contributed to understanding the impact and effectiveness of UNMISS in promoting stability and peace in South Sudan. While Ali (2019) focuses on the effectiveness of a specific mission in South Sudan, this current study provides insights into the challenges faced by humanitarian actors in a different conflict-affected region.

Ghattas, (2020) explored the intervention coverage, challenges, and adaptations in providing healthcare services in the Syria conflict. The study provides insights into the specific challenges faced by humanitarian actors in addressing health needs and highlights the adaptations made to overcome these challenges. The study further contributed to understanding the complexities of delivering healthcare in conflict zones and offers valuable lessons for improving intervention strategies in similar contexts. While Ghattas specifically zeros

down on health needs in Syria this study assesses the overall effectiveness of different types of interventions in mitigating the conflict in Darfur, Sudan.

Inyang et al., (2022) examined the case of humanitarian intervention in Nigeria with specific focus on internally displaced people (IDPs) in Benue State between 2018 and 2021. The study explored the efforts and effectiveness of humanitarian interventions in addressing the needs and challenges faced by IDPs in the region. The study further provided insights into the specific dynamics and complexities of humanitarian intervention in Nigeria, shedding light on the successes, limitations, and lessons learned from the interventions. The study by Inyang et al differs with this study in matters of scope and research design.

Clarke&Herbst, (2018) examined Somalia experiences with humanitarian intervention, providing insights into the challenges and lessons learned from past interventions in the country. The study explored the complexities of humanitarian interventions in Somalia, including the interaction between political dynamics, conflict, and humanitarian needs. The study also discussed the implications of these experiences for the future of humanitarian intervention, highlighting key considerations and potential approaches to improve effectiveness and outcomes in Somalia.

McQueen (2016) analyzed the concept and implementation of humanitarian intervention by studying the cases of Iraq, Bosnia, and Rwanda. The study examined the historical background and unique characteristics of each instance, scrutinizing the difficulties, achievements, and shortcomings of humanitarian operations in these conflict-ridden areas. This text examines the function of safety zones as a tactic for safeguarding civilians and delivering humanitarian aid in unstable settings. The study conducted a thorough assessment of the efficacy of humanitarian assistance in these situations, considering variables such as governmental determination, global collaboration, and the intricacies of the conflicts.

Warren et al., (2015) focused on assessing the effectiveness of sexual and reproductive health interventions in humanitarian crises. The review examined a wide range of interventions aimed at addressing the sexual and reproductive health needs of populations affected by humanitarian emergencies. By systematically analyzing existing evidence, the study provided insights into the impact and outcomes of various interventions, including those related to family planning, maternal health, prevention and management of sexually transmitted infections, and gender-based violence. The findings of this review contributed to the understanding of best practices and strategies for implementing effective sexual and reproductive health interventions in humanitarian settings. This study differs in matters of scope.

Weiss, (2018) provided a comprehensive exploration of the complexities and dilemmas inherent in humanitarian action. He examined the historical evolution of humanitarianism, ethical principles guiding interventions, emerging challenges in contemporary crises, and the imperative for innovation and adaptation. His study underscores the need for humanitarian actors to navigate political, security, and ethical considerations while striving to uphold the core principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence. The Darfur study delved into the unique challenges faced by humanitarian actors in implementing interventions in a protracted conflict setting characterized by complex political dynamics, insecurity, and access constraints. The study differs in matter of scope and research design.

Spiegel, (2017) assessed the shortcomings and systemic failures of the humanitarian system, arguing that it is not merely financially bankrupt but fundamentally flawed in its approach. He provided recommendations for reforming future humanitarian action, advocating for a shift towards more sustainable, accountable, and people-centered approaches. His work highlighted the need for greater collaboration, coordination, and innovation within the humanitarian sector to address the growing complexity and scale of humanitarian crises. While the above study recommendations may inform broader structural reforms, the Darfur study offered practical insights and recommendations tailored to the realities of implementing interventions in a protracted conflict setting.

Akik et al., (2020) focused on responding to the health needs of women, children, and adolescents within Syria during conflict. The study examined intervention coverage, challenges, and adaptations in providing healthcare services in a conflict setting. The findings of this study shed light on the specific challenges faced by

humanitarian actors in addressing health needs in a conflict-affected context and highlight the adaptations made to overcome these challenges. In comparison, the forthcoming study on analyzing the challenges faced by humanitarian actors in implementing interventions in Darfur aims to provide insights into the unique obstacles and difficulties encountered in delivering humanitarian assistance in the specific context of Darfur.

Boland et al., (2024) investigated the perspectives of crisis-affected community members on armed actor interventions in humanitarian and public health crises. By examining the viewpoints of those directly impacted by crises, the study offered valuable insights into the complexities of interventions involving armed actors, including military forces, rebel groups, and other non-state actors. They further explored issues such as trust, legitimacy, coercion, and the impact of armed interventions on humanitarian and public health responses. Their research contributed to a deeper understanding of the dynamics between armed actors and crisis-affected communities, informing more contextually appropriate and effective interventions. While the above study focuses on the perspectives of crisis-affected community members regarding armed actor interventions, this study provided a complementary analysis from the standpoint of humanitarian practitioners.

Koddenbrock,(2015) explored the practice of humanitarian intervention in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), focusing on the perspectives and experiences of aid workers, agencies, and institutions. By examining the operational realities and challenges faced by humanitarian actors in the DRC, He sheds light on the complexities of delivering aid in conflict-affected environments. The study delved into issues such as access constraints, security threats, coordination challenges, and the impact of local dynamics on humanitarian operations. The author provided valuable insights into the practical aspects of humanitarian intervention, informing efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action in complex emergencies. While both studies contribute to understanding the challenges of humanitarian action, they do so from different geographical and operational contexts.

Mena & Hilhorst, (2022) examined the phenomenon of path dependency in prioritizing disaster and humanitarian response amidst high levels of conflict, using a qualitative case study in South Sudan. By focusing on South Sudan, a country marked by protracted conflict and recurrent humanitarian crises, the study explored how historical, institutional, and contextual factors shape decision-making processes and resource allocation in disaster response. The authors investigated how past decisions, policies, and practices influence current approaches to humanitarian action, highlighting the challenges and opportunities for breaking out of entrenched patterns of response. Their research contributed to a deeper understanding of the complexities of prioritizing and delivering humanitarian assistance in conflict-affected contexts, informing efforts to enhance the effectiveness and responsiveness of humanitarian action in similar settings.

Wekesa, (2013) delved into the socio-economic factors influencing the implementation of humanitarian assistance in Somalia, specifically focusing on the middle Shebelle region in southern Somalia. The author explored how factors such as poverty, inequality, access to resources, social cohesion, and local governance structures impact the delivery and effectiveness of humanitarian aid. The study provided insights into the complex dynamics of aid delivery in a fragile and conflict-affected context like Somalia, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities for improving the targeting, design, and implementation of humanitarian assistance programs.

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by two complementary theories namely; the Just War Theory and the Responsibility to protect Theory (R2P). The just war theory provided a criteria for assessing the legitimacy of using force in conflicts. The theory questioned whether the humanitarian intervention in Darfur meets the criteria of just cause, right intention, proportionality, and last resort. This framework allowed for a critical analysis of the moral and ethical justifications for intervention and whether they align with the principles of the theory. The Just War Theory emphasized that the intention behind the use of force should be morally justifiable. The study assessed whether the intervening forces had the genuine intention of protecting civilians and alleviating the suffering in Darfur, rather than pursuing other ulterior motives.

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) theory explained the moral and political responsibilities of states and the

international community in preventing and responding to mass atrocities. According to this theory, the international community has a responsibility to intervene when a state manifestly fails to protect its population. In such a case the use of force should be authorized by the Security Council in accordance with the UN Charter. R2P provided a normative framework that addresses the moral and ethical considerations surrounding humanitarian interventions. It offers a set of principles and responsibilities that can guide the analysis and assessment of the international community's actions in response to the conflict in Darfur.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study took the form of an exploratory research design to examine the escalation of violence despite efforts to restore peace and stability in Darfur. To achieve its objectives, this study targeted representatives of regional and international humanitarian organizations in Darfur, Sudan, members of civil society, academicians, government officials, security experts and the Sudanese population living in Kenya. Purposive and snow balling sampling techniques were employed in to identify respondents for field interviews. The main instruments for data collection included structured questionnaires with closed ended questions sand key informant interviews with open ended questions. Data collected was analyzed and interpreted qualitatively.

Effectiveness of UNMID Mandate in Mitigating Conflict in Darfur

Protection of Civilians

UNMID's mandate to protect civilians in Darfur was one of its primary objectives, reflecting the urgent need to safeguard vulnerable populations amidst severe conflict. The mission established several safe zones and deployed peacekeepers to high-risk areas to enhance civilian protection. Key Informant D4, a Protection Officer, noted that

"while we made significant strides in protecting civilians, the ongoing violence and the limited reach of our resources meant that we could only address part of the population's needs" (05/06/2022).

This statement underscores the mission's commitment to civilian protection but also highlights the limitations faced.

The effectiveness of safe zones was undermined by the persistent violence and logistical constraints. The large and rugged terrain of Darfur made it difficult for UNMID to maintain consistent and comprehensive coverage. According to secondary data from UN reports, the establishment of safe zones did provide temporary relief to some civilians but could not fully address the widespread and ongoing threats (UN Security Council, 2020). Resource limitations further constrained UNMID's ability to provide extensive protection, with reports indicating that the mission often struggled to adequately patrol and secure all areas needing attention (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

Safe Zones and Patrols

The creation of safe zones by UNMID aimed to offer refuge to civilians fleeing conflict zones. Despite these efforts, the effectiveness of these zones was compromised by the volatile security situation. Safe zones often became targets for attacks, and their ability to offer lasting protection was limited. Key Informant E5, a Peace-building Advisor, highlighted that

"The safe zones were a critical component of our strategy, but their effectiveness was hampered by the unpredictable nature of the conflict and limited resources" (18/05/2024).

This observation reflects the challenges in ensuring the security and sustainability of these zones. Patrols conducted by UNMID were intended to maintain security and monitor the conflict. However, these patrols were frequently hindered by security threats and logistical difficulties. The mission's reports revealed that while patrols were effective in some areas, their reach was often limited by the hostile environment and insufficient resources (UNAMID, 2019). This situation illustrates the tension between UNMID's mandate and the practical challenges of operating in a highly volatile region.

Peace-building and Political Support

UNMID's role in peace-building involved facilitating negotiations and supporting the implementation of peace agreements. The mission played a crucial part in bringing conflicting parties to the negotiating table and supporting peace initiatives. However, the effectiveness of these efforts was often undermined by the lack of political will from key stakeholders. Key Informant E5 noted,

"Our support for peace talks was crucial in bringing conflicting parties to the negotiating table. However, the effectiveness of these efforts was often undermined by the lack of political will from some stakeholders" *(18/06/2024).*

This sentiment is corroborated by secondary data, which indicates that while UNMID facilitated dialogue, the progress towards a lasting resolution was slow and hampered by ongoing political discord (International Crisis Group, 2022).

UNMID engagement with political actors and stakeholders was intended to support the political process and enhance stability. Despite these efforts, political engagement was often complicated by divergent agendas and a lack of unified support. Secondary sources highlight that the mission faced significant challenges in aligning the interests of various stakeholders, which impeded its ability to foster a cohesive political resolution (African Union, 2021). This complexity reflects the broader difficulties in achieving political consensus in conflict-ridden environments.

Humanitarian Assistance

UNMID mandate also included providing humanitarian assistance and coordinating with international agencies. The mission played a role in streamlining aid delivery and ensuring that humanitarian assistance reached those in need. According to Key Informant F6, a Humanitarian Liaison,

"Despite challenges, UNMID's coordination efforts helped streamline the delivery of aid. However, the scale of the humanitarian crisis often outpaced our capacity" *(10/06/2024).*

This comment highlights the mission's efforts to manage humanitarian aid but also points to the limitations faced due to the scale of the crisis. Humanitarian reports indicate that UNMID's coordination efforts were crucial in facilitating aid distribution, but the sheer scale of the humanitarian needs often overwhelmed the mission's capacity (OCHA, 2023). Logistical challenges and security issues further complicated the delivery of aid, leading to gaps in addressing the needs of displaced and affected populations. The mission's ability to provide timely and comprehensive humanitarian assistance was therefore constrained by ongoing conflict and operational difficulties.

Challenges Encountered

Security and Access Issues

UNMID faced significant security and access challenges throughout its mandate in Darfur. The ongoing conflict created a highly volatile environment, with frequent attacks on peacekeepers and humanitarian workers. These security threats severely impacted the mission's ability to operate effectively. According to Key Informant D4, a Protection Officer,

"The persistent violence and security threats in Darfur often limited our operational reach, making it difficult to protect civilians and maintain safe zones" (05/06/2024).

This statement highlights the direct impact of security issues on UNMID's mission effectiveness. Access challenges were compounded by the conflict's fluid and unpredictable nature. The mission often struggled to reach remote and contested areas, impeding its efforts to deliver aid and provide protection. Secondary data from UN reports confirm that the security situation frequently disrupted access to key locations, limiting the mission's ability to execute its mandate comprehensively (UN Security Council, 2020). The combination of

active conflict, roadblocks, and hostile local actors created a perilous operating environment, which constrained UNMID's ability to perform its duties effectively.

Logistical and Resource Constraints

Logistical difficulties and resource constraints were major challenges for UNMID. The mission required extensive logistical support to operate across Darfur's vast and rugged terrain. However, the delivery of supplies, personnel, and equipment was often hindered by inadequate infrastructure and ongoing conflict. Key Informant F6, a Humanitarian Liaison, noted,

"Despite our efforts to coordinate aid delivery, logistical challenges and limited resources often outpaced our capacity to respond effectively to the humanitarian needs" (10/06/2024).

This comment underscores the impact of logistical and resource issues on the mission's operations. Resource limitations also affected UNMID's ability to maintain a sustained presence and perform essential tasks. Reports from UNAMID indicate that the mission frequently faced shortages of essential supplies and personnel, which impacted its ability to execute operations fully (UNAMID, 2019). The combination of logistical difficulties and limited resources constrained UNMID's operational capacity, affecting its overall effectiveness in mitigating the conflict.

Political and Operational Constraints

Political and operational challenges further complicated UNMID efforts. Politically, the mission encountered difficulties in aligning the interests of various stakeholders and navigating complex diplomatic dynamics. The lack of political will from key actors often undermined peacebuilding efforts and hindered the implementation of peace agreements. Key Informant E5, a Peacebuilding Advisor, remarked,

"*The political complexities and divergent agendas among stakeholders often limited our ability to foster a cohesive resolution to the conflict" (18/07/2024).*

This observation reflects the broader challenges faced by UNMID in achieving political consensus. UNMID struggled with coordination issues both within the mission and with external partners. The mission's effectiveness was often compromised by bureaucratic obstacles and a lack of cohesion among international and regional actors. These operational constraints further complicated the mission's efforts to address the complex and evolving situation in Darfur.

Resource Mobilization and Operational Challenges

Resource Mobilization

UNMID ability to carry out its mandate in Darfur was significantly affected by challenges in resource mobilization. The mission's funding was sourced from multiple channels, including the UN budget, contributions from member states, and voluntary donations. However, the variability in these financial sources often led to instability in the mission's operational capacity.

Securing consistent funding proved to be a major hurdle. According to Key Informant B2, a UN Financial Officer,

"Securing consistent funding was a major challenge. Contributions from member states were critical, but often variable, affecting our operational capacity."

This variability in financial contributions meant that UNMID faced periods of financial uncertainty, which in turn impacted its ability to deploy resources effectively and maintain operational continuity. The reliance on voluntary donations introduced another layer of complexity. These donations were not always guaranteed and were often contingent on the political priorities of donor countries. This dependence created a precarious financial environment where the mission could experience sudden shortfalls in funding, hampering its efforts

to respond to evolving needs on the ground.

The process of allocating and disbursing funds was frequently marred by delays. These delays were attributed to bureaucratic inefficiencies and the intricate procedures required for approving and transferring funds from the UN budget and donor countries. As a result, the mission struggled with logistical and operational delays, affecting its overall effectiveness in addressing the conflict in Darfur.

The impact of these financial challenges was evident in various aspects of the mission's operations. For instance, delays in funding affected the timely procurement and deployment of essential resources such as equipment and personnel. Additionally, the mission's ability to conduct comprehensive and sustained field operations was compromised, limiting its capacity to respond promptly to emerging crises and humanitarian needs.

Operational Challenges

The operational environment in Darfur presented severe security risks that critically impacted UNMID mission. The region was plagued by high levels of violence due to ongoing conflicts involving multiple armed groups and government forces. These security threats created a perilous environment for peacekeepers, as frequent attacks and ambushes endangered their safety and severely restricted their movements (Key Informant C3, Field Coordinator, 20/05/2024). The constant threat of violence and the presence of explosive devices in conflict zones further compromised UNMID ability to operate effectively, as peacekeepers had to adhere to restrictive security protocols, which impeded their operational capacity (UN Department of Peace Operations, 2021).

UNMID faced significant logistical challenges due to Darfur's difficult terrain and inadequate infrastructure. The region's poor road networks and limited transportation facilities complicated the delivery of essential resources, including food, medical supplies, and equipment (Key Informant C3, Field Coordinator, 20/05/2022). The harsh terrain necessitated the use of specialized vehicles and equipment, which were often delayed or damaged. Additionally, unreliable communication networks further exacerbated these difficulties, making it challenging to coordinate and monitor the movement of resources (UN Department of Peace Operations, 2021). These logistical constraints not only increased operational costs but also delayed critical interventions and humanitarian aid.

Effective coordination with local and international actors was another major challenge for UNMID. The mission had to manage complex relationships with various stakeholders, including local government officials, rebel groups, and international organizations, each with their own agendas and priorities (Key Informant C3, Field Coordinator, 20/05/2022). This often led to conflicting objectives and fragmented efforts, undermining a unified approach to conflict resolution and humanitarian aid. Bureaucratic inefficiencies and slow decision-making within both local and international institutions further compounded these coordination problems, resulting in overlapping efforts or missed opportunities for synergy (UN Department of Peace Operations, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The evaluation of UNMID effectiveness in mitigating conflict in Darfur reveals a mixed record of achievements and challenges. The mission made notable progress in protecting civilians, supporting peace-building efforts, and delivering humanitarian aid. However, its effectiveness was often constrained by ongoing violence, political dynamics, and resource limitations. These findings underscore the need for more robust and coordinated strategies in peacekeeping, including improved resource allocation, enhanced political engagement, and better coordination with humanitarian agencies. The experiences of UNMID offer valuable insights for future peacekeeping missions, highlighting the importance of addressing both operational and political challenges to achieve a more effective conflict mitigation strategy.

The analysis of the challenges faced by UNMID in implementing its mandate in Darfur from 2003 to 2023 reveals several critical obstacles. The mission struggled with security and access issues, logistical and resource

constraints, political and operational difficulties, and coordination challenges. These factors collectively hindered UNMID's ability to effectively execute its mandate and address the complex needs of the conflict-affected populations. The findings underscore the importance of addressing these challenges through enhanced security measures, improved resource management, better political engagement, and more effective coordination with other actors to achieve successful conflict mitigation strategies in future peacekeeping missions.

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