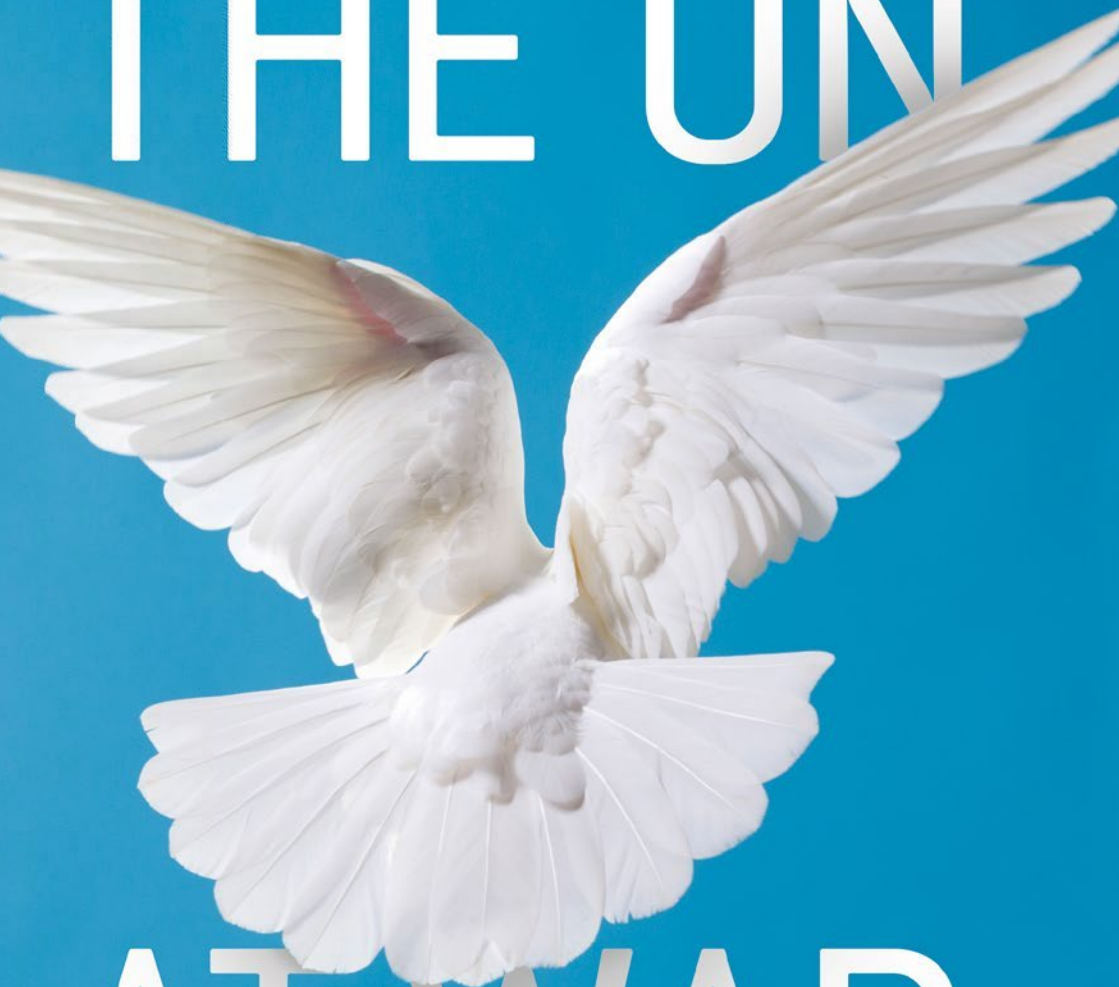


JOHN KARLSRUD

THE UN



AT WAR

Peace Operations in a New Era



The UN at War

“*The UN at War* is an excellent resource for researchers, policy-makers, practitioners, and students who want to learn more about peacekeeping. It provides a very useful analysis on the past, present, and future of peace missions as well as how they have faced and could face the challenges of today’s world.”

—Séverine Autesserre, *Barnard College, Columbia University, USA*

“Confronting new threats and challenges in a context of rising expectations, UN peace operations are at a crossroads. In smart and succinct fashion, this important new book identifies the key challenges confronting UN peace operations today, examines with intelligence the opportunities presented by improved technologies and doctrines and by the rise of regional organizations and partnerships for peacekeeping, and shows how UN peace operations shape, and are shaped by, global politics. Combining cutting-edge analysis with deep insights into contemporary peace operations, this book will enlighten both newcomers to the field and old hands.”

—Alex J. Bellamy, *Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies,
The University of Queensland, Australia*

“This is an ambitious, rigorous, comprehensive and deeply thoughtful analysis of the state of the UN peace operations. Karlsrud persuasively demonstrates that the trend in favour of ever more ‘robust’ peacekeeping, a notable feature of UN operations since 2000, carries very real risks. Through a detailed and illuminating analysis of on-going operations—informed in part by the author’s personal experience in the field—the overall conclusion is unmistakable: ‘the urge to resort to use UN peace operations for peace enforcement purposes, whether against armed opposition groups or terrorists’ needs to be resisted and critically reexamined.”

—Mats Berdal, *Professor, Department of War Studies, King’s College London*

“As the world becomes smaller, flatter, and more complex, the challenges to the UN’s role in maintaining international peace and security have multiplied. In this impressive new work, John Karlsrud brings a scholar-practitioner’s perspective to bear on these problems. The deceptively simple heart of his solution lies in the opening word of the UN Charter: ‘We, the peoples.’ Too often, he argues, the UN has seen its mandate as protecting governments, rather than the people they are meant to serve.”

—Simon Chesterman, *Professor and Dean, Faculty of Law,
National University of Singapore*

“The international community and the next United Nations Secretary-General will have a chance to initiate meaningful, transformative reforms in the way the United Nations addresses twenty-first-century social, political, and security challenges; the road map is provided by John Karlsrud in his new seminal treatise *The UN at War*, highly recommended to all international peace and security academics and practitioners.”

—José Ramos-Horta, *Chair of the High-level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau, Nobel Peace Prize laureate, and former President and Prime Minister of Timor Leste*

“This is the most current, up-to-date assessment of UN peace operations available. It addresses the new challenges of violent extremism and terrorism, and how to confront them without resort to the UN’s use of violence. Karlsrud proposes sequencing tasks (rather than trying to do everything at once); devising long-term political strategies; burden-sharing between the UN, African Union, and other partners; and proposes ‘people-centered reforms’ that protect ‘civilians, not governments.’ A must-read for both analysts and practitioners of peacekeeping.”

—Lise Morjé Howard, *Associate Professor, Department of Government, Georgetown University*

“John Karlsrud’s book is a true state of the art on contemporary UN peace operations. Among its many strengths, it addresses two critical challenges head on: how peacekeepers can protect civilians in places where terrorism is a threat; and how to engage more directly with the local populations they are meant to serve. Informed by a deep knowledge of the political and practical obstacles, this excellent volume invites serious reflection on how peace operations must adapt to an increasingly complex security environment.”

—Dr. Ian Johnstone, *Professor of International Law, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University*

“*The UN at War* face a range of urgent challenges with no easy answers. John Karlsrud, an author with first-hand experience working in UN Peace Operations, looks over the horizon at these challenges and possible responses. His book is timely, accessible and marshals a convincing argument about how the UN has to change to remain relevant, but how it must withstand calls for it to become a war-fighting organisation. This is a must-read book for those interested in the future of the UN and peacekeeping.”

—Roger Mac Ginty, *Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Manchester*

John Karlsrud

The UN at War

Peace Operations in a New Era

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John Karlsrud
NUPI
Oslo, Norway

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In memory of Anne Marie, Frode, and Maria

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In a world where peace is becoming more and more elusive, it is of utmost importance that we uphold the values on which the UN was founded. After a period of guarded optimism in the first decade of the 2000s, there has been an increase in violent conflict during the last few years. Violence seems to be emerging as the only way of expressing anger and frustration at the lack of agency and participation. There is an urgent need to reflect on what role UN peacekeeping, and more generally UN peace operations, should be given in this context.

“Theory is always for someone and some purpose,” asserted Robert Cox, a former UN employee and professor of international relations (1981: 128). Thus, the aim of this book is to provide critical reflections on UN peace operations, and constructive suggestions as to how the UN and the international system can evolve to remain relevant and tackle the peace and security challenges of the twenty-first century, without abandoning the principles that the UN was founded upon, and on which the legitimacy of UN peace operations rests.

This book began with my article “The UN at War: Examining the Consequences of Peace Enforcement Mandates for the UN Peacekeeping Operations in the CAR, the DRC and Mali,” published in *Third World Quarterly* in 2015. The changes that occurred in the mandating and implementation of these three missions from 2013 and onward seemed to me to mark the possible start of an unsettling trend where the key principles of UN peacekeeping—and the UN Charter—were no longer heeded. The arguments for moving away from these principles were and are many—and indeed, many of them present the world with difficult

dilemmas that require careful reflection as well as action. Questioning the assumption that we are facing an era of radically new threats that require new responses from the international community, I discuss these challenges and threats, and why we need to treat them as analytically distinct from the responses that the international community may agree on. Basically, I take issue with the trend toward using UN peace operations for peace enforcement purposes, whether against armed opposition groups, violent extremists, or terrorists.

The book focuses on UN peacekeeping operations in sub-Saharan Africa, where most UN peacekeeping missions are and have been for the last 15 years. However, it also looks forward, considering the very real possibility that future missions may be deployed to Libya in the Maghreb, and Syria and Yemen in the Middle East. The book does not deal with all the dimensions of modern UN peace operations, such as security sector reform and the rule of law, or developing a fit-for-purpose mission support concept for robust peacekeeping operations.

I am deeply thankful for the support received from the Training for Peace programme at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and from the Fulbright Foundation. The latter granted me a visiting scholar fellowship to spend three months at the Center on International Cooperation (CIC) at New York University, from September to December 2015. I am indebted to CIC and the staff there for hosting me. In particular, I would like to thank Richard Gowan, the then Deputy Director of CIC, and Barnett Rubin, the then acting Director, for initially supporting my proposal, and to the Center's leadership Sarah Cliffe and Jim Della-Giacoma for taking me on board and supporting me in every way possible during my stay. I am also grateful for the continued support from colleagues at the Peace and Conflict Research Group (PCRG) at NUPI, without which this book would not have come to fruition. I have benefited from countless discussions and received incisive and very helpful comments on various drafts of the manuscript from my colleagues around the world, including Arthur Boutellis, Camilla Campisi, Cedric de Coning, Ingvild Magnæs Gjelsvik, Richard Gowan, Ian Johnstone, Jim Della-Giacoma, Kiyoshi Matsukawa, Hanny Megally, Kari Osland, Niels Nagelhus Schia, Alexandra Novosseloff, Yf Reykers, Pernille Rieker, Natasja Rupesinghe, Adam Smith, Andrea Ó Súilleabháin, and Maxime de Taisne. I would also like to thank Jim Della-Giacoma and Ryan Rappa at CIC, and Jair van der Lijn and Timo Smit at the Swedish Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), for permission to use figures and help to develop these.

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Oslo, Norway
February 2017

John Karlsrud

Previous publications by the same author:

UN Peacekeeping Doctrine in a New Era: Adapting to Stabilization, Protection and New Threats. Co-edited with Cedric de Coning and Chiyuki Aoi. Abingdon: Routledge (2017).

Norm Change in International Relations: Linked Ecologies in UN Peacekeeping Operations. Abingdon: Routledge (2016).

The Future of African Peace Operations: From the Janjaweed to Boko Haram. Co-edited with Cedric de Coning and Linnéa Gelot. London: Zed Books (2016).

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACIRC	African Immediate Crisis Response Capacity
AFISMA	African-led International Support Mission in Mali
AMISISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AQIM	al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ASF	African Standby Force
ASG	Assistant-Secretary-General (UN)
ASIFU	All Sources Information Fusion Unit
AU	African Union
AU PSC	African Union Peace and Security Council
C-34	UN General Assembly Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations
CANs	Community Alert Networks
CAR	Central African Republic
CASEVAC	Casualty Evacuation
CCC	Civilian Contributing Country
CIC	Center on International Cooperation
CODs	Common Operational Datasets
CTITF	Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
CVR	Community Violence Reduction
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
DDVE	Demobilization and Disengagement of Violent Extremists
DFS	Department of Field Support (UN)
DPA	Department of Political Affairs (UN)

DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN)
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FARDC	<i>Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo</i>
FDLR	<i>Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda</i>
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
FIB	Force Intervention Brigade
FOBs	Forward Operating Bases
FOC	Full Operational Capability
G-5 Sahel	Group of Five Sahel
G-77	Group of 77
HIPPO	High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (UN)
IASC	Inter-agency Standing Committee
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICTs	Information Communication Technologies
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IS	Islamic State
ISSSS	International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
LCBC	Lake Chad Basin Commission
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MEDEVAC	Medical evacuation
MINURCAT	United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MINUSTAH	United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
MISCA	African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic
MNJTf	Multinational Joint Task Force
MNLA	Movement for the National Liberation of Azawad
MONUC	United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MUJAO	Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa

OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ONUC	<i>Organisation des Nations Unies au Congo</i>
ONUCI	United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
OROLSI	Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
P5	Permanent Five members of the UNSC
PBPS	Policy and Best Practices Service
PCCs	Police Contributing Countries
PoC	Protection of Civilians
PVE	Preventing Violent Extremism
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RM	Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFOR	Stabilization Force
SG	Secretary-General (UN)
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SNA	Somalia National Army
SRCC	Special Representative of the Chairperson
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
STCDSS	Specialized Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security
TCCs	Troop Contributing Countries
TechCCs	Technological expertise Contributing Countries
UAS	Unmanned Aerial Systems
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNAMID	African Union–United Nations Mission in Darfur
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNCCT	United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNHQ	United Nations Headquarters

UNISFA	United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan
UNOCC	United Nations Operations and Crisis Centre
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UN SCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNSG	United Nations Secretary-General
UNSOA	United Nations Support Office for AMISOM
UNSOM	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia
UNTSO	United Nations Truce Supervision Organization
UNU	United Nations University
USG	Under-Secretary-General
UUAV	Unmanned and Unarmed Aerial Vehicles

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Introduction

In 2013, the United Nations (UNSC) mandated the inclusion of a regional force—the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB)—in the UN peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (MONUSCO) and authorized the mission to “neutralize” identified rebel groups (UN 2013a: 7). The FIB defeated the M23 rebel group in joint operations with the national *Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo* (FARDC).

Only days after MONUSCO was authorized, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) was instructed to confront rebel, extremist, and terrorist groups in Mali (UN 2013b). The mission has in its short life-span become one of the deadliest UN peace operations on record, with 70 fatalities due to attacks by rebel and terrorist groups since its deployment in 2013 until October 30, 2016 (UN 2016a).

And in 2014, the UN mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) was deployed to help the country move back onto a path to peace, after sectarian violence had reached levels bordering on genocide. Unfortunately, the mission soon gained notoriety for repeated revelations of sexual exploitation and abuse, shared in equal measure with the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) and the French-backed peacekeeping force known as *Opération Sangaris*.

In South Sudan, the UN mission, United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), has been struggling to protect

civilians after the outbreak of civil war at the end of 2013. During the last three years, the UN camps have been converted to protection of civilians (PoC) sites, and the mission has been hard pressed to protect even those residing within its camps, much less the millions of people living in fear outside its camps. As a result, the UNSC in August 2016 authorized a regional protection force that should deal preventively and robustly with any actor threatening civilians (UN 2016b).

Each of these challenges, changes, and turns would in itself have been a reason to take pause, and several have resulted in reviews and inquiries. But together, they show that there is a fundamental mismatch between the tasks given to UN peacekeeping operations, and what they are able to do on the ground. It is clear that UN peacekeeping operations are struggling with increasing gaps between its foundational principles and the mandates given by the UNSC. The gaps are both principled and practical—should the UN go beyond the core principles of impartiality, consent, and the minimum use of force except in self-defense, and in defense of the mandate to fight actively against strategic actors? Should the UN Secretariat resist deployment to conflicts when there is no peace on the ground and where a mission may face violent extremists and terrorist without sufficient means to defend itself? How should the UN, and the international community at large, deal with conflicts where no peace operation will be able to offer sufficient protection to civilians, as is the case in South Sudan?

The increasing gap between the expectations to UN peace operations and what was happening on the ground was recognized by the then UN Secretary-General (UNSG) Ban Ki-moon in June 2014 when he announced the establishment of a High-level Independent panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO). The same year, the USA took the initiative to organize a Peacekeeping Summit during the UN General Assembly in September, chaired by the then US Vice-President Joseph Biden. The release of the HIPPO Report in 2015, together with releases of the 2015 review of the UN peacebuilding architecture; the global study of the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security; and a second US-led summit on peacekeeping during the 2015 UN General Assembly chaired by the then President Barack Obama—all these brought a sense of urgency and new momentum for dealing with these gaps and challenges. David Cameron and other world leaders cited the threat of terrorism as one of the factors motivating the contributions of troops, equipment, and training (Mason 2015). The picture that is generally presented is that of an organization that should modernize and be updated

to deal more effectively with the arguably new threats of the twenty-first century—violent extremism and terrorism—in addition to the core and traditional task of protecting civilians.

In this book, I argue for a more nuanced picture. The gap between expectations and what UN peace operations are able to deliver is not solely created by a lack of performance, poor management, and lack of capabilities, but is also the result of the increasing tendency of the UNSC to not match mandates with means, and to give to UN peace operations tasks they are not, and will not be, suited to accomplish. UN peace operations are deployed to more difficult theaters and given more robust mandates, including stabilization and enforcement tasks, in some instances veering toward counter-terrorism. In this context, the dissonance between what these missions are capable of providing, measured against the complex realities on the ground, is growing painfully clear. To understand the shift toward more robust mandates for UN peacekeeping operations, we have to look at four other important trends.

First, the financial crisis in 2008–2009 was expected to precipitate a drop in UN peacekeeping operations, as cash-strapped governments wanted to cut costs—particularly those bearing the main burden of the UN peacekeeping budget, like the USA. However, the earthquake in Haiti, the new mission in South Sudan, and two missions deployed successively to Mali and the Central African Republic (CAR) instead resulted in an increase in the number of troops deployed. At the same time, calls for the UN to do more with less have been persistent and actually successful. Since 2010, there has been a general increase in the cost effectiveness of UN peace operations, with the HIPPO Report noting a 17 % cost reduction in the period from 2010 to 2015 (UN 2015).¹

Third, fatalities caused by terrorism have increased rapidly—from 3329 in 2000 to a spike of 32,685 in 2014 (IEP 2015: 2). Much of the recent increase is due to the Islamic State (IS) and Boko Haram (*ibid.*). In this period, the UN has moved from being seen as an impartial actor to more often being the target of terrorist attacks—from Baghdad, to Algiers, Kabul, Mazar-i-Sharif, Abuja, Mogadishu, and Mali.

Concurrent with the enduring pressure of economic austerity, the increased numbers of UN peacekeepers in the field, and the growing threat of terrorism comes a fourth and equally important trend. Since the 9/11 attacks, counter-terrorism has been high on the international agenda, but in recent years, the rhetoric has moved from the “Global War on Terror,” to less ominous-sounding concepts of “countering violent extremism”