

Assessment of un's efficiency at maintaining international peace

Politics



The United Nations is based on the maintenance of peace and security, and as a result of the atrocities of the cold war, countries wanted peace.

Peacekeeping is one of the United Nations ways of maintaining international peace and security. This Essay will discuss whether the United Nations peacekeeping operations are an effective and efficient way of maintaining international peace and security. The essay will discuss this by highlighting both sides of the argument for and against effectiveness and efficiency of peacekeeping operations by looking at earlier peacekeeping operations and how they have developed and ultimately faced failures.

What is Peacekeeping?

Peacekeeping is the process of trying to maintain peace and security in a region of conflict by using military personal and mediation but without enforcement actions . Peacekeeping operations uphold peace and security, protect people, they get rid of weapons, and they try to help with restoring the law in different regions . Peacekeeping is not easy as it sounds because peacekeepers are deployed in the most problematic regions which have different complicated conflicts . There are different types of peacekeeping, which are wider peacekeeping and traditional peacekeeping. Traditional peacekeeping also means maintaining peace and security without enforcement actions, requires consent of the parties, peacekeepers have to be impartial and they cannot use force unless for self defense or with permission . Wider peacekeeping refers to maintaining peace and security with the consent of the host state as it takes place in the state rather than between states . Moreover, “ In the past, Peacekeeping has been differentiated from enforcement. However, the line has become blurred in

the 1990s interventions. A peacekeeping operation may shift temporarily or partly to peace enforcement” . Peacekeeping is generally done without any enforcement actions unless it becomes necessary to use force that is the reason why it has become blurred because it could shift at any time depending on the circumstances.

Effectiveness of Peacekeeping

The United Nations reduced a number of conflicts between and within states. People have high expectations of the United Nations even higher than they are supposed to have. As a result they expect things that the United Nations cannot fulfill . The United Nations had been successful in a couple of operations. The UN’s peacekeeping operations had been successful in Sierra Leone, Cambodia, Mozambique, El Salvador, Namibia, Tajikistan, Eastern Slovenia, East Timor, Burundi and Guatemala. In each of these regions, the UN has been successful in returning the peace and security of the region and enabling conflict resolution in order to solve any conflicts in these areas. For example, the UN’s peacekeeping operation that took place in Sierra Leone was a success for the UN as it attempted to resolve the conflict by a peace agreement after the civil war . Another example is the UN’s success in Burundi, which suffered from its ethnic war for a long time; the UN helped the area recover from the aftermath of the war. The United Nations strives to end threats to the peace and protect civilians and also help in the aftermath of wars and environmental disasters. The United Nations has acted as a buffer between states and within states in cases of civil war. It used its position as a buffer to try and prevent conflicts even though some are very difficult to prevent and peacekeeping generally works excluding the failures.

Peacekeeping does not need to be perfect to suggest that it works.

Peacekeeping has also helped Haiti, after the earthquake, in recovering from their losses and restoring their lives and to restore a safe and stable environment . In addition, peacekeeping is also argued to be effective because of its flexibility in nature as it addresses different types of conflicts and issues.

Peacekeeping Failures

Moreover, Peacekeeping in the beginning managed to maintain peace and security in different regions. Though, it began failing as a result of the reduced efficiency and resources and also because some of the conflicts they faced were too difficult to deal with, and they would have to resort to enforcement, which they could not do because peacekeepers had restrictions in relation to enforcement action. The United Nations peacekeeping started as a good idea and they have encountered successes. However, the United Nations peacekeeping had also faced failures in Rwanda, Somalia, the former Yugoslavia, Bosnia, Darfur Sudan, Israeli-Lebanon Border Murders, and Congo . These failures do not necessarily lead to the fact that peacekeeping is a failure as a whole but that they have not succeeded in these regions . For example, the peacekeepers in Rwanda could not stop the atrocities that took place right in front of them, as the UN did not realize that it was Genocide that they were facing in Rwanda and as a result failed to react . Peacekeeping is based on the idea of consent between the conflict parties, and it assumes that the parties with the conflict are determined to solve their problems, which is incorrect sometimes. That is the reason why failures happen because some parties are not willing to

agree peacefully or stop their conflict and as a result peacekeepers are unable to stop violations of the peace because of their duty to be impartial and restricted use of force .

According to Samantha power, other failures that UN peacekeeping face is that they deal with indications of conflict and not the actual conflicts, she argues that “ people are dying and getting raped right now” . Her argument shows that peacekeeping is effective for indications of conflicts and not actual serious conflicts taking place in other areas . However, it could be argued that the UN peacekeeping does not always deal with symptoms but they deal with actual conflicts like the one that took place in Rwanda, the genocide was not a symptom, it was a conflict that the UN tried to resolve, even though it ended up as a failure. In addition, “ John Ruggie argued that the UN is a complete failure in its efforts to manage regional conflicts after the cold war” .

Slow Deployment Decisions

The UN's peacekeeping had faced slow deployment decisions by the Security Council in Rwanda and Kosovo . These slow deployment decisions have affected the peacekeeping operations effectiveness in the eyes of the world . The need to react is a crucial aspect in threats to the peace in any region. The whole point of peacekeeping operations is that they have to react as fast as they can to stop the conflict from escalating. In addition, in order for the UN peacekeeping operation to be approved, it has to obtain consent from the host state and if they do not have consent they have to go through the Security Council, because then they would be breaching the sovereignty of the host state . If they do get approval from the Security Council then they

<https://assignbuster.com/assessment-of-uns-efficiency-at-maintaining-international-peace/>

could start their peacekeeping operation compulsory without the need of the consent of the host state.

Sexual exploitation and abuse

Another aspect, which is affecting the UN's peacekeeping operations' effectiveness, is the fact that peacekeepers are exploiting women sexually, raping them and they also make them prostitutes. According to Jacobson, these peacekeepers are sent to protect the civilians in the host country and they end up abusing their women and underage girls, which clearly hurts the whole idea of protection and peace. He also argues that recent statistics show that because peacekeepers were raping the women in the host country, 10 of the peacekeepers impregnated some women and fathered children. This shows that even though peacekeepers are sent to protect civilians from rape and abuse, they end up abusing them instead of offering them protection. In addition, Jacobson claims that it is not fit to say whether the peacekeeping operations are "wise or successful or even in the best interest of the people they were assigned to protect". He gives an example that "fathers would risk their lives to protect their own children but it is absurd to suggest that strangers would risk their lives to protect other strangers". Jacobson concludes by arguing that the UN peacekeeping operations carry many fundamental faults and it merely gives the illusions of safety. Furthermore, it is argued that the balance of women's positions as peacekeepers could help reduce the sexual exploitation and abuse by male peacekeepers.

Efficiency

Peacekeeping is said to be cheap and cost effective as it is only mediation and maintaining the peace and security of other people unlike war, which needs many different resources and is really expensive . According to Duffey, peacekeeping is very cost effective compared to war . Peacekeeping is also said to be cost effective because its cost is “ shared” fairly between member states . Dobbins argues that because peacekeeping troops are provided mostly by developing countries, these troops cost cheaper than other countries like the US . The peacekeeping operations could be more efficient if they allowed more countries to join the UN and distribute the costs to them.

However, Efficiency has been questioned in terms of the failures that peacekeeping operations have encountered. According to Hanhimäki, the reason why peacekeeping was a failure in Rwanda to stop the Genocide, is because “ they had not been deployed to post conflict situations but tried to create a post conflict environment with inadequate resources” . According to Bellamy and Williams, peacekeepers in Rwanda had inadequate resources, they were not trained enough and when “ the military helicopters they ordered, arrived and they lacked tools, spare parts, mechanics and manuals and had only limited ammunition. In addition, they were worn out from the use of the UN mission in Mozambique, and shortly after their arrival they became inoperable” . Peacekeepers could not maintain the peace because they needed enforcement action in Rwanda, it became too dangerous as some peacekeepers were killed and so the others were ordered to leave . As a result of limited military abilities, peacekeepers are incapable of protecting

themselves or others. The Hippo Panel criticizes the peacekeepers intelligence and abilities to tackle military threats to the peace and that they do not have enough training to face the types of conflicts that exist in those regions . It is outrageous to expect that peacekeepers are sent to regions that are conflict based, without high levels of training and enough resources. Furthermore, according to Obama, there is a problem with the fact that troops are provided by limited amount of nations . Nations are mostly reliant on developing countries to provide troops, which is not efficient enough. All nations should provide troops in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of peacekeeping.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the UN peacekeeping operations can only be assessed based on the level of the UN's contribution and type of conflict they're faced with. Peacekeeping will remain one of the UNs challenges. Peacekeeping operations faced successes and failures, but the failures are the only ones that the world remembers. People put high expectations on the UN and when the UN fails to meet those expectations, people tend to lose faith in them. Peacekeeping started as a good idea and an effective way of maintaining international peace and security through mediation, however it has lost its effectiveness in the high profile failures. In order for the UN peacekeeping operations to be really effective, they have to find a solution to the abuses and sexual exploitation that peacekeepers get involved in, they have to make fast deployment decisions and they have to limit the numbers of failures. In addition, efficiency causes a great impact upon the success of the UN's peacekeeping operations. The UN's failures mostly took place because

<https://assignbuster.com/assessment-of-uns-efficiency-at-maintaining-international-peace/>

of the inadequate resources, reduced numbers of weaponry, restricted use of enforcement, lack of financial resources and a lack of will on the part of the UN. Finally, Peacekeeping is effective as an idea but it addresses symptoms rather than concentrating on problems occurring right now and it is lately losing its efficiency which affects its effectiveness.