PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS: THE ENDGAME

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<a>Introduction

All peacekeeping operations (PKOs) are, in theory, temporary arrangements but when, why and how do PKOs end? The actual experience of ending peacekeeping operations can vary significantly. Closure may be partial or complete, gradual or rapid. It may reflect the attainment of mandated goals or failure to achieve those goals. It may be informed by broad strategic considerations or by the narrow interests of authorizing bodies, troop-contributing countries or host states. A PKO may follow a predecessor operation or it may be followed by a successor operation, led either by the same international organization or by a different actor. Some longstanding PKOs have not ended at all. The varieties of experience are considerable. In view of the potential implications of peacekeeping closure for the host country, the wider region and beyond, these experiences warrant careful examination.

This chapter reflects on these experiences with the aim of identifying the characteristics of peacekeeping closure and the international community's ongoing peacebuilding efforts after mission closure. We first consider what it means to 'end' a PKO. We then document the evolution of thinking and practice regarding the closure of peacekeeping missions. The subsequent section identifies factors that inform decisions to end PKOs. We then outline various modes of mission closure and transitions to new peace operations, giving particular attention to transitions between UN and regional peacekeeping missions. We conclude by highlighting the importance of factoring transition and eventual mission closure into planning when PKOs are first devised and deployed.

<a>Ending Peacekeeping Operations: Concepts and Processes

How do scholars and policy actors understand the ending of peacekeeping operations? With some important exceptions (for example contributions to Caplan 2012a), academic studies of peacekeeping have tended to treat the closure of PKOs as finite moments—*end points*—that are marked by the conclusion of mandated missions and the withdrawal of peacekeepers. This approach has a functional logic; researchers who wish to study the effects of peacekeeping need clear and replicable bases for identifying when peacekeeping 'treatments' are applied and when those treatments end.[1] Mandated start and end dates of PKOs

offer such clarity. For policy actors engaged in peacekeeping, however, the precise moment at which an operation ends is only one step in a much broader set of drawdown actions that precede exit and an equally broad set of peace support efforts that follow mission closure. Recognizing this, the United Nations, in particular, has increasingly adopted a process-based understanding of ending PKOs whereby drawdown, withdrawal, mission closure and follow-on arrangements are seen as constituent parts of a peacekeeping transition and, more broadly, a reconfiguration of the UN's presence and its peacebuilding strategy (Caplan 2012b; Hirschmann 2012; United Nations 2013; Zaum 2012). The idea of transition implies movement and, ontologically, the ending of PKOs can involve a shift from international support for *peacekeeping,* in which security and relief efforts are paramount, toward greater emphasis on *peacebuilding,* where the consolidation of positive peace and development are prioritized (Caplan 2012b, p. 5; Ponzio 2012, p. 303). To realize these longer-term goals, international actors (including the United Nations and its agencies) may remain on the ground after PKOs have ended, albeit in a restructured way. Thus, the idea of reconfiguring the international community's presence and restructuring the relationship between international and local actors has also become central to understandings of what it means to end a peacekeeping operation (Day 2019; Sherman 2019; United Nations 2013).

If ending a peacekeeping operation is indeed a process, then that process can be conceptualized by identifying the core activities that ordinarily form part of a peacekeeping transition. The first is *planning* of: (a) the political, programmatic, financial and logistical steps that are needed to ensure a smooth PKO exit and (b) the nature of any continued international presence after PKO closure (see discussion of cases in Forti and Connolly 2018; Price and Titulaer 2013). Alongside (and possibly in response to) planning, there may be an incremental *downsizing* of peacekeeping troops in advance of full withdrawal, if conditions on the ground allow. The number of civilian staff may also be reduced, with some international staff moving (back) into the UN system, while the PKO may support its national hires—often with limited success—to find onward gainful employment (Coleman 2020; Landgren 2020). At a given point in time, the UN Security Council (or equivalent body for other peacekeeping providers) will discuss and debate closing a mission before ultimately taking a *decision* to end a PKO on a particular date. As the mandated end date draws near, an outgoing mission will commence *liquidation* (Forti and Connolly 2018, p. 26) such as closing field offices, managing mission records, and reallocating assets and hardware, either to the host state or to another peacekeeping operation (Landgren 2020; Scott 2020, p. 41). The outgoing PKO may also conduct an

information campaign, with a view to informing the host state public of pending mission closure and the nature of any follow-on peacebuilding arrangements that will be supported by the international community (Forti and Connolly 2019, p. 6; Forti and Connolly 2018, pp. 27–8). The formal ending of a PKO comes at the point of mission closure, when local actors and any reconfigured international peace and security presence are given responsibility for continued peacebuilding efforts.

<a>The Evolution of Thinking and Practice

The thinking and practice of ending PKOs has evolved over time, particularly within the UN system. Historically, UN thinking in this regard has been underdeveloped, and practice has tended to be ad hoc (Day 2019, p. 4). While there have been established procedures pertaining to the drawdown and withdrawal of UN personnel and equipment, for a long time there was little strategic thinking underpinning UN peacekeeping transitions (United Nations 2000b, pp. 11–12). Even the landmark 2000 review of UN peace operations—known as the Brahimi Report—had very little to say about exit strategies (United Nations 2000d). The reason for this paucity of attention is, arguably, that until the end of the Cold War, the nature of peacekeeping operations did not require very much strategic thinking regarding closure. As missions were typically deployed to conventional armed conflicts between states, and mission objectives were concerned primarily with monitoring the implementation of ceasefire or disengagement agreements, the mandates were limited, which made exit strategies relatively easy to articulate (United Nations 2000b, p. 12).

As conflict environments became more complex, and peacekeeping operations along with them, thinking about transition initially remained rather limited, with the holding of elections often considered to be the central plank of an exit strategy (United Nations 2000d, para. 20; Chesterman 2004, ch. 7). But as UN operations in Angola, Cambodia and elsewhere in the 1990s would demonstrate, elections were not always a reliable basis for exit in the absence of a stable peace (Guyot and Vines 2015; Whalan 2013). Indeed, elections sometimes inflamed tensions and spurred renewed violence (Flores and Nooruddin 2012), although there were notable exceptions (for example Namibia, Mozambique and El Salvador). Moreover, because UN officials are required to work with incumbent national authorities, elections sometimes made it difficult for the United Nations to take the priorities of an incoming

administration into consideration. There thus emerged growing recognition within the organization of the need for more strategic thinking about transition strategies.

In November 2000, the Dutch government initiated a discussion about UN Security Council decision-making on mission closure and mission transition. The debate led to the publication of a report in April 2001 by the UN Secretary-General titled 'No Exit Without Strategy: Security Council Decision-Making and the Closure or Transition of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations' (United Nations 2001). The report represented the first systematic attempt by the United Nations to identify factors that the Security Council should consider when deciding to close or significantly alter a UN peacekeeping operation. Among these factors was the need for early transition planning, a joined-up approach that includes all relevant actors both within and outside the UN system, the continuous review of circumstances in-country leading up to significant adjustments to an operation and sensitivity to the effects of any adjustments on the host country. The report drew on a range of peacekeeping experiences and was noteworthy for its candid analysis of the organization's own shortcomings.

With heightened interest in managing peacekeeping transitions more effectively, various departments within the United Nations undertook to adopt policies and practices that would help to strengthen the capacity of the organization in this regard. Prominent among these was the introduction of benchmarking. In 2002, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) became the first UN peacekeeping operation to employ benchmarks to inform decision-making about troop drawdown (United Nations 2002). Noting 'with satisfaction' innovations in UNAMSIL's methods of operation that might prove useful best practice, 'including an exit strategy based on specific benchmarks for drawdown', the Security Council began to prescribe the use of benchmarking more widely (United Nations 2005). By April 2014, seven out of 17 UN peacekeeping operations had introduced benchmarking, although not all of them for the purpose of managing transitions (United Nations 2014; Caplan 2019, pp. 57–9).

Other new practices followed. Early planning for transition, incorporated into UN guidance in 2013 (United Nations 2013), became more widespread. The UN peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), Mali (MINUSMA), Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and South Sudan (UNMISS), for instance, have all been required to develop transition strategies well before the expected conclusion of their operations (Day 2019, p. 12). Recognising the importance of host buy-in for any successful transition, the

United Nations has also required mission leadership to ensure the participation of national governments in the planning of transitions, alongside 'a broad and representative range of national stakeholders' (United Nations 2013, para. 10). Agreeing a common approach has not always been feasible, however, in view of the fact that the interests of national authorities can be at odds with those of the United Nations (Day 2019, p. 12). The Secretariat has thus also been encouraging effective use of communications to manage expectations in host states. Additionally, emphasis has been placed on 'the development of relevant national capacities… to ensure an effective and sustainable handover of mission responsibilities to national partners' (United Nations 2013, para. 10). Admittedly some of these policies, and others, have been more aspirational than real. As the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture has observed, 'transitions […] are frequently poorly timed and poorly managed' (United Nations 2015d); and UN member states, leaders and staff still all too often focus on mission departure as the end point instead of a broader transition process in their understanding and practices.

It is clear, nonetheless, that there has been an evolution in thinking and practice that reflects appreciation of the fact that ending peacekeeping operations is a process of transition rather than a single moment or event; that transition requires careful planning and coordination among all relevant parties; that any transition plan needs to be predicated on the peacebuilding requirements of the host country and include a realistic plan for ongoing peacebuilding support by the UN Country Team; and that credible, impartial analysis of the current context and the threats to sustainable peace is crucial to an understanding of peacebuilding requirements.

<a>Factors Informing the Decision to End a Peacekeeping Operation

Numerous factors have a bearing on decisions over when and how to end peacekeeping operations. We can distinguish broadly between factors relating to (a) the implementation of an operation's mandate and (b) political considerations on the part of the UN Security Council or other authorizing agents, the troop-contributing countries and the host countries.

<b>Implementation of the Mandate

Elections. Where PKOs have had a mandate to organize elections, they have often been viewed as a critical moment in the peacekeeping operation—evidence of acceptance by the belligerents of the primacy of the ballot over the bullet—and an indication that the operation therefore might take steps to draw down and withdraw (United Nations 2000b). It is still the

case that elections are seen to mark a turning point but, increasingly, the tendency has been to view elections as just one element of a broader transition strategy rather than as *the* focal point of a transition. 'Peace processes do not end with a ceasefire, a peace agreement or an election', the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) observed in its 2015 report. 'Such events constitute merely a phase, rather than the conclusion, of a peace process' (United Nations 2015c, para 131). Yet while there is recognition that the requirements for a self-sustaining peace are more complex, the United Nations and other organizations do not always possess mechanisms and clear criteria for assessing progress towards the achievement of a stable peace (Caplan 2019).

Deadlines. Notwithstanding calls for prioritizing the achievement of mandate objectives ('end states, not end dates'), the termination of peacekeeping operations is sometimes governed by deadlines. One reason for this is because UN Security Council resolutions authorizing the establishment of peacekeeping operations often contain 'sunset clauses' that necessitate periodic renewal of the operations by the Security Council. In the absence of an agreement to renew an operation, the operation will be brought to an end. Deadlines may also be written into the political agreement that the peacekeeping operation is designed to support. The Erdut Agreement between Croatian Serbs and the Government of Croatia, for instance, limited the UN Transitional Administration in Eastern Slavonia (UNTAES) to 12 months renewable for another 12 months (United Nations 1995). The disadvantage of a deadline is that it may encourage belligerents to wait out the peacekeepers and resume hostilities once they have left. However, deadlines may also generate buy-in from the parties to a conflict: the Croatian Government only accepted the deployment of UNTAES because it knew that it would not be a mission of indefinite duration (unlike the predecessor UN peace operations on its territory). Fixed timetables can also facilitate planning: with the knowledge that the UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) would close in 24 months, the UN devised a Mandate Implementation Plan (MIP) that was meant to guide UNMIBH in the completion of its mandate.

Benchmarking. Benchmarking is a form of evaluation that uses specified standards to help ascertain the extent to which an operation's objectives have been achieved (United Nations 2010). For instance, the reduction and the elimination of militia threats from a region may be a benchmark for the establishment of a secure environment. If done properly, benchmarking can introduce greater rigour and precision into assessments and allow for monitoring progress towards achieving a stable peace. As indicated above, benchmarking has been employed

widely in UN (and other) peacekeeping operations and has assisted in transition planning (Landgren 2020), although the Security Council and other authorizing bodies may interpret benchmarks in different ways and according to their own interests. While benchmarks have varied depending on the mandate of a given mission, the Security Council has tended to concentrate on five main areas: 1) political dialogue and elections; 2) stability and security; 3) governance and the rule of law; 4) human rights and 5) the extension of state authority (United Nations 2014; Day 2019). Since 2018, the UN has begun to rely on a more comprehensive and systematic assessment tool known as the Comprehensive Performance Assessment System (CPAS) to inform mission planning, including drawdown and withdrawal (United Nations 2020).

Failure to fulfil a mandate. The decision to end a peacekeeping operation may be taken because of a failure to fulfil a mandate. The two UN operations in Somalia (UNOSOM I and II), from 1992 to 1995, both failed to complete their mandates, which included facilitation of the delivery of humanitarian assistance, monitoring of a ceasefire agreement, the disarmament of all local armed forces and preventing the resumption of violence, among other tasks (Williams 2015a; Williams 2015b). The UN operation in Rwanda (UNAMIR I), which was mandated to help ensure security during a period of political transition, proved to be ill-equipped to prevent the genocide that would claim hundreds of thousands of Rwandan, mainly Tutsi, lives (Melvern 2015). In these and other cases, the UN Security Council, having concluded that the operations were not meeting their objectives, decided to terminate them. However, termination did not mark the end of all UN engagement in these countries.

<b>Political Considerations

Security Council members and troop-contributing countries. Decisions about when and how to end a peacekeeping operation are made not only in consideration of the foregoing options; they are also made on the basis of the national interests of Security Council members and troop-contributing countries (United Nations 2000b). Indeed, the decision to engage, the nature of the engagement and the duration of the engagement are in many respects political decisions which may be subject to domestic pressures, budgetary concerns and competing strategic considerations. When China vetoed renewal of the UN's preventive peacekeeping operation in Macedonia (UNPREDEP) in 1999, it was not because of careful consideration of the quality of the peace in the former Yugoslav republic, which in fact would succumb to violent conflict two years later; rather, it was seen as a reaction against Macedonia's

establishment of diplomatic relations with Taiwan (Partos 1999). Similarly, when the deployment of Nigerian troops in Sierra Leone in support of ECOMOG (the regional peacekeeping force) became a domestic political issue in Nigeria in 1999, the newly elected President Olusegun Obasanjo took the decision to withdraw his country's forces, leading ultimately to the withdrawal of ECOMOG from Sierra Leone (Bah 2012).

Host countries. Host countries, too, may press for the termination of an operation if the government perceives that its national interests—or its own narrow political interests—are not being served by the continued presence of a UN peacekeeping operation. The termination and exit of the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) in December 2010, for instance, was instigated at the request of the government of Chad which, contrary to the views of the UN Security Council, maintained that it no longer needed the peacekeeping operation for the purpose of helping to protect civilians (Price and Titulaer 2013; Karlsrud 2015). Sometimes the threat of expulsion by a national government can prompt a peacekeeping operation to consider withdrawal or reconfiguration. Soon after winning the presidency of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 2006, Joseph Kabila began to sideline the UN mission (MONUC) there and push for its drawdown, leading to the reconfiguration of the mission (renamed MONUSCO) with a focus on stabilization (Day et al. 2020, p. 25).

<a>Modes of Transition and Outcomes of Withdrawal

While factors that inform decisions of the UN Security Council or equivalent bodies to end peacekeeping operations evidently have an impact on when and why PKOs withdraw, they also inform *how* withdrawal will take place; that is, they inform the mode and pace of the transition process, as well as the nature of any follow-on arrangements that may succeed peacekeeping operations.

<b>Rapid Exit

Peacekeepers (both military/police forces and civilian staff) may draw down and withdraw from host states in short time, albeit under quite varied circumstances. In one scenario, rapid exit immediately follows the fulfilment of mission mandates and goals. Where this is the case, a relatively large-scale peacekeeping presence is maintained until a specific mandated activity is realized—such as the supervision of elections—and peacekeepers withdraw soon thereafter. This was the case in Mozambique, for example, where ONUMOZ

troops remained on the ground in large numbers until shortly after elections were held and a newly-elected government was installed in late 1994 (Berdal 2015, p. 422). A similar dynamic was seen in Cambodia, where large numbers of UNTAC troops were drawn down over a few months and then exited in late 1993, after overseeing an electoral process (Widyono 2015, p. 400).

Other cases of rapid withdrawal do not follow fulfilment of mission goals but, instead, come as swift responses to signals from host state governments that they no longer welcome the presence of a peacekeeping operation. In 2010, for example, MINURCAT exited on a relatively short timeline following the Chadian government's call for withdrawal (see Figure 1) (Piccolino and Karlsrud, 2011; Price and Titulaer, 2013). The UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), similarly, was terminated from one day to the next in mid-2008 and the mission was compelled to exit at speed after Eritrea signalled its ongoing discontent with the mission by placing a series of restrictions on the operation that severely impeded its functioning (Cammaert and Sugar 2015, pp. 678–80).

<b>Phased Withdrawal

While peacekeeping operations may move from peak deployment to closure in short time, the drawdown and ending of PKOs often occurs more gradually, in phases—partly to allow sufficient time for transition plans to be formulated and operationalized but also to gauge the effects of drawdown and, if necessary, to adjust the nature and timing of withdrawal accordingly. Benchmarking and other performance measures set by the PKO can also inform the pace of drawdown. One advantage of a phased approach is that responsibility for security, governance and other roles can be gradually transferred to local authorities (and other follow-on actors) but, at the same time, peacekeepers can remain on the ground in some form to provide resource support, technical assistance and back-up to local actors, as needed. This was the case in Liberia, where UNMIL incrementally reduced troop numbers over ten years (see Figure 1), before handing over responsibility for security to Liberian forces in 2016, some two years before the peacekeeping operation closed (Forti and Connolly 2018, pp. 4, 8). Gradually reducing the overall size of the international presence may also limit the economic shock that can otherwise accompany mission closure and the exit of peacekeepers, whose presence boosts local demand for goods and services but whose exit can, equally, leave a gap in market demand (see Scott 2020; Beber et al. 2019).

Figure 1: Modes of Withdrawal and Follow-On Arrangements[2]

[FIGURE 1 HERE]

<b>Reconfigurations of the International Presence: Follow-On Arrangements

Peacekeeping transition and withdrawal processes not only vary in pace; they also vary in terms of outcome, where that term is understood not as mission closure and exit but, rather, as a reconfiguration of the international peacebuilding presence through the deployment of various Security Council-mandated 'follow-on' arrangements (United Nations 2013). The aim of such arrangements is to provide a degree of institutional support so that the gains of PKOs can be maintained following the end of support from peacekeeping missions for security, governance and development (Caplan 2012b, p. 5).

For the United Nations, the extent of its follow-on presence runs along a broad continuum, with the maximal approach taking the form of a successor UN peacekeeping operation that retains a troop deployment. On occasion such a succession can simply involve rebranding an existing mission with the provision of a new mandate (for example the transition from MONUC to MONUSCO in DR Congo, see Figure 1) (Doss 2015). However, the deployment of another peacekeeping operation can also be part of a gradual drawdown of the overall peacekeeping effort and, where that is the case, the successor operation will be more limited in size and scope (for example MINUJUSTH in Haiti after the closure of MINUSTAH in 2017, see Figure 1) (Di Razza 2018). When the UN wishes to bring its peacekeeping presence to an end altogether but retain a high-profile peacebuilding presence, the Security Council may choose to deploy a political mission or an integrated office (Day 2019, p. 6), which are civilian operations that can provide good offices and technical assistance in support of peacebuilding and development efforts. This is also a way for the UN and member states to retain analytical and early warning capacity throughout the country. Examples of such arrangements include UNIOSIL in Sierra Leone (following UNAMSIL) (Price and Titulaer 2013, pp. 19–21) and BINUH in Haiti (following MINUJUSTH). However, since political missions are funded out of the UN's regular budget and they demand political attention by the Security Council, Council members may be reluctant to deploy these missions unless there is a strong case for doing so (Forti and Connolly 2019, p. 8). Instead, the United Nations may reconfigure its presence under the organizational banner of its UN Country Team, which would have already been deployed alongside the peacekeeping mission. In this arrangement, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) is likely to play a key role in delivering UN peacebuilding

programmes but it will work alongside a large suite of UN agencies and regional actors, as has been the case, for instance, in Liberia, Timor-Leste, Chad and Côte d'Ivoire since the closure of the UN PKOs there (Forti and Connolly 2018, pp. 28–9).

<a>Ending as Transitioning between UN and Regional Peacekeeping Operations

As discussed in the previous section, follow-on operations are a common mode of ending PKOs. These transitions do not only occur from one UN peacekeeping operation to another but increasingly between operations conducted by the UN and those conducted by other, oftentimes regional, actors engaged in peacekeeping. Indeed, of all UN PKOs with a follow-on operation between 1947 and 2018, 22 percent were followed by non-UN operations. Conversely, 25 percent of operations that were established with the ending of a regional PKO were conducted by the UN.[3]

While cooperation between the UN and regional organizations is already envisaged in Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, increased regional engagement and enhanced cooperation have only become important factors in peacekeeping since the end of the Cold War (United Nations 2001, para. 35). Since then, various types of cooperation have emerged between the UN and its regional partners, above all the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU) (United Nations 2015b, para. 2). Bah and Jones (2008), for instance, differentiate between three types of UN-regional partnership: sequential, parallel and hybrid operations. Hybrid peacekeeping operations are arrangements in which two organizations join commands and plan and conduct all activities together, as with the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, UNAMID. In parallel operations, different organizations deploy independently to the same (post-)conflict zone at the same time, focusing on different functional or regional areas, such as the simultaneous involvement of UNMIBH and NATO's Implementation Force (IFOR) and, later, its Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Sequential operations are cases where several organizations intervene at different stages of a response, following one another. Two subtypes of sequential PKOs can be distinguished: bridging and handover operations (Balas 2011, p. 394). A bridging operation is deployed rapidly for a brief period of time, usually with a clear end date, until a successor operation can take over. In the case of a handover operation, one organization ends its PKO, often after a longer period of deployment, and another organization comes in to take over its responsibilities. Examples include the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA), which was taken over by the

UN operation in Mali (MINUSMA), and the handover of rule of law tasks from the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to the EU Rule of Law Mission (EULEX).

The type of cooperation most widely used and institutionalized has been that of sequential/bridging operations, which involve transitioning from a regional, mostly AU- or EU-led, operation to a UN operation (Bah and Jones 2008, p. 23; United Nations 2015b, para. 24). This sequencing frequently occurs in situations where there is an urgent need to deploy a robust force (De Guttry 2015, p. 18). Regional organizations are commonly identified as the most rapid way to intervene due to presumed deployment advantages, such as knowledge of the local circumstances, enhanced legitimacy, additional (robust) resources, greater consensus within the organization, proximity to the crisis and a focus on rapid deployment capabilities (Bures 2006; Bellamy et al. 2010, pp. 310–13). The AU and EU even have designated rapid response forces—the African Standby Force and the EU Battlegroups— although to date none of these forces has seen military action.

EU and AU bridging operations generally follow different patterns based on their respective comparative advantages (Meiske 2019, pp. 53–128). EU bridging operations are usually small in scale and deployed to fill a functional gap or niche activity left by the UN, or to a specific region until the UN can strengthen its forces (Brosig 2014). The 2003 EU Operation Artemis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for instance, was mandated 'to be deployed on a strictly temporary basis to allow the Secretary-General to reinforce MONUC's presence in Bunia' (United Nations 2003, para. 2). AU bridging operations, on the other hand, are often larger in terms of size and mission scope, and act as a first responder to stabilize challenging security situations and prepare the ground for UN operations (Coleman 2011, pp. 522–6). Examples include the African Union Mission in Burundi (AMIB), which was deployed as an interim operation until the conditions were favourable for the establishment of the UN operation (ONUB); or the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which was mandated in 2007 to 'be deployed for a period of six (6) months, aimed essentially at contributing to the initial stabilization phase in Somalia, with a clear understanding that the mission will evolve to a United Nations operation' (African Union 2007, para. 9). As of today, however, AMISOM has still not transferred authority to the UN. This underlines the importance of developing a clear exit strategy for bridging operations, consisting of a designated timetable or benchmarks for assessing when it is appropriate to deploy a UN peacekeeping operation, as was done in the 2013 and 2015 joint AU-UN benchmarking reviews for a UN peacekeeping operation in Somalia (Williams 2018, pp. 157–64, 322–42).

Successful transitions from one organization to another further require 'common strategic objectives, political coherence and a clear division of responsibilities', as was noted in a 2015 lessons-learned exercise on the transitions from AU to UN peacekeeping operations in Mali and the Central African Republic (CAR) conducted by the UN Secretary-General in collaboration with the AU (United Nations 2015a, p. 8). The lessons learned emphasise that a smooth transition starts with close cooperation between the regional organization and the UN from the very beginning of the regional PKO, including consultations on the development of respective mandates, the active participation of dedicated UN officers in operational planning of the regional operation, the early introduction of a transition plan and team and the establishment of a Joint Operations Centre.

One of the central elements of the transition process is the re-hatting of military and police contingents of the previous operation to the successor operation, often in significant numbers. Notwithstanding additional training activities and efforts to upgrade equipment, the capabilities of the re-hatted contingents, their equipment, human rights record and command and control structures are sometimes below UN standards, as was the case with the AU operations AFISMA in Mali and MISCA in the Central African Republic. Similarly, the transfer of civilian capacities to implement strategies related to human rights and the protection of civilians requires harmonization of standards and working methods. Once the UN operation replaces the regional operation, sustained regional engagement in the post-transition phase, such as the African Union Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL), can further contribute to a coherent strategy and smooth transition. All things considered, to be effective, a transition must occur between one well-functioning, operationally robust operation and another (United Nations 2015a; De Guttry 2015).

<a>After Peacekeeping Operations Have Ended

While the UN and policy-oriented think tanks, such as the International Peace Institute (IPI),[4] have given considerable attention to peacekeeping transitions, there have been few attempts to document and study conditions on the ground in former host states after missions have ended and the international peacebuilding presence has been reconfigured (partial exceptions include Doyle and Sambanis 2006, and Howard 2008). As such, we have limited understanding of: (a) the short-term impacts (if any) of mission closure on peace and development in former host states immediately after peacekeeping operations end; and (b) the

long-term legacies of peacekeeping interventions (possibly decades after PKOs have closed) for states that have previously hosted missions (Gledhill 2020). For organizations that provide peacekeeping, the limited attention given to post-exit outcomes is, perhaps, unsurprising; international political attention and resources tend to focus on ongoing or future PKOs rather than past missions, though former host states do stay on the radar of the UN Security Council and General Assembly when they have follow-on political missions and/or sit on the agenda of the UN Peacebuilding Commission (Bellamy 2010; Forti and Connolly 2019, p. 8). For academics, the limited attention given to post-exit outcomes partly mirrors the limited attention of policy actors but it may also be due to methodological challenges that are associated with studying post-exit outcomes (see Caplan 2020). One such challenge relates to data; there is simply little comprehensive and reliable data on trends in security, the economy and governance in states that have previously hosted PKOs. A second challenge relates to causal inference; even when data are available, it is difficult to isolate the lasting impact of peacekeeping interventions—after exit—in the face of causal 'noise' generated by domestic and international dynamics that play out after PKOs have withdrawn (Diehl and Druckman 2015, p. 97).

While the study of post-exit outcomes has been limited, it is an important area of investigation. After all, we can only really assess whether peacekeeping efforts contribute to a sustainable peace if we examine what happens after PKO support structures are removed. Recognizing this, there have been several recent efforts to investigate post-exit trends in formerly 'peacekept' states. Di Salvatore and Ruggeri (2020), for example, have looked at cross-national quantitative indicators of state capacity over ten years following the closure of UN PKOs. While they identify positive trends on a number of fronts after exit, they also observe large variation in the post-exit trajectory of cases in their sample, which limits their confidence in their generalized findings. Other studies have explored more finite outcomes, in specific cases. Dorussen (2015), for example, has investigated perceptions of security in Timor-Leste after the closure of UNMIT in 2012, finding broadly positive views on that front among participants in a survey (albeit one with a sample size). Scott (2020), meanwhile, has produced a study for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the UN Transitions Project on 'Financing a Sustainable Peace'. Drawing on data gathered from four countries where UN PKOs have recently closed, or will soon close, the study investigates *(inter alia)* economic challenges and responses that can arise in the wake of PKO closure. Thompson

(n.d.) has delved into these issues in relation to the Liberian case, in particular, arguing that the impact of UNMIL's withdrawal on the local economy should not be overstated.

Alongside these studies, the authors of this chapter are working with an international team of researchers to investigate the impact of PKO withdrawal on state capacity and service delivery in former host states.[5] Our aim is to assess whether the end of peacekeeping operations and the withdrawal of peacekeeping forces is associated with any immediate change (improvement or decline) in security, governance, economic conditions and the foreign relations of states that have hosted large-scale UN peacekeeping operations. In an effort to manage some of the challenges of studying post-exit outcomes, we are employing diverse and complementary research methods at two levels of analysis. At the cross-national level we are investigating (primarily through quantitative analysis) whether there are common trends in the trajectories of former host states over the five years following PKO mission closure. Recognizing that there may be significant case-specific variation in post-exit outcomes, we are also documenting perceptions of conditions on the ground in specific countries in which UN PKOs have recently closed, notably Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Haiti. This work involves a combination of public perception surveys and qualitative interviews.

<a>Conclusion

The ending of peacekeeping operations poses a number of challenges. New or unanticipated threats to the establishment of a stable peace may emerge late in the day. National capacity to maintain the peace following exit may be limited. Coordination with any follow-on missions will be required. Sufficient funding will need to be available to help ensure mitigation of the adverse effects of drawdown and withdrawal and to support future economic development. These and related challenges all require careful and continuous transition planning from the outset of an operation.

As is evident from the foregoing, there has been an evolution in thinking and practice with respect to the ending of peacekeeping operations. As policy actors have come to appreciate increasingly that the ending of these operations is a process rather than an endpoint, they have made significant strides towards managing the challenges of transition. There is growing understanding that successful transitions are vital to consolidating any gains that a peacekeeping operation may have achieved.

<a>Notes

[1] For an overview of literature that addresses the impacts and effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, see Di Salvatore and Ruggeri (2017).

[2] Figure created by the authors; data based on Kathman (2013) and IPI Peacekeeping Database (n.d.) and cross-checked with data provided by UNDPO.

[3] In total, 42 percent of UN PKOs and 27 percent of regional PKOs that have ended between 1947 and 2018 were followed by another operation in the same/next month. Data and calculations are based on MILINDA (Jetschke and Schlipphak 2020). Note that the data do not indicate an explicit successor operation but only an operation deployed in the same country at the same time that a previous operation ended.

[4] See the IPI project on 'Peacekeeping Transitions': https://www.ipinst.org/program/peace-operations-and-sustaining-peace/peacekeeping-transitions (accessed 9 December 2020).

[5] For an overview of the project, which is supported by the UK's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), along with further support from the Folke Bernadotte Academy and Oxford University's John Fell Fund, see https://afterexit.web.ox.ac.uk.

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