

**Testimony by Dr. Esther D. Brimmer,
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Before the House Foreign Affairs Committee’s Africa Subcommittee,
On “Peacekeeping in Africa”**

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Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass, distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for convening this hearing on United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa. I appreciate the Committee’s attention to these important issues, and am pleased to discuss the Obama Administration’s commitment to promoting peace and security across Africa through multilateral action and shared responsibility.

As President Obama has said, “UN peacekeeping can deliver important results by protecting civilians, helping to rebuild society, and advancing peace around the world. From Sudan to Liberia to Haiti, peacekeeping operations are a cost-effective means for the United States and all nations to share the burden of promoting peace and security.” UN peacekeeping missions are a key tool to help bring stability to countries emerging from violent conflict – and to prevent a return to such violence. This Administration’s support for UN peacekeeping operations is deep, and builds on a strong, decades-long, bipartisan effort to improve its effectiveness.

My colleague, Assistant Secretary Carson, has laid out our approach to peace and security in Africa, and to the regional, sub-regional and national efforts for peacekeeping capacity. I will focus on the role of missions led by the United Nations – today, the seven UN-led or supported peacekeeping missions in sub-Saharan Africa – and our work to back effective peacekeeping. We have seen the recent – and critical – role of peacekeepers across Africa. Supporting a new country in South Sudan. Helping run elections in Liberia. Promoting stability in Cote d’Ivoire. Trying to stem renewed violence in eastern Congo. These missions are challenging and risky, but we recognize their contributions to peace and stability throughout the continent.

In this era of increasing fiscal restraint, I would also like to highlight the cost-effectiveness of UN peacekeeping. Over 70 percent of the annual cost of UN peacekeeping operations is paid by the rest of the world. Perhaps more importantly, the cost of any unilateral action would be far greater. According to a 2007 Government Accountability Office study, the cost of deploying one U.S. soldier in Haiti would cost us eight times more than deploying a UN peacekeeper.

As the largest financial contributor to the UN system, we are conscious that we must ensure U.S. taxpayer dollars are used efficiently, transparently and accountably. For example, the U.S. was instrumental in gaining General Assembly

approval for the Global Field Support Strategy, a five-year project to turn the UN's previous piecemeal administrative and logistical operations support system into a tightly and comprehensively integrated one. The U.S. continues to strongly support its implementation, and, to date, this initiative has resulted in savings of \$62 million. By taking advantage of collective action and leveraging the unique expertise of the United Nations we ensure the efficient use of taxpayer dollars while significantly advancing U.S. national interests.

CORE GOALS, MAJOR CHALLENGES

First, let's be clear that peacekeeping is not a policy in itself, but rather a key tool to deliver on policy goals. UN missions deploy to reinforce efforts to create the conditions for lasting political settlements that can bring a durable peace, working in places that have faced—or are still facing—violent conflict and war. They provide backing for those who agree to put down their guns and to support the rule of law.

Our approach starts with strong resolutions in the Security Council, but it doesn't stop there. We look deeply at what will happen next – to make sure that missions can carry out their mandates, that they have the capacity, leadership, and

support needed to succeed. We look at the challenges that face each mission, and what is common across operations.

These missions are often the international community's last resort to bring the parties to a peace that will work, and succeed, at preventing a return to conflict. Their mandates range from the protection of civilians to electoral assistance, from police training to observing ceasefires. None of this is easy, but they are critical tasks. We know, from the beginning, that missions will face tough challenges. Our job is to help them succeed and to keep focused on the larger political aim that each mission deploys to support.

Indeed, since the first UN peacekeeping operation was authorized in 1948, the UN has deployed 67 missions worldwide, including 22 in Africa, to assist countries as they transition from periods of conflict to times of peace. UN peacekeepers have worked in some of the most remote regions of the world, with documented successes across five continents helping countries emerge from protracted conflict and insecurity to build a foundation for longer-term peace, stability, and development.

In Africa, UN peacekeepers have faced particularly acute challenges. Currently, roughly half of all UN peacekeeping operations are in Africa,

comprising over 71,000 peacekeepers – approximately three-quarters of all “blue helmets” currently serving. They have complex mandates, including the protection of civilians from active threats. They often operate in environments with weak state authority – or worse, are targeted by noncompliant states or their proxies. They are tasked with patrolling enormous expanses of desert, dense jungle, and mountainous terrain, regions often without much infrastructure such as roads, communications, even electricity.

As you know, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the United States plays a pivotal role in the establishment of any peacekeeping operation. Launching a peacekeeping operation requires our consent, the agreement of the UN Security Council, and the backing of the parties to the peace. Once we decide to authorize a peacekeeping mission, it is in our national interest to see it succeed.

Over the past 60 years, we’ve seen both the potential and the shortcomings of multilateral peacekeeping operations. We’ve learned critical lessons about the effectiveness and limits of peacekeeping. We’ve seen the results when the mandate isn’t appropriate to the need, or when violence escalates and UN peacekeeping missions either aren’t able to or don’t respond effectively. We know the problem when peacekeepers themselves abuse others. In short, we know

that each mission must have the leadership, resources, personnel, and capacities to act effectively.

As we confront the specific challenges faced by these missions, we recall the lessons learned from operations and are mindful of the goal for every mission we authorize: the successful completion of the mission, the responsible drawdown of forces, and the transition of mission responsibilities to the host government. And we work continually with our Security Council partners to improve mission mandates, identify cost savings, and close missions which have achieved their intended goals. In Mozambique, for example, a United Nations operation in the 1990s helped implement the general peace agreement and monitor a fragile cease-fire following 17 years of civil war. UN peacekeepers provided the necessary political space for former enemies to begin a dialogue and build trust among each other, with the result that Mozambique today is on a path of sustained peace. Since 2000, UN peacekeeping missions in Sierra Leone and Burundi have also transitioned to peace-building or political offices, respectively. Sierra Leone, which as recently as 2005 was host to a UN peacekeeping mission, is now prepared to send troops of its own to support AMISOM operations in Somalia.

KEY UN MISSIONS IN AFRICA

Let me touch on the seven UN-led or supported peacekeeping operations in Sub-Saharan Africa. Each plays a critical role and supports the peace and security of the continent.

I will start with Sudan – and now, South Sudan – where UN missions have been pivotal. UN peacekeepers were instrumental in supporting implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which, just over one year ago, led to the creation of South Sudan as the world’s newest country. After a lengthy civil war that left an estimated two million South Sudanese dead, the international community supported this peace agreement, which the United States helped broker. Last year, with the independence of South Sudan, the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) was established to work with the new government to assist with strengthening its government institutions and its security sector. The mission is implementing this ambitious mandate, under incredibly difficult circumstances, including an ongoing economic crisis in South Sudan, renewed inter-communal violence in remote areas of the country, and increased tensions between the Government of Sudan and the Government of South Sudan along their shared border. Significant numbers of internally displaced people (IDPs), widespread food insecurity, and other humanitarian crises present additional challenges in a country lacking the most basic infrastructure, such as

roads. Yet with our full support, UNMISS continues to support humanitarian work, monitor and investigate human rights violations, and protect civilians through an early warning system and a civilian and military presence in the country's most volatile areas.

More needs to be done to ensure UNMISS's success going forward. We will continue to work with the UN and other member states to ensure that the mission has sufficient military helicopters and waterborne craft to get troops, police, and relief workers to security and humanitarian hotspots as quickly as possible.

Let me turn now to Darfur, where the United States has been a strong supporter of a robust UN peacekeeping presence.

UNAMID – a hybrid UN/African Union operation – has faced significant obstacles to fulfilling its ambitious mandate focused on the protection of civilians. Despite its authorized force strength of nearly 21,000, Sudanese authorities and, to a lesser extent, rebel groups have regularly denied UNAMID access to areas where it needs to go, limiting the mission's ability to fully implement its mandate. Direct attacks on the mission by armed elements in the region have resulted in the deaths of 37 UNAMID-affiliated personnel since 2008.

Yet even in this insecure environment where the Government of Sudan fails to ensure the conditions for true peace and Darfuri armed movements remain outside the peace process, UNAMID forces continue to play a critical role in the safety and security of Darfur's inhabitants. UNAMID has taken a leading role in supporting the implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, and UNAMID is working to prevent humanitarian conditions from deteriorating further.

For example, UNAMID provides protection to humanitarian actors operating in Darfur, advocates for the provision of greater humanitarian access by the Sudanese government, and, in some cases, assists with the delivery of critical supplies to the region. Of equal importance, UNAMID provides security to approximately 1.7 million displaced persons living in camps, who are especially vulnerable to attacks. UNAMID has a special focus on women's political participation and safety, with particular attention to addressing sexual and gender-based violence.

Yet the future of Darfur remains uncertain, and, as recent incidents have demonstrated, UNAMID is not equipped or able to be everywhere at once. A third UN peacekeeping mission in the region – the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei – is mandated to protect civilians under imminent threat in this contested border

area of Abyei, which is claimed by both Sudan and South Sudan. The presence of approximately 4,000 uniformed UNISFA personnel has been critical to maintaining stability despite the aerial bombardments from the Sudanese Armed Forces, militia activities, and ground attacks that have plagued the border area writ large. UNISFA is actively supporting demining efforts along the border in the Abyei area, and has been instrumental in preparing for deployment of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, which will see Sudanese, South Sudanese, and international monitors monitoring a demilitarized border. This support will prove critical as the two countries continue with negotiations and confidence-building measures.

Moving from the Sudans to West Africa, several UN peacekeeping missions provide critical bulwarks against a return to the broader armed conflicts and instability that plagued the region over the past two decades.

These post-conflict operations include the UN Mission in Liberia, UNMIL, which is tasked with helping Liberia strengthen its security sector and promote the rule of law following years of devastating civil war. It boasts about 9,000 uniformed personnel, including U.S. Army Brigadier General Hugh Van Roosen, who is serving as the mission Chief of Staff. He is the first U.S. flag officer to

serve in a UN peacekeeping mission in nearly 20 years, and one of 28 U.S. military personnel serving in UN peacekeeping missions worldwide.

Today, with our support, UNMIL is beginning a shift in its personnel, from a focus on military to more police and civilian personnel, as it works to complete its tasks and transition responsibility for security to the government of Liberia. Its successes to date include helping disarm over 100,000 ex-combatants including some 11,000 child soldiers, providing training to thousands of police officers, and delivering critical support to the 2011 national elections which brought President Johnson-Sirleaf a second term.

Missions can experience sudden change, however, as the UNOCI mission in neighboring Cote d'Ivoire did in late 2010 and early 2011. Post-electoral violence required UNOCI, a peacekeeping mission first deployed in 2004 to assist in implementing a 2003 peace agreement, to help ensure that power was ultimately ceded to the democratically elected president, Alasanne Ouattara, and to robustly implement its protection of civilians mandate. Today, with about 11,000 uniformed personnel, UNOCI is tasked with assisting government efforts on security sector reform and leading efforts at demobilization, disarmament, and rehabilitation of former combatants. Regional stability was threatened during the Cote d'Ivoire crisis, when an estimated 190,000 refugees flowed into Liberia,

straining recipient communities. Due to increased stability in Cote d'Ivoire, and with the support of its neighboring UN peacekeeping mission, approximately 169,000 of those refugees have now voluntarily returned.

So UNOCI is adjusting to the improved security situation, and we recently supported the UN Security Council reduction of one battalion from the Abidjan area. Today, we urge that UNOCI remains focused on the security situation, as it begins a transition to a reduction in its military component.

As with UNOCI, UNMIL also is on a path for eventual completion of its mandate. Our expectation is that UN forces will draw down over the next few years, and hand over their security responsibilities to the Liberian government. Concerns remain, however, including over instability along the Liberian-Cote d'Ivoire border, where the two missions are intensifying their cooperation with their host governments.

Let me turn next to the Democratic Republic of Congo. With an authorized force strength of over 19,000, the UN operation – called MONUSCO – is today the second largest UN peacekeeping operation in the world. The mission is tasked with an ambitious mandate to protect civilians and support stability in a highly volatile, conflict-prone region. It is worth noting that the eastern DRC alone is

twice the size of California, with little infrastructure. The country has faced intractable conflict and violence, and hosts more than a million internally displaced persons, along with hundreds of thousands of refugees from neighboring countries

Despite its challenges, MONUSCO has advanced peace and security in the DRC, pioneering innovative measures to understand the threats and vulnerabilities facing the population, and putting together teams to try and support communities that face violence. MONUSCO has for several years used joint protection teams – including military, police and civilian members – to build relationships with local communities, provide their leaders with mobile phones to notify the UN of possible threats, and enable peacekeepers to respond quickly with both deterrent force and medical and other support as needed. To address some of the sources of illicit funding that help fuel the ongoing conflict, MONUSCO is partnering with the Government of the DRC to establish several mineral trading centers to help regulate and control the industry, particularly in North and South Kivu. This work is in addition to MONUSCO’s more traditional tasks: to support DDR – disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration – of former combatants, to train police officers, and to help the Government of the DRC promote stability and rule of law.

Today, however, renewed fighting in the eastern province of North Kivu has undermined the progress of the past few years. The principal challenge there is now one of physical security, as the mutineers who make up the M23 militia have chased out DRC armed forces in a swath of the province, taking towns by force and committing gross human rights violations. Ongoing violence is precipitating a humanitarian crisis that the DRC Government and MONUSCO are hard-pressed to address alone, as they were already contending with other criminal armed groups posing a threat to civilians in the area, such as the Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda (FDLR) and Mai Mai rebel groups. Until the current crisis is alleviated, it will be difficult to pursue longer term security sector reform and governance to ensure the Government can protect its population and establish State authority throughout the DRC. These are necessary predicates for any kind of MONUSCO reconfiguration or drawdown.

Members of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region – which includes the DRC and Rwanda – have called for creation of a “neutral international force” that will “eradicate” the M23 and other “negative forces” in eastern DRC. How to accomplish this goal and build an enduring peace is a huge challenge, and it is not at all clear from where the resources or authority for such a force would come.

What is clear is that the DRC – with support from MONUSCO – must continue its work to eliminate the threat to civilians posed by the M23 and other armed groups, and to take enduring action to provide effective governance in the eastern DRC, address the legitimate grievances of stakeholders, and arrive at a durable political agreement with its neighbors. As Secretary Clinton has said, “we support the efforts of the DRC, and we urge all the states in the region, including Rwanda, to work together to cut off support for the rebels in the M-23, to disarm them and to bring their leaders to justice.” These challenges require the parties to the conflict to address underlying causes, while in the interim ensure clear support to MONUSCO.

Finally, let me turn to Somalia, where the United Nations provides critical administrative support to the African Union peacekeeping mission there through a field support office known as UNSOA. Peace and stability in Somalia has been a vexing challenge for more than 20 years now, and one that with the rise of al-Shabaab has grown to include direct threats to U.S. national security interests. That is why we have supported both AMISOM and the UN role backstopping African Union efforts to reform the Somali state.

UNSOA provides dedicated support to AMISOM as part of the UN’s Global Field Support Strategy, aimed at improving efficiency and effectiveness in the

delivery of support services to missions. UNSOA, in coordination with the UN Political Office for Somalia, directs logistical support from Nairobi, Kenya, and Entebbe, Uganda, due to the particularly difficult nature of the AMISOM mission. We believe that UNSOA, however, highlights how multilateral engagement, in conjunction with bilateral partners, can assist regional partners in their efforts to support the Somali authorities and mitigate the threat from al-Shabaab. This support office is an excellent example of how burden sharing through the UN can directly contribute to our collective national security interests.

CORE CHALLENGES

No two missions are the same. But across missions, we see both best practices and critical challenges that deserve attention to improve operations, and enhance their effectiveness.

First, protection of civilians is a core task for all peacekeepers – military, police, and civilian – throughout the life of a mission. This is true even when it is not a specifically mandated task – in the sense that civilians expect, rightly, that the UN’s arrival means they will be safer. Anything less damages a mission’s credibility and effectiveness. That is easy to say. In practice, peacekeeping operations need more than the authorization to take action, they need a strategy

based on reliable information and analysis of the local situation, member states to contribute troops, capacity –which includes funding, equipment, training, and information – as well as effective leadership to operationalize the mandate of the mission.

So we are working to support mission-wide strategies for the protection of civilians, including support for standardized training for peacekeepers on the protection of civilians, to improve the ability of missions to anticipate, prevent and mitigate violence. We have also made substantial progress in providing peacekeepers with the tools they need to respond swiftly and effectively to sexual and gender-based violence. UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 were fundamental international agreements that enabled and empowered UN and regional peacekeeping missions and the humanitarian community to combat the imminent threat of sexual violence within the context of conflict. The protection of civilians is one of the toughest jobs for missions. To be successful, we must reduce the space between the Security Council’s intentions and the ability of missions to protect civilians in the field, whether in the DRC or Cote d’Ivoire, Darfur or South Sudan. The United States has funded the UN to support better analysis of what missions are doing, and together with others, to improve the missions’ ability to protect vulnerable groups. Also, through the Global Peace

Operations Initiative (GPOI), we are further undertaking initiatives to build UN training capacity on the protection of civilians. And we are deepening the focus on civilian protection in the peacekeeping training we provide to partner countries.

Second, we are focused on missions succeeding and transitioning out of a job – and handing over the reins to governments. That means operations need to get right a core task – the support to the rule of law and policing, a challenging prospect in countries emerging from conflict or where the rule of law previously did not exist. We continue to support efforts to increase civilian and policing capacities for UN missions. To date, more skilled corrections, judicial, police, and civilian experts are needed. We have worked with our colleagues in the State Department’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) to increase U.S. support to policing in peacekeeping missions and to build partner countries’ policing capacity through the International Police Peacekeeping Operations Support (IPPOS) program. Today, we have more than 155 American police officers and corrections and justice advisors serving in Liberia and South Sudan (as well as in Haiti). IPPOS training and equipment have enhanced the ability of Togo, Burkina Faso, Senegal and Nepal to contribute effective formed police units and individual police officers to UN peacekeeping operations. In addition, IPPOS helps train trainers in police-contributing countries.

Third, a core principle across all missions is the effective implementation of the UN's policy of zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). This must be upheld by all categories of UN personnel – military, police and civilian. The United States has pressed hard to develop procedures and programs on training and guidance, oversight, investigation, accountability and assistance to victims of sexual misconduct. This is an important issue, and efforts continue to deal with it. We have seen progress over the past few years in reducing the incidence of SEA, along with some commendable, swift and appropriate responses by governments whose peacekeepers have committed such offenses – including the actions of the governments of Uruguay and Pakistan to put their personnel on trial for egregious misconduct. The UN itself is revising its internal procedures for tracking cases, and actively exploring ways to improve both its screening process and its ability to follow-up on actions taken by governments. We also successfully have pressed the UN to implement measures that withhold reimbursement to TCCs for troops who have engaged in sexual exploitation and abuse—the first time that a direct linkage has been made between performance and reimbursement in UN peacekeeping.

Fourth, we recognize that leadership of these missions is vital. Both in New York and in the field, effective, experienced leadership is a determining factor in

whether UN operations can carry out their mandates, and the lack of such leadership can undermine a mission. For example, strong leadership in the DRC has made it possible for peacekeepers to better prevent and respond to violence against civilians. The United Nations has increased its focus over the past two or three years on building leadership capacity among military, police and civilian staff through both specific and integrated training.

In addition, we are encouraging more women to be included in missions. As Secretary Clinton has said, “We recognize that when we think about peacemaking, which is, after all, one of the critical tasks of any of us in international security, that something is missing. And that is women. There are not enough women at the table, not enough women's voices being heard.” The UN encourages nomination of women for peacekeeping operations, which can lay a foundation for their later service in leadership roles, and now ensures that the short lists of candidates for senior positions include women with peacekeeping experience.

Fifth, we believe that peacekeeping needs to be managed in a manner that reflects the current economic climate. We have led the charge in the General Assembly on landmark reforms to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of how peacekeeping missions are supported, and we have consistently advocated fiscal discipline in peacekeeping budgets. Due in large part to these efforts, the overall

budgets this year are approximately \$500 million less than they were last year, which will save U.S. taxpayers nearly \$140 million.

CONCLUSION

UN peacekeeping missions in Africa also provide important opportunities for military partnerships with African governments. Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal, for example, as well as those that once benefitted from international peacekeeping missions like Ethiopia and Burundi, now contribute troops and police to help other states pursue their path to peace and security, both in Africa and beyond. We appreciate this Committee's support for critical funding, including for programs like the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) – funded through the Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) Account – which the United States uses to develop the capacity of these peacekeeping partners. Building this capacity will help ensure the UN is able to draw from a more well-trained and professional pool of troops, who are better able to carry out the challenging mandates the Security Council asks them to achieve.

Despite the incredible challenges faced by these missions, UN peacekeeping operations can deliver results in even the most challenging environments and

conflict zones, in Africa and elsewhere. We support these missions not only because they advance U.S. national interests, but because they are a reflection of critical American values. These missions prevent further conflict, protect vulnerable civilians, and defend basic human rights. They provide critical support during fragile political transitions and to fledgling state institutions. We are all familiar with the devastating effects an unstable country far from our borders can pose to our national security. Where governments fail to meet the basic needs of their citizens or their responsibilities to protect civilians and provide security within their borders, the consequences can be far-reaching, including to the American people.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your support for our broader multilateral engagement across the United Nations system, including the strong support you and this Committee have given over the years to U.S. leadership on UN peacekeeping missions. As I said before, this Administration's support for UN peacekeeping builds on an effort that has grown since the deep challenges of the 1990s, and the failures in Rwanda and Bosnia, and the U.S. effort to prevent such horrors again. Our reform agenda builds on that common goal – to support peacekeeping missions' success, but never lose sight of the larger risk. Like Members of this Committee, we recognize the high cost of these missions and will

continue our efforts to ensure that we are careful stewards of taxpayer resources throughout the UN system.

I look forward to continuing to work with the Committee to ensure UN peacekeeping operations remain a useful and cost-effective tool that serves U.S. foreign policy goals throughout Africa and around the world. I look forward to discussing these issues further, and welcome any questions you may have.