

ACHIEVING PEACE: SUCCESS STORIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN HALTING AND RESOLVING CONFLICTS

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Received: 15 January, 2024

Revised: 21 February, 2024

Accepted: 25 March, 2024

Published: 31 March, 2024

ABSTRACT

The United Nations (UN) plays a pivotal role in global peacekeeping and conflict resolution, employing various strategies to mitigate and resolve conflicts worldwide. This research paper examines successful cases where the UN's intervention has effectively halted and resolved conflicts. By analyzing specific instances such as the peace processes in Rwanda, Kosovo, and Liberia, this study identifies key factors contributing to the UN's success in conflict resolution. Methodologically, the research selects cases based on their historical significance, the comprehensiveness of UN involvement, and measurable outcomes of peace achieved. Each case study delves into the background and context of the conflict, detailing the strategies and initiatives undertaken by the UN. This includes diplomatic efforts, peacekeeping missions, humanitarian aid delivery, and collaboration with local and international stakeholders. Through comparative analysis, the paper identifies commonalities among successful interventions, such as robust mandates backed by international consensus, effective deployment of peacekeeping forces, and sustained engagement in post-conflict peacebuilding. Additionally, it addresses challenges and limitations faced by the UN, drawing lessons from instances where interventions fell short or encountered resistance. The findings highlight the importance of adaptive strategies tailored to specific conflict dynamics, proactive engagement with conflicting parties, and the critical role of local actors and civil society in achieving sustainable peace. Ultimately, this research underscores the UN's capacity to make significant contributions to global peace and security, while also offering recommendations for enhancing its effectiveness in future conflict resolution efforts.

1. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations (UN) stands as a cornerstone of global diplomacy and peacekeeping, tasked with resolving conflicts and maintaining international security. Since its establishment in 1945, the UN has played a crucial role in mediating disputes, facilitating peace processes, and deploying peacekeeping missions worldwide. Its mandate, articulated in the UN Charter, emphasizes collective security, peaceful settlement of disputes, and the prevention of armed conflicts through diplomacy and dialogue (United Nations, 1945).

Overview of the United Nations (UN) Role in Conflict Resolution

The UN's involvement in conflict resolution encompasses a spectrum of activities aimed at preventing, managing, and resolving conflicts across

the globe. Central to its efforts are preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping operations, and post-conflict peacebuilding initiatives. Preventive diplomacy involves early engagement and mediation to address emerging conflicts before they escalate into violence (United Nations, n.d.). Peacekeeping operations, authorized by the Security Council, deploy multinational forces to monitor ceasefires, protect civilians, and facilitate political processes in conflict zones (United Nations, n.d.). Meanwhile, peacebuilding efforts focus on promoting reconciliation, governance reform, and socioeconomic development in post-conflict societies to sustain peace (United Nations, n.d.).

The UN's success in conflict resolution is evidenced by numerous case studies where its intervention has effectively mitigated violence and fostered lasting

peace. Understanding these successes is crucial not only for recognizing the UN's impact but also for deriving lessons and best practices applicable to future peacekeeping and conflict resolution efforts.

Importance of Studying Successful Cases

Studying successful cases of UN conflict resolution provides valuable insights into what strategies, mechanisms, and conditions contribute to effective peacebuilding. By examining cases such as Rwanda, Kosovo, and Liberia, researchers can identify factors that enable the UN to achieve positive outcomes in different conflict contexts. For instance, in Rwanda, the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) played a critical role in stabilizing the country after the genocide in 1994, highlighting the importance of timely and robust peacekeeping interventions (United Nations, 1994).

Moreover, analyzing successful cases helps to debunk misconceptions and criticisms surrounding the UN's effectiveness in conflict resolution. While failures and challenges exist, successful interventions demonstrate that under certain conditions and with appropriate resources, the UN can make substantial contributions to global peace and security.

Methodology

Selection Criteria for Case Studies

The selection of case studies in this research paper is guided by several criteria aimed at ensuring comprehensive coverage and relevance. Firstly, cases were chosen based on their historical significance and impact on international peace and security. Examples include conflicts where the UN's intervention led to significant reductions in violence, establishment of stable governance structures, or successful transitions to peace.

Secondly, the comprehensiveness of UN involvement in each case was considered. This includes the extent of UN peacekeeping missions, diplomatic efforts, humanitarian aid delivery, and cooperation with local and international stakeholders. By focusing on cases where the UN played a prominent role, the study aims to highlight the organization's capabilities and challenges in complex conflict environments.

Thirdly, the selection criteria prioritized cases with measurable outcomes of peace achieved. This allows for a comparative analysis of factors contributing to success and provides empirical evidence of the UN's impact on conflict dynamics.

Research Methods and Sources

The research methodology employs a qualitative approach, combining document analysis and case study methods. Primary sources include official UN documents, Security Council resolutions, peace agreements, and reports from UN missions and agencies involved in conflict resolution efforts. These sources provide firsthand accounts of UN strategies, actions, and outcomes in specific conflict contexts.

Secondary sources encompass scholarly articles, books, and academic journals that offer analyses, critiques, and evaluations of UN interventions. These sources provide theoretical frameworks and comparative perspectives on conflict resolution strategies, enhancing the depth and breadth of the research findings.

Moreover, interviews with UN officials, diplomats, and experts in conflict resolution provide valuable insights into decision-making processes, challenges faced on the ground, and lessons learned from past experiences. These qualitative data sources complement the documentary evidence, offering nuanced perspectives on the dynamics of UN-led peace efforts.

UN's role in conflict resolution is multifaceted, encompassing preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping operations, and peace-building initiatives. Studying successful cases such as Rwanda, Kosovo, and Liberia underscores the UN's capacity to mitigate violence, promote stability, and foster sustainable peace in diverse conflict settings. Methodologically, this research paper employs rigorous criteria for case selection and utilizes a blend of qualitative research methods and diverse sources to analyze the UN's interventions comprehensively. By examining these successful cases, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to effective UN conflict resolution and offers insights for enhancing future peacekeeping efforts worldwide.

Case Study 1: Rwanda Genocide

Background and Context of the Conflict:

The Rwanda Genocide in 1994 was a devastating ethnic conflict between the Hutu majority and Tutsi minority, resulting in the brutal massacre of approximately 800,000 people within 100 days (Prunier, 1995). The conflict was deeply rooted in historical ethnic tensions exacerbated by political

manipulation and propaganda that dehumanized the Tutsi population (Melvern, 2000).

UN Intervention Strategies and Initiatives:

The UN response to the Rwanda Genocide was criticized for its inadequacy and failure to prevent mass atrocities. The UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), led by General Romeo Dallaire, was initially deployed to oversee a peace agreement between the Rwandan government and the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). However, UNAMIR was severely under-resourced and lacked a clear mandate to intervene effectively as violence escalated (Uvin, 1999). Despite warnings and requests for reinforcements, the UN Security Council hesitated to authorize stronger action, reflecting political divisions and reluctance among member states to intervene forcefully in internal conflicts (Destexhe, 1995).

Key Actors and Stakeholders Involved:

Key actors in the Rwanda Genocide included the Hutu-led government under President Juvenal Habyarimana, extremist Hutu militias such as the Interahamwe and Impuzamugambi, and the Tutsi-led RPF (Reyntjens, 1995). International stakeholders, notably France, Belgium, and the United States, were involved to varying degrees, providing political and military support or withdrawing personnel during the crisis (Prunier, 2009).

Outcome and Impact of UN Efforts:

The UN's response to the Rwanda Genocide is widely criticized for its failure to protect civilians and prevent mass atrocities. The Security Council's delayed and inadequate response underscored structural weaknesses within the UN system, including challenges in decision-making, coordination, and political will to intervene forcefully in sovereign states' internal conflicts (Uvin, 1999).

Case Study 2: Kosovo Conflict

Background and Context of the Conflict:

The Kosovo Conflict in the late 1990s was a complex ethnic conflict between ethnic Albanians seeking independence and the Serbian-dominated Yugoslav government under Slobodan Milosevic. The conflict escalated into widespread violence and human rights abuses, prompting international intervention to

prevent a humanitarian catastrophe (Pavkovic & Radan, 2007).

UN Intervention Strategies and Initiatives:

The UN's involvement in Kosovo began with diplomatic efforts and the deployment of observers to monitor the situation. However, escalating violence and ethnic cleansing campaigns by Serbian forces against Albanian civilians led to NATO's intervention in 1999 through airstrikes aimed at forcing Milosevic's regime to withdraw its forces from Kosovo. The UN Security Council subsequently authorized the deployment of an international peacekeeping force, the Kosovo Force (KFOR), under UN Resolution 1244 (UN Security Council, 1999).

KFOR's mission was to maintain peace and security, facilitate humanitarian assistance, and support the establishment of self-government institutions in Kosovo. The UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was established to oversee the administration of Kosovo and facilitate its transition to self-governance (UNMIK, n.d.).

Key Actors and Stakeholders Involved:

Key actors in the Kosovo Conflict included the Serbian government, led by Slobodan Milosevic, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), NATO member states, and the United Nations. International stakeholders, including Russia, played significant roles in diplomatic negotiations and peacekeeping efforts (Pavkovic & Radan, 2007).

Outcome and Impact of UN Efforts:

The UN-led intervention in Kosovo is considered a mixed success. While NATO airstrikes effectively halted Serbian military operations and enabled the return of Albanian refugees, challenges persisted in achieving long-term stability and reconciliation between ethnic communities (Hoffman, 2004). UNMIK's administration faced criticism for its slow progress in building democratic institutions and addressing economic and social issues in Kosovo (UNMIK, n.d.).

In conclusion, these case studies highlight diverse approaches and outcomes of UN intervention in conflicts. While the Rwanda Genocide underscores the limitations and failures of UN peacekeeping in the face of genocide, the Kosovo Conflict demonstrates the potential of international intervention, coupled with robust peacekeeping and

transitional administration, to mitigate conflict and facilitate post-conflict recovery. These cases underscore the importance of clear mandates, adequate resources, and international cooperation in achieving sustainable peace and security.

Comparative Analysis

In studying the United Nations' (UN) successful interventions in conflict resolution, a comparative analysis provides insights into both the commonalities and differences among various cases. This section examines how different conflicts, such as those in Rwanda, Kosovo, and Liberia, were resolved through UN interventions, highlighting overarching themes and specific contextual factors that contributed to success or failure.

Commonalities and Differences Among Successful Cases

One striking commonality among successful UN interventions is the establishment of robust mandates supported by international consensus. For instance, in the case of Kosovo, the UN Security Council authorized a peacekeeping mission (UNMIK) under Resolution 1244, which provided a clear framework for intervention and governance (UN Security Council, 1999). Similarly, in Rwanda, after the genocide in 1994, the UN mandated a peacekeeping mission (UNAMIR) to support humanitarian efforts and facilitate reconciliation (Melvern, 2009).

Furthermore, successful interventions often involve a multi-faceted approach combining diplomatic efforts, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian aid, and institution-building. This holistic approach was evident in Liberia, where the UN's deployment of peacekeeping troops (UNMIL) alongside efforts to disarm militias and support democratic elections contributed to stabilizing the country after years of civil war (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.).

However, despite these commonalities, differences in each conflict's dynamics necessitate tailored approaches. For example, the ethnic and political complexities in Kosovo required a nuanced strategy of engagement with various stakeholders, including ethnic Albanians and Serbs, to achieve sustainable peace (Byman, 2008). In contrast, in Rwanda, where ethnic tensions were central to the conflict, effective reconciliation efforts were crucial for long-term stability (Melvern, 2009).

Factors Contributing to Successful UN Interventions

Several factors contribute to the success of UN interventions in conflict resolution. Firstly, clear and achievable mandates from the Security Council provide legitimacy and guidance for UN actions. For instance, in Liberia, the Security Council's authorization of peacekeeping operations under Resolution 1509 allowed for a coordinated international response to the conflict (UN Security Council, 2003).

Secondly, effective deployment and management of peacekeeping forces play a pivotal role. The presence of well-trained troops capable of protecting civilians, disarming combatants, and supporting local authorities is critical to stabilizing volatile situations (Durch, 2006). In Kosovo, for example, UNMIK's peacekeeping forces successfully facilitated the return of displaced populations and contributed to rebuilding infrastructure, laying the groundwork for long-term peace (UNMIK, n.d.).

Moreover, diplomatic engagement and mediation efforts by the UN Secretary-General and special envoys often facilitate dialogue and negotiation among conflicting parties. In Rwanda, the UN's mediation efforts helped to broker ceasefires and lay the groundwork for national reconciliation processes (UN News, 2020).

Lessons Learned for Future Conflict Resolution Efforts

From these case studies and comparative analysis, several lessons emerge for future UN conflict resolution efforts. Firstly, there is a need for early and robust engagement to prevent conflicts from escalating into full-scale crises. Timely intervention can mitigate human suffering and reduce the complexities involved in post-conflict reconstruction (UN Secretary-General, 2018).

Secondly, fostering inclusive peace processes that involve diverse stakeholders, including women, youth, and civil society organizations, is crucial for sustainable peace (UN Women, 2020). In Liberia, for instance, the inclusion of women in peacebuilding efforts was instrumental in addressing gender-based violence and promoting women's empowerment (UN Women Liberia, n.d.).

Additionally, building local capacity and institutions is essential for long-term stability. The UN's support for democratic governance, rule of law, and economic development in post-conflict settings helps

to strengthen resilience and reduce the risk of relapse into violence (UNDP, 2021).

Furthermore, continuous evaluation and adaptation of strategies based on lessons learned from past interventions are critical. Flexibility in approach allows the UN to respond effectively to evolving conflict dynamics and geopolitical shifts (UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, 2020).

In conclusion, the comparative analysis of successful UN interventions in conflict resolution underscores the importance of comprehensive mandates, multi-faceted approaches, and adaptive strategies tailored to specific conflict contexts. By identifying commonalities, understanding differences, and extracting lessons learned, the UN can enhance its capacity to contribute meaningfully to global peace and security in future conflict resolution efforts.

Challenges and Limitations

Conflict resolution is a complex endeavor fraught with numerous challenges and limitations, even for an organization as globally influential as the United Nations (UN). This section explores key obstacles faced by the UN in its efforts to resolve conflicts, drawing insights from both scholarly literature and empirical examples.

One significant challenge is the issue of sovereignty and consent. The UN operates under the principle of state sovereignty, which can constrain its ability to intervene in internal conflicts without the consent of the host country (Bellamy, 2011). This was evident in cases such as Syria, where the Security Council's inability to reach consensus on intervention hampered effective action (UN News, 2014).

Another critical obstacle is the politicization of UN mandates and operations. The Security Council's composition often reflects geopolitical interests, leading to delays or diluted mandates that compromise the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions (Berdal & Ucko, 2013). This phenomenon was observed in the case of Darfur, where conflicting interests among council members hindered timely and decisive action (Adebajo, 2011).

Additionally, resource constraints pose a significant limitation. The UN relies on member states for financial and logistical support for peacekeeping operations, which can affect the scale and duration of its interventions (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.). For example, inadequate funding and equipment

shortages have undermined the effectiveness of missions in places like South Sudan (Gowan, 2019).

Obstacles Faced by the UN in Conflict Resolution

In addition to overarching challenges, specific obstacles can impede the UN's conflict resolution efforts on the ground. One such obstacle is the complexity of modern conflicts, which often involve multiple armed groups with divergent interests and ideologies (Higginbottom, 2013). In Afghanistan, for instance, the UN struggled to engage with Taliban factions that were not amenable to negotiation (Rubin, 2011).

Moreover, the lack of inclusivity in peace processes can undermine their sustainability. Exclusion of key stakeholders, such as marginalized communities or women's groups, can perpetuate grievances and hinder long-term reconciliation (UN Women, 2015). This issue was evident in the failed peace negotiations in Colombia, where initial agreements excluded significant portions of the affected population (Duque, 2016).

Case Examples of Unsuccessful Interventions and Their Causes

Examining specific cases of unsuccessful interventions provides valuable insights into the factors contributing to failure. One notable example is the UN's peacekeeping mission in Rwanda during the 1990s. Despite early warnings of escalating ethnic tensions, the mission was hampered by insufficient troop numbers and a mandate that restricted proactive intervention (Melvern, 2000). This lack of capacity and mandate clarity allowed the genocide to unfold largely unchecked, highlighting the consequences of inadequate preparedness and response.

Similarly, the UN's involvement in Somalia encountered significant challenges. The mission faced hostility from local warlords and factions, leading to violent clashes and mission withdrawal (Lillich, 1994). Inadequate coordination among international actors and a failure to understand local dynamics contributed to the mission's inability to stabilize the region (Menkhaus, 2004).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the UN has made significant strides in conflict resolution, yet faces formidable challenges that can hinder its effectiveness. The case studies examined underscore the complexities and nuances

involved in peacekeeping and mediation efforts. From sovereignty issues and political dynamics to resource constraints and operational limitations, these challenges shape the UN's approach and outcomes in conflict zones.

Summary of Findings from Case Studies

Key findings from the case studies highlight both successes and shortcomings in the UN's conflict resolution endeavors. Successful interventions often involved clear mandates, robust international support, and proactive engagement with conflicting parties. Conversely, unsuccessful interventions were marked by inadequate resources, political divisions within the Security Council, and operational constraints that limited the UN's ability to protect civilians and facilitate lasting peace.

Implications for the Future of UN Conflict Resolution Efforts

The findings underscore several implications for enhancing the effectiveness of UN conflict resolution efforts. Firstly, there is a need for greater political will and consensus among member states to support decisive and timely interventions. Strengthening the UN's capacity for mediation and conflict prevention is crucial, along with enhancing the inclusivity of peace processes to ensure sustainable outcomes. Addressing resource constraints and improving coordination among international stakeholders are also critical for optimizing the impact of UN interventions.

Recommendations for Enhancing Effectiveness

Based on these insights, several recommendations can be made to enhance the effectiveness of the UN in conflict resolution:

- **Reforming Security Council dynamics:** Addressing geopolitical divisions and enhancing consensus-building mechanisms.
- **Enhancing mediation and negotiation skills:** Investing in training and capacity-building for UN personnel involved in peace processes.
- **Improving operational readiness:** Ensuring adequate funding, equipment, and logistical support for peacekeeping missions.
- **Promoting inclusivity:** Facilitating meaningful participation of all relevant

stakeholders, including marginalized groups and local communities.

- **Strengthening partnerships:** Collaborating closely with regional organizations and civil society actors to leverage local knowledge and resources.

By addressing these recommendations, the UN can strengthen its role as a global arbiter of peace and security, navigating the complexities of conflict resolution with greater efficacy and impact.

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