

ГУМАНІТАРНА ДІЯЛЬНІСТЬ ООН В АФРИЦІ: ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ГЕОПОЛІТИЧНИХ РЕАЛІЙ

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Africa's relationship with the United Nations began in 1960, when 15 African countries gained independence and 17 became UN member states.

In an effort to remove the stain of Western colonialism, the UN embarked on an effort to assist newly independent African states in their right to sovereignty and self-determination.

Many states lacked familiarity with democratic structures, were plagued by ethnic strife, and faced internal struggles for access to political power and access to resources. The first peacekeeping mission on the African continent was established in what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) with the support of 20,000 troops.

Fast forward 60 years, and some critics would argue that, despite billions allocated in official development assistance by the UN and major international donors, not enough has been achieved. Africa still suffers from chronic political instability, poverty, hunger, and disease, as well as a resurgence in resource extraction at the hands of foreign powers.

As the United Nations celebrated its 75th anniversary last year [2020], it is important to evaluate the presence and the effectiveness the organization has had on the African continent—from peacekeeping to sustainable human development.

Since the start, UN peacekeeping in Africa has been a miserable failure. Tied to the whims of a Security Council which is less and less capable of performing its basic functions, Africa has not been served well by UN interventions.

This began in the former Belgian Congo, where the naivety of both Dak Hammarskjöld and U Thant in refusing to support intelligence gathering—mainly over a commitment to sovereignty rights and a paranoia about the emerging Cold War—led to poor responses to violent incidents by peacekeepers, as well as the endangering of lives and the overall success of the mission [1].

In Rwanda, the negligence of the UN Security Council in reducing an already beleaguered UNAMIR force of just over 2,500 to a mere 270 in April 1994, with the genocide against the Tutsis well under way, bordered upon criminal [2].

Later, the UN sent another mission to the DRC, in 1999 to help stop a civil war that had already killed more than three million people.

At one point the Rwandan Army ordered the UN to withdraw from the east of the DRC, which it claimed was being used as a refuge by Hutus who had taken part in the 1994 genocide, despite a Chapter 7 mandate under the UN Charter to use force to protect the peace. Worse, when a UN panel reported that Rwanda and Uganda were prolonging the war to extract wealth from the region, the Security Council vacillated on publishing the report in full [3].

The UN relief operation in Rwanda has become one of the most unsuccessful missions of the organization in its history. One of the most important reasons for this was reluctance of the organization in the face of the most influential states of the world to intervene in the course of bloody events in Rwanda. In addition, in the late twentieth century. The UN was overburdened with peacekeeping tasks, which were realized by the efforts of peacekeepers in 16 operations to maintain peace. Some of them were obviously seen as a higher priority for permanent members of SC. For example, the number of peacekeepers on territory of the former Yugoslavia was more 28 thousand people., While during the crisis in Rwanda were deployed peacekeeping forces with less capacity five hundred. However, even with such a limited number of peacekeepers, the latter could have had a much greater impact on the course of events if the UN bureaucratic machine had not prevented them from doing so. They had a significant impact on the peace process events in Somalia. The failures of peacekeepers in this country, the failure of the peace enforcement operation forced the UN, and first of all, permanent members of Belarus to reconsider their attitude to participate in such missions.

However, the main problem in this situation there was an inappropriate choice of methods with the real state of affairs. Under conditions when the country is planned genocide is being carried out, it is not necessary to fight its organizers by introducing it peacekeeping operations. Unfortunately, only at the cost of thousands of lives was it possible to learn a lesson about the shortcomings not only of the peacekeeping system, but also forms and methods of UN activity in general

UN peacekeepers in South Sudan also failed to protect civilians following conflicts between government forces and former rebels in 2016. In the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo, similar disdain for the UN and its peacekeeping mission Monusco (which replaced the dysfunctional Monuc), has led to violent demonstrations and attacks by civilians in the past. Today in Mali, peacekeepers are under equipped and lack capacity and human

resources. They have often been referred to as tourists because they are associated with helicopters and 4x4 vehicles. Each country is responsible for charging its implicated troops but guilty verdicts might not be in a nation's best interests as that would taint its reputation in peacekeeping - although these track records are not officially considered when selecting which countries contribute to the missions. The Security Council, paralyzed by indecision and a reluctance to address resource gaps and personnel shortages, has exacerbated these problems [4].

The UN in 2015 marked the end of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with measured progress, although Africa started from a relatively low level compared with other regions of the world. Africa's GDP growth since 2001 has remained positive, with rates of at least 5% compared with the global average of 3% [5].

Child mortality (under the age of 5) has declined 55% against the target of two-thirds continent wide. The political empowerment of women in Africa increased by at least 15% from 2000 to 2014. The incidence of HIV in people aged 15-49 was halved in Southern, West and Central Africa, and reduced by 46% in East Africa, between 2001 and 2013 [6].

According to NYU economist William Easterly in 2009, the MDGs were always biased against Africa, as success or failure were determined by a set of arbitrary choices that made MDG achievement less likely in Africa than in other regions of the world. For example, the aim of "zero hunger", in the face of the intensification of climate change effects and food insecurity, proved a bridge too far [7].

The new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which contain 17 goals with 169 targets and 232 specific indicators, also put Africa on the back foot. While ambitious, financing is paltry and well below the required investment. Already, 20% of all African countries do not raise enough in revenues to essential state functions, while in Sub-Saharan Africa that rate rises to 33% [8].

This is compounded by a global \$2.5 trillion financing gap. Of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), goal number 1 – eradicating poverty – is the biggest challenge faced by the global body. The United Nations admits that the goal of poverty eradication isn't close to being met, and projections suggest that over 23% of Sub-Saharan Africa's projected 2030 population of 1.7 billion will be living in extreme poverty. In other words, of the 500 million people that will be living in extreme poverty by 2030, 479 million will be from sub-Saharan Africa. That means' the world is on track to miss not only the ambitious goal of complete poverty eradication,

but also the more modest target of reducing extreme poverty to less than 3% of the global population [9].

The continent's economic growth is driven by a highly educated and vibrant young population, with 60% of residents below 25 years of age. Africa also holds around 30% of the world's known mineral reserves – and yet it contributes only around 3% to global GDP. These resources include the world's largest reserves of natural gas, oil, gold, copper, precious minerals and diamonds. This unique combination of natural and human resources gives the continent a valuable leverage opportunity for mutually beneficial international business partnerships that would also offer a pathway out of poverty for its residents [9].

State responsibility.

The UN cannot be blamed for every calamity. States bear just as much responsibility. These include the colonial states of the past and the corrupt, mismanaged states which succeeded them. The UN has sounded warning after warning on a range of African humanitarian crises, with predictably poor responses from the international community. The UN began sounding the alarm in the Sahel region several years ago, asking for more than \$2 billion to address food insecurity in the region. Only 60% of pledged funds were received in 2013 [10].

Humanitarian aid shortfalls have plagued UN responses in the region for years. Currently, southern Africa faces an immediate climate changerelated emergency, with hunger and food insecurity in many countries at unprecedented levels. Southern Africa is in the throes of a climate emergency, with hunger levels in the region on a previously unseen scale. Drought, flooding, and economic shocks have left 45 million facing food shortages. Zimbabwe is already facing its worst hunger emergency in a decade, with 7.7 million people – half the population – acutely food insecure. But there is evidence the situation has «deteriorated significantly» over the past few months. About 20% of people in Zambia – a regional breadbasket – and Lesotho face acute food insecurity, as does 10% of the population of Namibia, WFP said. The crisis has been aggravated by surging food prices, large-scale livestock losses and rising joblessness. The 16 nations in the Southern African Development Community, a region identified as a climate «hotspot» by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, have experienced only one normal growing season in the past five years. Seasonal rains have been late in many countries and UN experts predict, with 60% certainty, that another bad harvest is due in the coming months. In 2019, the World Food Programme required almost \$500 million to address food insecurity in southern Africa, but received just \$205 million [11].

Africa-based organizations have come to play a more prominent role. These include the African Union (AU), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The African Union launched Agenda 2063, a «complementary» set of development goals for the continent. SADC has launched interventions in a number of countries including the DRC and Lesotho, with mixed results.

This is not to suggest that such initiatives are replacing the United Nations, rather providing a sense of continent-wide ownership of development and security challenges.

More importantly there are a broader range of development partners, including the recent trend of Chinese investment in infrastructure and resource extraction, without the added burdens of «strings» attached to financing.

India and Japan have opened up the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor, which is a competitor to China's Belt and Road Initiative, and is more harmonized with the UN's SDGs and Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

So to sum up, the next decade will be crucial in determining the UN's future in Africa. Competition has eroded some of its power and it no longer has a monopoly on technical expertise. To overcome its mistakes and atone for the past, institutional reforms are necessary, beginning with the Security Council, where Africa could have more sway. To save its long and fractious relationship with Africa, those reforms must start now.

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