

**When Peace Becomes War: The
Colonial Enterprise of the UN
Security Council**

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Created in 1945, the United Nations (UN) was the world's first commitment to global governance, the idea that the planet is formed of a community of states that best tackles international problems through cooperation and concerted action. More than 60 years later, the UN changed into a complex system comprising 193 member states and 44,000 employees dispatched over dozens of sub-organizations with overlapping duties (United Nations Careers). The central function of the UN is promoting its three pillars, peace and security, development, and human rights across its six main organs through the rule of law (United Nations). Though these principles are deemed universal and theoretically guarantee the protection of all peoples of the world, a close examination of the operations of the Security Council, the organization's ultimate decisional body, reveals a much darker picture. In fact, the capitalism, colonialism, and racism embedded in the United Nations' unequal power structure inherently shape the global governance agenda in the favor of Western nations to the expense of African ones. In the age of globalization, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) first and foremost secures its longstanding hegemony through the management of peacekeeping missions. As the African continent is the most impacted by climate change, civil war, and poverty, peacekeeping operations contradict the UN's claims of international solidarity in legitimizing the imperial domination of European sovereignty, ignoring the undeniable role colonial powers play in creating the very life-threatening situations it pretends to solve and perpetuating dishonest framings of global issues that have devastative impacts for local populations on the ground.

Explaining the Security Council's commitment to Peacekeeping

Although the UN Charter does not overtly mention it, peacekeeping missions have become the United Nations' largest task (Howard & Dayal, 2017). While action regarding some international matters requires the votes of all UN member states in the General Assembly, this is not the case for peacekeeping mandates that are exclusively authorized and closed by the Security Council's colonial powers that form the "P-3": France, the United States and Great Britain (74). The P-3 may launch peacekeeping operations under Chapter VI or Chapter VII of the Charter that respectively outline diplomatic strategies and allow coercive measures to stop aggression, like sanctions and the use of force (74). However, scholars argue that starting with their burst in the 1990s, peacekeeping operations starkly differ from their traditional motivations (Gutner, 2017). More than ever before, they are now authorized under Chapter VII - despite no proof that force increases stability -, may go without the consent of all parties and do not prioritize successful exit (Gutner, 2017 & Howard & Dayal, 2017). In contrast, the representatives of the P-3 favor the military defeat of armed rebels to supposedly protect civilians over peace enforcement (Howard & Dayal, 2017).

The truth is that the UNSC's authorization of peacekeeping missions is the single most important vehicle of 21st-century Western colonialism in Africa. Not only has no country from the Global South ever pushed Chapter VII mandates allowing the use of force, but their authorization has influenced political developments in this region more than anywhere else on the planet (97). Of all past peacekeeping missions

authorized by the P-3, 23 were in Africa, compared to only 7 in the Middle East, 8 in Europe, 8 in the Americas (of which half, interestingly, were in Haiti where US paternalism is a publicly acknowledged fact) and 9 in Asia and the Pacific (Howard & Dayal, 2017 & United Nations Peacekeeping). Similarly, of the current 14 missions worldwide, half are in Africa (United Nations Peacekeeping). Those who explain the outstanding presence of UN peace efforts in Africa by the rise in civil and political instability of the 1990s fail to mention how this burst in social unrest is a direct reaction to UN policies.

Indeed, in forcing African governments to implement the 1980s and 1990s neoliberal Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, two UN-affiliated organizations, the UN directly propelled civil unrest in Africa as the population manifested its discontentment with the resulting retreat of the welfare state and repressive authoritarianism (Abrahamsen, 2000). First, because voting power in the World Bank and the IMF is proportional to the amount of capital invested, rich countries control and hence design policies that fit their financial interests (12). With the US holding the largest share of votes, the G7 accounts for 40% of the voting power, compared to barely 4% for the entire Sub-Saharan Africa (12). Not surprisingly, then, the SAPs emphasized the privatization and liberalization of export-based economies that facilitated foreign investment and justified massive resource extraction for the “economic growth” preached by the UN (9). It thus only makes sense that as the neoliberal SAPs dramatically worsened quality of life in Africa, propelling inflation, poverty, unemployment, and inequality,

the UNSC’s narrative of “good governance” and “democratization” transformed peacekeeping mandates into militarized responses to what the P-3 perceived as “security threats” (9). In other words, the Western-induced accelerated incorporation of Africa into the unequal global capitalist economy intrinsically fueled domestic turmoil that in turn supported the new valuation of the use of force in UN peace enforcement strategies.

Other than their dismissal of how Western capitalism spurs conflict in Africa, contemporary peacekeeping mandates are nevertheless problematic for multiple reasons, starting with their inadequate understanding of sovereignty.

The International Dominance of Westphalian Sovereignty: Mapping the Origins

Peacekeeping mandates take place within the wider ideological concept on which the United Nations is based: sovereignty, and more importantly the equality of all sovereign states under the law. Under this principle, all states agree to respect the “sovereignty” of other states in refraining to intervene in other states’ internal affairs (Weiss, 2017). The state is the very building block of the United Nations, as according to the 1945 UN Charter, state leaders are solely responsible for implementing human rights within their borders in agreeing to enforce collective security, peaceful settlement of disputes, the non-use of force and non-intervention (Weiss, 2017 & Weil, 2020). This idea entails that through the UN, sovereignty can be violated when a state struggles to provide - or deliberately threatens - peace, security, human rights, and

development to its population, in which case the “international community” may intervene to promote peace arrangements. Human rights violations taking place in a given member state’s jurisdiction hence represent the unique international exception that allows the UN to condone a breach of state sovereignty.

Today, the most extreme expression of this principle in international affairs is best illustrated by the United Nations’ adoption of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) to support peacekeeping missions. The Responsibility to Protect was first articulated in the 2001 report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) funded by Canada for the UN (Trent & Schnurr, 2018). The report redefines sovereignty as no longer attached to the principle of non-intervention emphasized at the end of World War II and instead places human rights above state security (Getachew, 2019). In this sense, R2P prioritizes the idea that global governance actors must break a state’s sovereignty if this given state fails to protect its citizens from gross violations (Trent & Schnurr, 2018). Since 2001, states are exclusively responsible for protecting people from “genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity” and if they fail to do so, the “responsibility to protect falls on the international community” (Getachew, 2019, p.225). With the 21st-century introduction of R2P, states not only *can* but *should* violate sovereignty to protect human rights conventions, a clear change from the 1945 UN Charter that did not advocate for foreign intervention with such insistence. Now, the international community considers sending UN soldiers in violent domestic conflict a moral duty more than a last-resort option.

This logic behind the justification of peacekeeping operations is first problematic for it assumes sovereignty is universal, rather than an immediate consequence of violent European colonization that established an obvious hierarchy in the modern state system. Since the territorial state is presently the most important legal-political entity on the planet, one looking at any world map tends to consider the modern division of the globe into “countries” natural when in truth, it is inseparable from processes of white capitalist accumulation. In fact, with the goal of ending religious wars, Europeans signed the 1648 treaty of Westphalia that allowed a ruler to determine the religion of the territorial entity he governed – meaning a single ruler controlled individual nation-states with clear territorial borders (162). As Europeans increasingly expanded their empires over the 18th and 19th centuries, sending their “civilized” surplus populations to the Americas and enslaving African “savages” while extracting natural resources, they used sovereignty to annex the new land they conquered (Persaud, 2001). Whereas European states were able to freely conduct their own domestic affairs as “sovereign” peoples, this same sovereignty subjugated colored populations to colonizers who managed them as “natives” living in the novel geographical units they exploited (114). The sovereignty, therefore, permitted the legal transformation of independent lands and peoples into colonized subjects of European territorial extensions, and hence can only be understood as the key enabler of the present Western-controlled, highly racialized capitalist economy. It is four hundred years of colonial rape, theft, murder and coercion against non-Europeans rather than utopian “universality” that allowed Westphalian

sovereignty to dominate the entire planet.

This forced imposition of sovereignty thereafter translated into African nations' inferior levels of international political power. Indeed, the sovereignty white colonizers envisioned for weak European states was very different from the sovereignty they enforced in Africa. Because of their subjective feelings of racial superiority, they designed externally imposed structures of cultural and economic marginalization on Africans that simultaneously fueled European states' access to African natural resources (Grovogui, 2001). For example, Belgium and Switzerland owe their survival to today's P-3, France, Great Britain, and the US, who decided to include the weakest European states into continental structures of power for political and economic imperial motives (37). During the 1884-1885 Berlin Conference, Western powers gave King Leopold II of Belgium the private ownership of the Congo Free state, knowing that the Congo was 8 times bigger than Belgium and that Belgium lacked the political and military means to individually exert its influence in Europe and Africa (39). Similarly, Switzerland was seriously weakened by French occupation and completely lacked the central authority enjoyed by other European nations until the Great Powers integrated the Swiss Confederacy into the European state system in 1848, which allowed the state's acquirement of the Italian-speaking Ticino and the French-speaking regions of Valais, Neuchâtel and Geneva. This small, land-locked, and resource-poor country with no ethnic unity only has an influential role in the international economy because European colonizers - including King Leopold II - deposited the wealth generated by their African resource theft

and dispossession into its "neutral" banks protected by secrecy laws (39). It is no coincidence so many official United Nations treaties and declarations are ratified in Geneva. Overall, the very existence and expansion of Belgium and Switzerland was permitted by colonizers who believed their white populations were superior to non-Europeans and thus gave these states first-class Westphalian sovereignty for their own goals of capitalist accumulation. This means that over the 19th century, racist white men increasingly judged previously irrelevant European states worthy of important influence in global politics, and from then on gave them power that vastly contrasted with their physical size and natural wealth. Conversely, in order to organize capitalist extraction, these same Europeans divided Africa's abundant land and riches in delineating borders that founded new, powerless states starting in the 19th century. In brief, the racist pillars of today's international state system perpetuate fundamentally unequal sovereignties that place predominantly white states at the top of the world order and relegate African states to commodity exporters under Western tutelage.

Racist colonial capitalism, therefore, turned European states into world powers able to impose their own sovereignty as "universal". For it takes for granted that all peoples of the world agreed to be governed into Westphalian nation-states and since it does not recognize that North American and European countries benefit from wealth and power accumulated through cruelly extractive regimes, the Security Council dangerously expresses the imperial hegemony that Western states developed during the plundering of the African continent. The largest impact of the present-day supremacy of European

sovereignty is the lingering unequal distribution of political power between the world's nations that allows exclusively Western state leaders to launch so-called peacekeeping missions on the African continent.

Warlordism or Rule of Law? White Impunity and the Protection of Powerful States

The political character of Europeans' colonial violence triggered a systemic inequality that explains the contradiction by which the Global North has the power to use peace arguments to defend the violation of human rights in the South while the reverse is impossible. Indeed, the veto power of the P-3 on the creation of peacekeeping missions stems from the colonial essence of the United Nations itself. Although this fact is not acknowledged anywhere on the organization's website, the United Nations is a political body invented by colonizers during processes of European accumulation through African exploitation. When World War I ended, imperial powers crafted the League of Nations to preserve European colonial domination while peacefully passing down the possessions of defeated Germany to Great Britain, France, and Belgium (Schuerch, 2017). Instituted in 1920, the League was headed by its "Executive Council" that placed all African colonies under stable control and classified states according to their perceived level of Eurocentric advancement through its "mandate system" (36). For the first time, Africans were internationally governed by a definite political-legal body that oversaw the smooth running of colonial activities across the continent. After World War II, the Allies – France, Great Britain, China, the United States, and

the Soviet Union – became the permanent members of this decisional body that changed its name to "Security Council". Unequal center-periphery economic relationships between Europe and Africa were further entrenched in the post-war international Westphalian order as the United Nations Trusteeship Council "monitored the administration of colonial possessions" (37). Over the 1960s process of decolonization, Western metropolises simply labeled their sovereign colonies "independent" but did not end neither their imperial trade agreements with Africa nor their supremacy in the global state hierarchy (38). Thus, colonial violence against Africans for European capitalist development not only enabled the invention of the United Nations as a whole, but more importantly, also gave Western states absolute control over theoretically "sovereign" African nations. The strongest legacy of this colonialism is that the United States, France, and Great Britain, through the P-3, continue to exert political domination over Africans as they launch peacekeeping missions on their own terms, whereas African leaders lack the legitimate international power necessary to do the same.

The end result is a clear two-fold paradox that constantly reinforces and values whiteness as a site of power: the predominantly white countries sitting on the Security Council ignore domestic human rights violations against their populations on the one hand and erase their responsibility in fostering serious crimes against humanity abroad on the other. Indeed, the monopoly of the P-3 on what "legitimate" peacekeeping missions entail results in selective perceptions of security threats that protect Western governments from much-needed scrutiny (Howard & Dayal, 2017). In both cases, crimes

committed by whites go unnoticed, exposing the Security Council's racist devaluation of crimes against black and brown bodies.

In effect, the Security Council's complete authority on the UN management of peacekeeping operations results in the current international indifference regarding grave crimes committed by Western elites at home. Indeed, precisely because they have the exclusive power to decide when and where peacekeeping missions take place worldwide, the same white state leaders who champion human rights in Africa deliberately bring attention away from the violations their own governments commit. The Security Council has tellingly not authorized a single mission backed by the Responsibility to Protect in the West despite undeniable proof of massive state-sanctioned crime. For instance, the government of Canada, who ironically funded the report leading to the international endorsement of Responsibility to Protect, remains unpunished after committing a carefully designed genocide against Indigenous peoples, a crime supposed to trigger international action according to its own R2P report (Cecco, 2019 & Coletta, 2018). Doubts about the Security Council's intentional disregard of non-white lives is invalidated by the fact that even a UN expert's report denouncing "Third World conditions" in indigenous communities, including no access to drinkable water and heating systems, is apparently not sufficient to stop Canadian human rights violations (UN News, 2011). In the same way, the number of black felons alarmingly increased by 90% from 2006 to 2016 while Indigenous people account for 5% of the Canadian population and yet 27% of all prisoners, indicating that the Canadian state violates UN legal

conventions against racism (Morgan, 2018 & Coletta, 2018). The Security Council simply chooses to ignore state-sanctioned violence ordered by Western state leaders like Canada's. Additionally, France is one of many European countries using police forces to kill, harass and brutalize innocent black people, with official investigators going as far as calling the police rape of a young boy an "accident" despite Human Rights Watch exposing French institutional racism (Elizalde, 2017 & France 24, 2020). Although race-based violence of this sort is not part of R2P's definition, it is still relevant to note that the UNSC never launches peacekeeping missions in the West or brings international attention to such ethnic-based crimes committed by the white majority against non-white minorities. Clearly, the people the UN wishes to prosecute are never white and always live outside the West, while white state leaders benefit from legal impunity its Security Council guarantees.

Second, the UNSC's explanation of conflict as the individual presidents' violation of humanitarian principles in the UN Charter overlooks the ever-present connections between the Western-dominated capitalist economy and African domestic affairs that incite state collapse in Africa. Falsely portraying colonial powers as innocent, it portrays African rulers as deficient negroes inherently opposed to peace and order. In truth, since so-called independence, Western nations destabilize nationalist governments unwilling to accommodate their capitalist interests and establish corrupt ones headed by trained military officers (Eleazu, 1973). The point is not that African political leaders are totally innocent, but rather that they are puppets within greater schemes of capitalist colonialism. Paradoxically, those who

defend their populations and defy foreign colonial hegemony in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter end up dead or exiled. For instance, French troops waged a counterinsurgency war in Cameroon (1957-70) to crush the pro-independence Union of Cameroonian Peoples (UPC) founded by Felix Moumié, Ruben Um Nyobé and Ernest Ouandié, killing approximately 300,000 (Death in Geneva: The poisoning of Félix Moumié, 2010). France crushed protesters in the highlands, burning villages, raping children, and women in front of their husbands and local chiefs (2010). French soldiers decapitated Um Nyobé and spread his body parts across the country, poisoned Moumié in Switzerland – a “neutral” country – and shot Ouandié (2010). The dictator, Ahmadou Ahidjo, became president while the colonial administrator, Maurice Delauney, charged of seeing through the entire genocide, finished his career as mayor of Cannes where he lived in his villa until natural death (2010). Furthermore, Britain, the U.S., France and Belgium planned the murder of democratically elected Patrice Lumumba who had just become the president of the resource-rich Democratic Congo Republic (Grovogui, 2002). As a substitute, they supported despotic French-trained military officer Mobutu Sese Seko who terrorized the Congolese for decades; the world’s largest UN peace mission with legal use of force today, MONUSCO, is tellingly in the DRC (333). The Security Council also authorized a peacekeeping mission during the civil war in Sierra Leone despite the fact the conflict mostly served Western diamond accumulation; even more startling is that KLM, the Dutch airline company, flew into Freetown half-empty throughout much of the civil war to bring back the blood diamonds to Europe (335). Another

example is when France sold weapons to dangerous rebels and protected genocide fugitives in Rwanda to ensure continued coffee export (Kamola, 2007). Those human rights violations are mere illustrations of the hundreds of other unspeakable abuses committed by Western states since African so-called independence. No tribunals were established to investigate the war crimes committed by any of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council or non-permanent member states of the Global North. What is clear is that in Africa, North America, and Europe, the P-3 discourages and even eliminates genuine peace and justice efforts that challenge the colonial impunity of white citizens and governments.

But perhaps more treacherous than anything else, the P-3 veto power on peacekeeping mandates also has a broader implication: to obscure their imperial interests, Western state elites publicize colonial framings of global issues that reproduce racist white saviorism and exacerbate the imperial violation of the sovereignty of countries of the South. Put differently, France, the United States and Great Britain target ignorant audiences who come to support their countries’ abuses of UN peacekeeping forces because they believe mediatic lies about their “moral duty” to “protect” the “Third-World” poor. This trend was clearly exacerbated by the 2001 introduction of the Responsibility to Protect that shaped human rights violations in purely apolitical terms of urgency and decried given forms of violence without calling attention to the root causes of this violence (Cliffe & Mamdani, 2009). In fact, the R2P principle has not been used anywhere in the North and once again, only the Security Council can approve international action following the application of R2P (Getachew, 2019).

The Security Council ignored the criteria mentioned in the report that warned against abuses of R2P for illegitimate foreign intervention, allowing colonial powers to secure imperial interests in claiming to protect “vulnerable populations” in non-Western countries (Trent & Schnurr, 2018, p.114). For instance, the US and the UK used R2P in 2003 as a post-hoc justification for military intervention in Iraq after their original claims of “weapons of mass destruction” (114). The Security Council also authorized a mission in Sudan in 2005, appealing to the conscience of Westerners with R2P; NGOs and the International Criminal Court shamed President Al-Bashir for encouraging violence between “Arabs” and “Africans”, not once mentioning that such racialization of identities originated from British colonization (Mamdani, 2009, p.85). Uneducated white Westerners fell for these lies and strongly supported Western military presence in Iraq and Sudan. The Security Council’s hegemony over what qualifies as a “Responsibility to Protect” results in racist, ahistorical and apolitical framings of human rights abuses that distort their root causes and exaggerates the legal violations of the UN’s principle of sovereignty.

It cannot be stressed enough that this discursive dominance transforms incomplete explanations of violence into real, traumatic experiences for people on the ground. For example, international peace and democracy efforts against sexual assault themselves degraded sexual violence in the DRC (Autesserre, 2012). The UNSC wrongly framed illegal exploitation of minerals rather than foreign corporations’ legal extraction of precious metals as the primary cause for rape and proposed reconstructing state authority rather than economic development, community

reconciliation and fighting corruption as the solution (204). Because of the exclusive focus on sexual assault and the development of state reconstruction programs, like the building of roads and investment in the army, MONUSCO actually multiplied sexual violence in facilitating the militias’ movement between mines and made combatants realize the value of rape as an effective bargaining tool (205). Ironically, the so-called feminists who explained rape as the patriarchal violations of the female body in the West irresponsibly reduced it to an easily solved security threat in Africa (Meger, 2016). The consequences are deadly rape for the Congolese population, including the destruction of 4-year-old girls’ rectums and vaginas (Dalton, 2018). Maybe the racist white savior “feminists” at the forefront of this fetishization of violence in the Congo should tell these children how sorry they are, how they did not mean it, how they did not *know* their ignorance coupled with their colonial power would exacerbate the atrocious violence they faced to unimaginable levels. It is too late. The same is true for the thousands of innocents who lost their livelihoods and loved ones following the UN-backed invasions of Somalia and Sudan, to name a few. The mortifying impacts of colonial Western discursive framing of conflicts in Africa cannot be reversed. The racist explanations of violence Africans face hence allow war crimes to continue as the denunciation of crime is always one-sided.

Exploring the Relevance and Effectiveness of Peacekeeping in the African Context

The international community spends so much time discussing the internal details

of peacekeeping missions that the relevance of these very mandates remains unchallenged and free of critical assessment in global governance. In reality, from their ideological underpinnings to their tangible local repercussions on so-called vulnerable populations, no evidence shows that UN peacekeeping mandates actually foster stability in contemporary Africa.

First, the theoretical foundations of UN peacekeeping are at best ineffective and at worse detrimental to the well-being of African nations. The purpose of peacekeeping is to enforce peace agreements that are believed to enhance long-term peace (Howard & Dayal, 2017). This idea of cooperation is founded on Eurocentric constructivist International Relations theory that reduces aggression to threats of war between states, stipulates that states must act as “all against one” to prevent further aggression in the international environment and asserts “democratic peace” enhances stability (Kupchan, 1995).

In truth, constructivist peace theory does not apply to Africa and has never been empirically proven anywhere outside Europe (Zvogbo & Loken, 2020). On the contrary, such a conception of political peace is entirely invalid for it sharply clashes with patterns of African state formation. Unlike in Europe where there are more people than land, Africa has always had more land than people (Herbst, 2014). Before colonization, this sheer abundance of land made it easier for dissatisfied subjects to simply escape rulers rather than fight them, meaning heads of state could not exert their power through territorial control. The peasants’ easy exit caused African states to have very porous borders with leaders focusing on controlling the central

capital, the exact opposite of European rulers who heavily securitized external borders due to land scarcity (95). Furthermore, there was little incentive to invest in small pieces of territory because African farmers almost completely depended on rain-fed agriculture (95). Therefore, because land control was generally not contested in precolonial Africa, rights of sovereignty were distinct from royal authority (94). Control over land did not equate control over people as it did in Europe. Since rulers of the people were not necessarily the same as the guardians of the land, the land could belong to one person and its occupants to another (97). This is why some African rulers signed coercive treaties that transformed their land into European protectorates; they thought their people pledged allegiance to European rulers while they remained in control of the land. Unfortunately, the brutality of European land occupation indicated otherwise. All these factors combined explain why wars were - and still are - mostly intra-state in Africa, as heads of state fought to gain control over people more than territory and rarely defended their borders with militaries. In parallel, the continued authorizations of UN peacekeeping forces for intra-state rather than inter-state wars in Africa violate UN Charter Article 2 that outlines non-intervention in matters within a state’s domestic jurisdiction (Gutner, 2017). Indeed, since they operate within rather than outside the state, the wars’ actors, like rebel groups and political parties, have never agreed to the principle of collective security that justifies UN peacekeeping mandates (Gutner, 2017). Unlike their rulers, they never consented to the Charter’s interventionist policy regarding armed conflict. Overall, UN peace efforts are doomed to fail as they reinforce European notions of peace

incompatible with the African context and moreover attempt to end inter-state conflicts that do not even exist.

The constructivist democratic peace theory behind UN peacekeeping missions that supposedly ensures peace is moreover illogical for another reason: it does not include Western colonial and imperial wars (Henderson, 2008). Again, the United Nations shows its racist glorification of white lives as its understanding of political peace focuses on European cases affecting European citizens only. Apparently, wars that kill millions of innocent non-white people do not count. Furthermore, this Eurocentric democratic peace theory undermines peace in Africa because by assuming wars' inter-state nature, it first solidifies rather than challenges colonial borders that spurred ethnic rivalries and second allows neopatrimonial leaders to personify state power as their internal strategies for control go unnoticed (33).

In parallel, peacekeeping missions reformulate racist narratives that legitimize colonial forms of governance and imply Africans must imitate Western political processes to progress. In fact, global governance actors claim peacekeeping promotes viable transitions to democracy in helping African governments develop multi-party politics, transparent elections and accountability checks (Abrahamson, 2000). This argument automatically devalues pre-colonial political systems that better respond to the aspirations and needs of the poor, praising the liberal democracies prevalent in the North instead (13). Such ignorant rejections of local cultures have disastrous effects. For instance, the Somalian interpretation of Islam led to pragmatic and not literal readings of the Quran that ultimately overcame clan identity and made religious extremism unlikely

(Verhoeven, 2009). Islamic Courts were hence established in the 1990s, restoring security and order in over half of Somalia. A communal alliance developed between businessmen who financed the Courts and clan leaders who used traditional authority to disarm militias, effectively bringing justice to the population and reducing warlords' influence (415). The US demonization of the Courts as "neo-Taliban" propelled the militarized UNITAF and UNOSOM II peacekeeping missions, reviving war as insurgents resisted this unwanted intervention and rallied around anti-Western sentiment (420). The UN's repudiation of Islamic governance and approval of Western "freedom" cost the lives of thousands of civilians to no avail. Moreover, it is important to remember that the "modern" civil institutions like the army, police forces, civil services, legislative assemblies, educational systems, political parties, and formal constitutions Western countries now judge vital to democratic statehood were ironically used by their own state leaders to abuse African populations during colonization (Eleazu, 1973 & Weldesellasi, 2017). Indeed, the same legal principles that protected European citizens simultaneously imposed harsh social control and eliminated political resistance in Africa; for instance, jails and court prosecutions did not exist prior to colonization (253). Peacekeeping missions consequently fortify violent European state apparatus that worsens conflict and defend cruel remnants of colonial administration.

In addition, thinking that sending seemingly good-intentioned human beings - who usually do not speak the mother tongues of the affected populations they must protect - in the middle of civil wars inevitably brings peace is as naïve as it is inaccurate. Even

at their most practical level, peacekeeping missions fail to reach their initial goals because they overlook that UN principles of “democracy” are implemented by soldiers who pursue personal desires and nothing else. Being a UN peacekeeper is a job, and not a divine call for justice as international actors often paint it to be. People who decide to become peacekeepers are individuals wishing to be paid, meaning they are not immune to crime and perversion. Hundreds of reports around the world prove the grave sexual misconduct of UN peacekeepers, including soldiers, civilians, private contractors, aid workers and others associated with peace operations (Westendorf, 2020). Peacekeepers from France, Chad and the Equatorial Guinea rape and sexually exploit children and women especially vulnerable in war situations, with no consequence; abuses have been reported all over the world in countries like the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Haiti, Liberia, and Mali (2020). Other reports show that soldiers frustrated by delayed payrolls raped local prostitutes, while French peacekeepers forced girls in displaced refugee camps to have intercourse with dogs (Morene, 2017). Even within its own forces, the UNSC refuses to take seriously the violence committed against the racialized, just like it ignores violations against non-whites in Western countries. The reaction of Paula Donovan, co-director of AIDS Free World, when white judges dropped charges against French peacekeepers clearly illustrates the UN colonial disregard of black bodies that protects rapists: “This is a travesty. If African soldiers had sexually abused little boys in Paris, the investigation would not be closed until every perpetrator was behind bars” (2017). Obviously, had African black men raped blue-eyed blonde boys anywhere on the

planet, the international media and community would automatically condemn the rapists until legal action would ensure their punishment. The United Nations does not protect black children this way because its racialized nature reduces them to negroes deserving to be recipients of the most outrageous forms of violence. When the world’s biggest international organization committed to justice and equality condones and refuses to establish measures to end sexual crimes against innocent women, men, and children, it should hold no credibility in the international arena, especially since such crimes are ignored on the basis of race. Thus, on top of fostering inappropriate conceptions of peace and destructive depictions of human rights violations, peacekeeping missions encourage the scandalous protection of criminals on the ground.

Whose Peacekeeping?

The United Nations discusses inter-state sovereign relations as if they held the same amount of influence in the modern state system, a colonial lie that hides the wide power disparity between African and European nations and that further secures death-making institutions at both global and local levels. In 2021, states are not equal and therefore cannot exercise their right to intervene in other states’ affairs on a fair playing field. In reality, the UN Security Council’s sanction of Westphalian sovereignty legitimizes a system of global governance that is systematically hypocritical and opposed to social equality or change in proposing oversimplistic military interventions for complex issues embedded in the racial and colonial foundations of today’s international economy and politics.

State leaders must agree upon redistributive methods of justice working to end African states' weak sovereignty that renders their economies peripheral and accessible to North American and European colonial regulators. It is only in doing so that hopes of better futures ensuring more economically, socially, and politically equitable realities for all can be nurtured. In the same way that it legitimized counterinsurgency wars against African opponents less than a hundred years ago, the UNSC's conventional explanations of peace efforts, war and poverty maintain dichotomies that work against efforts to address deeper causes of global inequality and violence. Ignoring the exclusive domination of Western discourse and its role in the legitimization of unfair transfers of wealth and power transforms technically peaceful operations into dangerous military interventions. As predominantly white nations enriched by capitalist colonialism decide which human rights violations deserve peacekeeping missions and which ones do not, public inaction regarding major illegal abuses of non-white populations both in the West and in Africa threatens pressing needs to establish peaceful arrangements for good.

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