Peace and Security Dynamics as A Result of Conflict Intervention by United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Robert Koome Kimathi[1]
Pontian Godfrey Okoth[2]
Frank Khachina Matanga[3]

[1]rkkoome@yahoo.com
[2]pokoth@mmust.ac.ke
[3]fmatanga@mmust.ac.ke

[1,2,3]Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The study examines chronology and nature of external interventions, including peacekeeping missions, diplomatic initiatives, and economic engagement. By assessing both positive and negative consequences, the study explored how the conflict intervention has shaped the political landscape, security dynamics, and socio-economic conditions in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Studies on or and around United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo with respect to conflict, peace and security, portray shortcomings bordering on ineffectiveness. This presents a serious paradox and a question on conflict intervention by MONUSCO's peace and security processes. The study objective was to interrogate peace and security dynamics in the DRC as a result of the conflict intervention by MONUSCO. The study explored Liberal Theory, Power Theory and Theory of Functionalism from which a conceptual model was drawn. The study was conducted in Eastern DRC. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The target population was 49,871 with a unit of analysis of 21,105 civilians comprising 5052 refugees, 4053 internally displaced persons and 12,000 local traders, 16,161 MONUSCO staff, 7,895 from major none governmental organizations (NGOs), and 4,710 from the political class, the rebel groups, and immigration. The study adopted simple random stratified sampling, snowballing and purposive sampling strategies. The sample size was 384. The primary and secondary data were collected using questionnaires, focus group discussions, observation guides, and key informant interviews. Content analysis was done for all qualitative data; statistical data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings of the study indicate that, MONUSCO is occupational and not an interventional force and that the government forces could handle the conflict in the DRC without MONUSCO. MONUSCO   is ineffective due to the long chain of command within the UN security system and that the International community wants MONUSCO to exit DRC. The study concludes that MONUSCO should exit the DRC in order to achieve peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). That MONUSCO'S presence in the DRC is both occupational and inconsequential. Therefore, MONUSCO has failed to intervene effectively in DRC and restore peace and security to a large extent. The study recommends that   MONUSCO's Operational Capacity be boosted to enhance its mandate to include more robust peace enforcement measures, including disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs for ex-combatants.

Keywords: *Conflict Dynamics, Conflict Intervention, Structures*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The international conflict intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo, known as the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or its French designation, Mission de l'Organization des Nations Unies pour la Stabilization en République Démocratique du Congo (MONUSCO), represents a UN peacekeeping force established by the UN Security Council through resolutions 1279 (1999) and 1291 (2000).

Despite the interventions by MONUSCO from July 2010 to-date and later East Africa Community Regional Force (EACRF) from November 2022 to December 2023, the conflict in eastern DRC has continued to spike up (Ntanyoma, 2021). This resuscitation of the conflict has been a great concern not only to DRC but also to the neighbouring states because of conflict spillover. However, due to the absence of DRC government security forces protection to the civilians, communities have taken the initiative of defending themselves. According to Okoth *et al.*, (2018) on peace, security, and development in 21st century Africa, there is a shift from state safety to individual and communities' safety.

Many of East African zones of conflict and instability are sites of long-running crises; some of its civil wars and insurgencies have lasted decades (Mulata, 2017). The initial causes of the wars in East Africa are thus not always the same as the factors that perpetuate them. On the other hand, the porous borders across East Africa countries are

unmarked and usually contested. When incidents occur or valuable resources are discovered in these areas, tensions spike between neighbouring states, complicating peace-building efforts.

The conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo has become a matter of grave concern to the regional states with the re-emergence of M23 rebels in late 2021. M23 off-shot from the National Congress for the Defence of the People (NCDP) is popular in its French acronym CNDP. This was a rebel group which fought against the government of DRC from 2006 to 2009. M23's main claim is that the Congolese Tutsi and other ethnic communities in North and South Kivu provinces are discriminated against by the DRC Government considering them as "Rwandophones" since they are Rwandese by origin (Ntanyoma, 2021).

Apart from individual and bilateral state conflict interventions in DRC, instances of regional interventionism have been evident, although it can be contended that they might reflect state security interests or parochial economic interests. The East Africa Community Regional Force (EACRF) though short lived in the DRC, was constituted in the year 2022 and deployed in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to combat the M23 rebels (Aljazeera, 2022). The regional force was deployed to have an initial timeframe of six months, renewable, and was to combat, work on civilian programmes such as setting up social amenities and hold peace meetings with villagers in a new strategy meant to endear locals to the authorities (Holland, 2022).

With the conflict intervention through MONUSCO, it was a common assumption that the UN peacekeeping mission was a panacea to the DRC problems more so, as an approach to conflict management. Illunga (2019) notes that the key elements and turning points in the change of the mission mandate were always motivated by the negative impact of political actions and/or behavior of armed groups on the population, rather than a perspective of incremental sustainable change based on successful functioning. Over time, this type of strategic response has placed MONUSCO in a reactive rather than proactive position and made it difficult to establish a sustainable framework for peace, let alone to contemplate an exit strategy (Illunga, 2019). In principle, such an international arrangement should promote growth and development within individual member states as it strengthens integration processes, enhances intergovernmental cooperation creating a global identity in the comity of nations. This is said to be true of underdeveloped and dysfunctional counties as further contended by Cickecka (2018).

Today's conflicts in the country are, to a large extent, a reincarnation of those of the past, ideological antagonism, constitutional orientation crisis, dispute control of natural resources and ethnic dimensions of the conflict. This indicates that the structural causes of the conflicts have not been adequately addressed. The DRC is the third largest country in Africa, with vast natural resources around 1,100 minerals and precious metals with an estimate of 77 million inhabitants, less than 40% live in urban areas (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2023). According to Gebrekidan, DRC is an example of how colonial experience had a great negative impact (Cook and Lounsbery, 2020). Even after independence in 1960, positive peace and prosperity was elusive due to internal divisions (Cook and Lounsbery, 2020). Despite a number of interventions including MONUSCO, the conflict in DRC, being the most violent after WWII, has caused loss of millions of lives and is among those conflicts that are in serious need to get resolved. Since mainstream mechanisms to conflict resolution have been unsuccessful so far in finding a lasting solution to the DRC problem, there is need to find some alternative mechanisms and regionalism that can serve as a good solution to the problem. Although few studies have been found to recommend this approach for establishment of peace in Africa, a thorough analysis of a potential regional mechanism in case of African conflicts has not been conducted so far. Furthermore, the studies on regionalism are often found to focus on the role of regional organizations and states actors operating within that region (Tull, 2019).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

With the conflict intervention through MONUSCO, it was a common assumption that the UN peacekeeping mission was a panacea to the DRC problems more so, as an approach to conflict management. The initial soft mandate of MONUSCO of observation quickly changed to offensive peacekeeping mission, prioritizing the protection of civilians and creating political space for dialogue on stability and institutional building. Illunga (2019) notes that the key elements and turning points in the change of the mission mandate were always motivated by the negative impact of political actions and/or behavior of armed groups on the population, rather than a perspective of incremental sustainable change based on successful functioning. Over time, this type of strategic response has placed MONUSCO in a reactive rather than proactive position and made it difficult to establish a sustainable framework for peace, let alone to contemplate an exit strategy (Illunga, 2019).

Today's conflicts in the country are, to a large extent, a reincarnation of those of the past, ideological antagonism, constitutional orientation crisis, dispute control of natural resources and ethnic dimensions of the conflict (Cook and Lounsbery, 2020). This indicates that the structural causes of the conflicts have not been adequately addressed. Despite a number of interventions including MONUSCO, the conflict in DRC, being the most violent after WWII, has caused loss of millions of lives and is among those conflicts that are in serious need to get resolved. Since mainstream mechanisms to conflict resolution have been unsuccessful so far in finding a lasting solution to the DRC

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1.2 Research Objective

The objective of the study was to examine the impact of conflict intervention by the United Nations Stabilization Mission on the peace and security processes in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review
2.1.1 Liberal Peace Theory

The study was underpinned by Immanuel Kant's liberalism peace theory, which was first proposed in the 18th century. The theory explains that the peace of liberalism is inextricably linked to the stability of democracies, which is not well understood from a military standpoint (Tim, 2005). Kant liberal peace theory provides a foundation for comprehending and establishing long-term peace and security that is based on democratic values. Interdependence encourages mutual political contacts in this situation, which creates favourable conditions for economic development as a result of collaboration between people, communities, and governments.

This idea helped determine whether DRC's enormous security challenges are indicative of the stabilization path. It should be noted that the region has adopted East Africa Community (EAC) and Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) as architectures to peace and security. There are strong interdependences between economic progress and political ideologies, according to liberalism's notion. Respondent political ideologues encourage economic development in this setting, while economic resources define political ideology. Peace is built and sustained as a result of such interdependences, necessitating research into the extent to which political and democratic institutions are firmly linked to conflict, limiting East Africa Community's economic progress (Call, 2012).

2.1.2 Power Theory

Morgenthau, (1954) argued that power is a central factor in international relations and that states act primarily to pursue their national interests (McCourt, 2020). This is a theoretical framework used in the study of conflicts that examines how the distribution and exercise of power among various actors, such as governments, rebel groups, international organizations, and neighbouring states, impact the origins, development, and outcomes of conflicts. Power theory explores how disparities in political, economic, and military power can contribute to the escalation or resolution of conflicts and how power struggles can shape the behaviour of parties involved in a conflict.

The conflict intervention in the DRC by the UN can be analyzed through the lens of power theory, particularly in the context of realist and structural realist perspectives. Realism emphasizes the central role of power and self-interest in international relations. The theory suggests that power imbalances among states can be a source of conflict. In the case of the DRC, the conflict is characterized by a complex web of domestic and international factors (McCourt, 2020). The DRC is rich in natural resources, including minerals, which are of significant economic and strategic value. Various regional and international actors, including neighboring states and multinational corporations, have interests in controlling or exploiting these resources. The UN intervened in the DRC conflict to restore stability and protect civilians. However, the effectiveness of MONUSCO has been influenced by the power dynamics at play. While the UN wields considerable soft power and legitimacy in the international system, it lacks a standing military force of its own. This perspective highlights the complex interplay of power dynamics, self-interest, and international politics that shape the dynamics of conflict intervention and peacekeeping efforts in the DRC.

2.1.3 The Theory of Functionalism

Functionalist theory argues that international organizations arise to address common challenges that individual states cannot manage alone. MONUSCO's deployment in the DRC exemplifies this by providing security, humanitarian aid, and support for governance in a country grappling with persistent conflict and instability. According to Bellamy and Williams (2015), MONUSCO serves a critical function by acting as a stabilizing force in a fragile state environment, thereby preventing the escalation of conflict that could have broader regional implications.

Functionalism suggests that international organizations facilitate cooperation among states to solve transnational problems. In the context of the DRC, MONUSCO plays a crucial role in coordinating international efforts to manage the conflict and its spill over effects on neighbouring countries. As noted by Weiss and Daws (2018), MONUSCO's mandate includes working with regional actors and organizations to address cross-border issues such as armed groups, refugee flows, and illicit trade, reflecting the functionalist idea that international cooperation is essential for peace and stability.

Functionalism posits that international organizations help create and promote norms that reduce conflict and maintain order. MONUSCO's role in promoting international norms, such as human rights, democratic governance, and the rule of law, aligns with the functionalist perspective that the UN and its missions are instruments for diffusing these norms globally. Barnett and Weiss (2008) argue that peacekeeping missions are essential in embedding international norms and standards within local practices, thereby fostering a predictable and peaceful international environment.

2.2 Empirical Review

Wasike and Odhiambo (2016) discuss the role of theories in guiding the thrust of academic studies. They emphasize the importance of theories in offering compelling and incisive causal explanations with calculated precision. They buttress their argument by quoting Smith (1986) who asserts that theories play the role of predicting, prescribing and evaluating socio-political phenomena hence they cannot be ignored.

2.2.1 Dynamics of Conflict Intervention by International and Regional Blocs

On July 1, 2010, the UN Security Council (UNSC) gave the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) a new mandate. It said that MONUSCO could use any means necessary to carry out its duties, which included protecting civilians, humanitarian workers, and human rights activists who were in immediate danger of being hurt and helping the DRC government with its efforts to stabilize the country and keep the peace. However, with the current spike of violence in the DRC it demonstrates unfulfilled deep rooted grievances of people that haven't been addressed through MONUSCO structures.

According to Cook and Lounsbery (2020), exploring conflict dynamics entail a detailed study of the evolving nature of violence especially for intrastate conflicts. This should focus governments capability and capacity vis-à-vis the rebel groups involved in the conflict as for the case in the DRC. It also requires focusing on the relationships of various categories of rebel groups either local or foreign, their interests and end goals. National interests of states and interests of the states are matters that have characterized conflict intervention by international and regionals blocs. Operationalized, conflict dynamics entail power imbalances both within the conflict zones and between the powers constituting the international and regional forces intervening in a conflict, identity issues, emotions, and communication breakdowns (Kumar, 2023).

Unlike studies which have focused on the conflict dynamics, this study focused on the dynamics of conflict intervention due to the prevailing circumstances with respect to the MONUSCO intervention in the DRC, and with a view to understanding the presumed situation and the empirical situation of conflict and the changing approaches towards a successful conflict intervention (Cook and Lounsbery, 2020). The regional rivalry among sub-Saharan countries and the lack of a dominant economic and military force impede successful conflict involvement in Africa. For instance, the trust deficit between the DRC and some of its neighbours is at the heart of the current crisis. Some observers note that the trigger for escalating tensions between Rwanda and the DRC was the latter's rapprochement with Uganda and Burundi to fight their respective rebel enemies inside the DRC (Handy, 2023). Moreover, the DRC has been and continues to be used as a staging ground by rebel movements opposed to the regimes in Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi and Sudan (Prunier, 2004). These neighbouring countries therefore have a direct interest in ending the conflicts in the DRC for their own internal stability. Experience indicates that the dominant positions of South Africa and Nigeria were crucial for the successful implementation of sub-regional efforts aimed at maintaining peace and security in SADC and ECOWAS. IGASOM's exclusion of what it termed front-line states, including Kenya and Ethiopia in Somalia, was a decision rooted in apprehension and distrust (Abass, 2010).

III. METHODOLOGY

The study used both a descriptive survey and an evaluative research design. The data collected was qualitative. Besides, descriptive survey design focuses on ways of formulating the objectives of data collection, data collection instruments, data analysis, and proper reporting of the findings (Anjalo, 2018; Okoth, 2022; Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

The area of study is in the Eastern DR Congo and borders the republics of South Sudan to the North East, Uganda to the East, Rwanda and Burundi to the South East, Tanzania to the South South East and Zambia to the South. It is characterized by plains, valleys and high grounds with thick tropical rain forest and water masses. In this region, changes in elevation bring marked changes in vegetation, which ranges from montane savanna to heavy montane forest. The Rwenzori Mountains, lakes Albert and Edward are prominent physical features shared between DRC and Uganda.. Lake Kivu is shared by Rwanda and DRC while Lake Tanganyika is shared by DRC and Tanzania. The Sabyinyo mountains is shared between DR Congo, Rwanda and Uganda and it is the headquarters of M23 rebels. Virunga National Park is Africa's most biodiverse protected area, home to over one thousand species of mammal,

bird, reptile, and amphibian as well as 1/3 of the world's endangered mountain gorillas. Mount Nyiragongo is a volcanic mountain located in Virunga national park and its last eruption was reported in May 2021. The Eastern region of DR Congo is characterized by tropical high rainfall, high humidity and with average daily temperatures of about 25 degrees. The Eastern DR Congo is endowed with fertile volcanic soil and exceptional natural resources, including minerals such as cobalt, copper, gold, coal, and iron-ore deposits, bauxite, offshore deposits of petroleum, diamonds, lithium, tin, tantalum, tungsten etc. The major human activity is subsistence farming and cattle rearing, however, a large number of people are traders and miners.
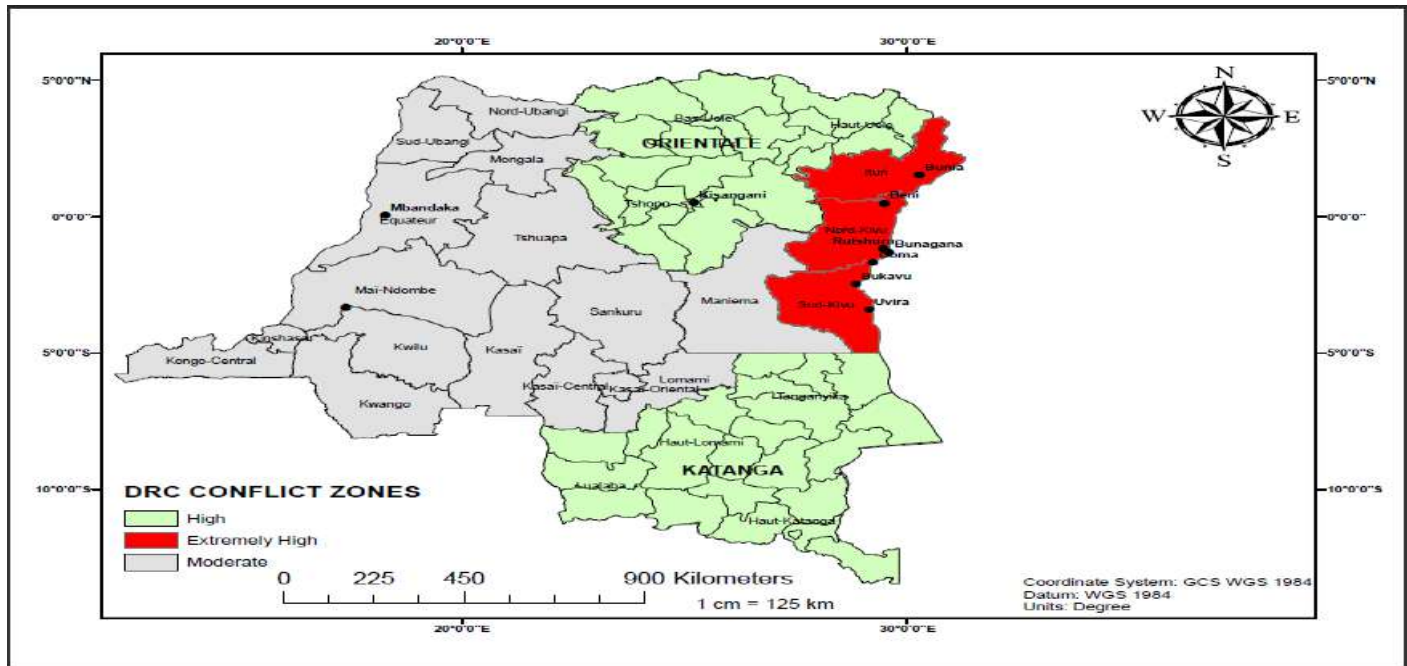

Figure 1
Map of DRC showing conflict zones
Source: *GIS Expert*, 2023

The target population for the study was 49,871 individuals, with the unit of analysis comprising 21,105 civilians, including 5,052 refugees, 4,053 internally displaced persons, and 12,000 local traders. Additionally, the population included 16,161 MONUSCO personnel, 7,895 representatives from major non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and 4,710 members from the political class, rebel groups, and immigration. The study utilized a combination of sampling strategies: stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation, snowball sampling to reach hard-to-access populations, and purposive sampling to target key informants. The sample size for the study was determined to be 384 respondents.

Data collection instruments include interviews, questionnaires, documentary analysis, focus group discussion and observation.

Analysis was done using content analysis where quantitative measures of the frequency of appearance of particular elements in the text are taken: qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings as charged by Okoth (2022).

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 MONUSCO is Perceived as Occupational and not Interventional Force

The study sought to evaluate whether MONUSCO is an occupational force or interventional force. Out of 310 respondents ,187 (60.32%) agreed that MONUSCO is occupational and not an interventional force, 73 (23.55%) disagreed with the inquiry, 35 (11.29%) were undecided, 11 (3.55%) had no knowledge of the question and 4(1.29%) had no response. The results are illustrated in figure 2.
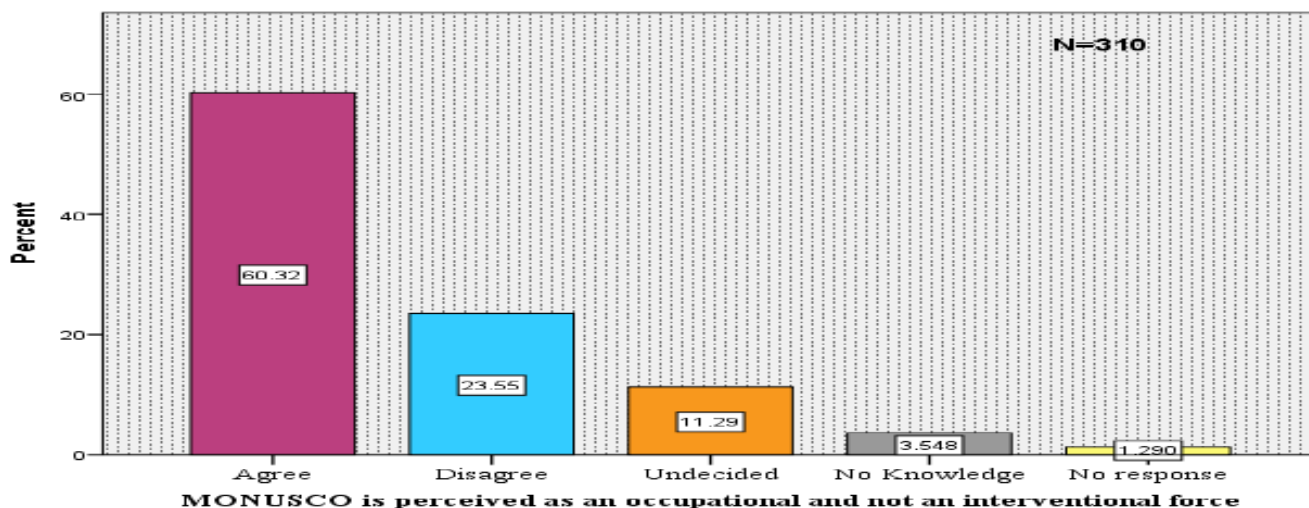
Figure 2
MONUSCO is Perceived as Occupational and not Interventional Force

The study aimed to evaluate whether MONUSCO is perceived as an occupational force or an interventional force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Out of 310 respondents, 187 (60.32%) agreed that MONUSCO is an occupational force, 73 (23.55%) disagreed, 35 (11.29%) were undecided, 11 (3.55%) had no knowledge, and 4 (1.29%) had no response.

The majority agreement 187 (60.32%) indicates a significant perception that MONUSCO functions more as an occupational force than an interventional one. This viewpoint   stemmed from the prolonged duration of MONUSCO's presence in the DRC, which began in 1999. Over time, the mission's extensive involvement in various aspects of governance and security   led some to view it as an occupying entity rather than a temporary intervention force. This perception can be exacerbated by the lack of significant improvements in security and stability, leading to frustration and skepticism among the local population regarding MONUSCO's role and effectiveness.

Conversely, the 73 (23.55%) who disagreed   viewed MONUSCO as an essential interventional force aimed at stabilizing the region. They argued that MONUSCO's presence is crucial for maintaining peace and providing humanitarian assistance in a highly volatile environment. This group   acknowledged the mission's efforts in protecting civilians, supporting the political process, and helping to rebuild the country's institutions, viewing these actions as consistent with an interventional force rather than an occupying one.

The 33 (11.29%) who were undecided reflect the complexity and mixed outcomes of MONUSCO's activities. They   recognized both the mission's positive impacts and its shortcomings, making it difficult to definitively categorize it as either occupational or interventional. This equivocation was due to observing varied outcomes in different regions and contexts within the DRC. Respondents with no knowledge 11 (3.55%)   indicated a gap in awareness about MONUSCO's mandate, operations, and impacts. This   resulted from insufficient communication or lack of visible engagement with the local communities. Increasing transparency and public outreach regarding MONUSCO's goals and achievements   helped address this information gap. Finally, the 4 (1.29%) who had no response   reflected general disinterest or disengagement with the topic. These individuals had no enough exposure to MONUSCO's activities or did not prioritize the issue in their considerations. Thus, while a majority perceive MONUSCO as an occupational force, a substantial minority view it as a necessary interventional entity, highlighting the varied perspectives and complexities of peace and security dynamics in the DRC.

To corroborate findings on MONUSCO being perceived as an occupational rather than an interventional force, it's essential to explore the role of cooperative security theory and examine various scholarly perspectives that both agree and disagree with this characterization. Cooperative security theory posits that international security is best achieved through cooperative efforts among states and international organizations, emphasizing diplomacy, dialogue, and collective security mechanisms over unilateral military actions.

4.2 The Conflict in the DRC can be Handled by the Government Forces without MONUSCO

The study sought to evaluate whether the conflict in the DRC can be handled by the Government forces without MONUSCO. Out of 310 respondents,148 (47.7%) agreed that the conflict in the DRC can be handled by the Government forces without MONUSCO, 73 (23.5%) disagreed with the inquiry,47 (15.2%) were undecided, 33 (10.6%) had no knowledge of the question and 9 (2.9%) had no response. The results are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1
The conflict in the DRC can be handled by the Government forces without MONUSCO

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Agree	148	47.7
Disagree	73	23.5
Undecided	47	15.2
No Knowledge	33	10.6
No response	9	2.9
Total	**310**	**100.0**

The study aimed to evaluate whether the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) can be handled by the government forces without the presence of MONUSCO. Out of 310 respondents, 148 (47.7%) agreed that the government forces can handle the conflict independently, 73 (23.5%) disagreed, 47 (15.2%) were undecided, 33 (10.6%) did not know, and 9 (2.9%) had no response. The 148 (47.7%) majority agreement suggests that many believe the Congolese government forces are capable of managing the conflict without external intervention. This perspective   arose from a desire for national sovereignty and self-reliance, reflecting a confidence in the capabilities of the Congolese military and police forces. These respondents also believed that the presence of MONUSCO has not significantly improved the security situation and that local forces, being more familiar with the terrain and cultural context, were more effective in handling the conflict.

Conversely, the 73 (23.5%) who disagreed   saw MONUSCO as a necessary stabilizing force that supplements the capabilities of the government forces. They   argued that the DRC's military still faces significant challenges, such as insufficient training, lack of equipment, and issues of corruption, which hinder their ability to manage the conflict effectively on their own. This group   also believed that MONUSCO provides essential support in terms of logistics, intelligence, and international diplomatic backing, which are crucial for maintaining peace and security. The 47 (15.2%) who were undecided   recognized the complexities and mixed realities of the situation. They saw both potential and shortcomings in the capacity of the government forces and thus find it difficult to take a definitive stance. This mixed reaction was influenced by observing the varied effectiveness of government forces in different regions and under different circumstances.

Respondents with no knowledge 33 (10.6%)   indicated a lack of information about the current capabilities of the Congolese military and police forces. This gap could be addressed through better communication and education about the progress and challenges faced by the national security forces. Finally, the 9 (2.9%) who had no response reflected general disinterest or disengagement with the topic, which is common in survey settings. These individuals did not have enough exposure to or involvement with the issues to form an opinion. Thus, while a significant portion of respondents believe that the DRC government forces can handle the conflict independently, a considerable minority emphasize the ongoing need for MONUSCO's support, highlighting the diverse perspectives on the capacity and effectiveness of the national security apparatus.

4.3 MONUSCO FIB (QRF) is Ineffective due to Long Chain of Command within the UN Security System

The study sought to evaluate whether MONUSCO FIB (QRF) is ineffective due to long chain of command within the UN security system. Out of 310 respondents,167 (53.9%) agreed that MONUSCO   is ineffective due to long chain of command within the UN security system, 87 (28.1%) disagreed with the inquiry,41(13.2%) were undecided, 11 (3.5%) had no knowledge of the question and 4 (1.3%) had no response. The results are illustrated in table 2.

Table 2
MONUSCO FIB (QRF) is Ineffective due to Long Chain of Command within the UN Security System

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	167	53.9
Disagree	87	28.1
Undecided	41	13.2
No Knowledge	11	3.5
No response	4	1.3
Total	**310**	**100.0**

Based on the findings of the study evaluating the effectiveness of MONUSCO FIB (QRF) in the DRC, specifically regarding the perceived ineffectiveness due to a long chain of command within the UN security system, several insights can be drawn from the responses of the 310 respondent's. Firstly, the majority of respondents 167 (53.9%) agreed that MONUSCO's ineffectiveness is indeed linked to the long chain of command within the UN

security system. This perspective   stemmed from practical observations or experiences where delays or miscommunications in decision-making have hindered timely and effective intervention in post-conflict situations. In complex environments like the DRC, rapid response is crucial to prevent escalation of violence or to protect civilians, and any bureaucratic delays can undermine these efforts.

Conversely, 87 (28.1%) of respondents disagreed with this assertion. Their viewpoint reflected a belief that other factors, such as resource allocation, local political dynamics, or logistical challenges, play a more significant role in determining MONUSCO's effectiveness. They   argued that while the chain of command could be improved, it is not the primary reason for perceived ineffectiveness. The 41 (13.2%) who were undecided indicated a need for more nuanced understanding or further evidence before forming a conclusive opinion.

Their indecision stemmed from a lack of direct experience with the operational intricacies of MONUSCO or the UN security system, or it   suggested uncertainty about the relative importance of chain of command issues compared to other factors. A small percentage 11 (3.5%) had no knowledge of the question, which   suggested a lack of familiarity with the specific workings of MONUSCO or the UN's operational structure in conflict zones like the DRC. These respondents did not have been adequately informed to provide a meaningful response. Finally, those who provided no response 4 (1.3%)   reflected individuals who chose not to participate or did not have a strong opinion on the matter, possibly due to limited engagement with the topic or the survey itself.

The researcher argues that the varying responses highlight a range of perspectives on the effectiveness of MONUSCO FIB (QRF) in relation to the UN's chain of command. While a significant portion sees the long chain of command as a critical issue, others emphasize different factors or remain undecided, indicating the complexity of evaluating peace and security dynamics in post-conflict interventions. To corroborate findings on the ineffectiveness of MONUSCO's Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) Quick Reaction Force (QRF) due to a long chain of command within the UN security system, it's important to analyze this issue through the lens of cooperative security theory and explore scholarly perspectives that both support and challenge this assertion.

Cooperative security theory emphasizes the importance of swift and coordinated responses to security threats through collaborative efforts among states and international organizations. However, the effectiveness of such responses can be hindered by bureaucratic processes and complex command structures, as observed within the UN system. Scholars who argue for the inefficiency of the FIB QRF point to operational challenges stemming from hierarchical delays and bureaucratic protocols.

4.4 International Community wants MONUSCO to exit DRC

The study sought to evaluate whether the International community wants MONUSCO to exit DRC. Out of 310 respondents, 91 (29.4%) agreed that the International community wants MONUSCO to exit DRC, 162 (52.3%) disagreed with the inquiry,51 (16.5%) were undecided, 3 (1.0%) had no knowledge of the question and 3 (1.0%) had no response. The results are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 3
The International Community want MONUSCO exit DRC

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Agree	91	29.4
Disagree	162	52.3
Undecided	51	16.5
No Knowledge	3	1.0
No response	3	1.0
Total	**310**	**100.0**

Based on the findings on whether the international community wants MONUSCO to exit the DRC, insights from the 310 respondents reveal diverse perspectives. Approximately 91 (29.4%) of respondents agreed that the international community wants MONUSCO to exit the DRC. This viewpoint   stemmed from several reasons. Some believed that MONUSCO's presence perpetuates dependency on external intervention rather than fostering local capacity building in security and governance. Others   argued that prolonged peacekeeping missions can become politically contentious, with host countries and regional stakeholders preferring to handle security challenges internally or through regional mechanisms.

Conversely, a majority of 162 (52.3%) disagreed with the assertion that the international community wants MONUSCO to leave the DRC. Their perspective   reflected a belief that MONUSCO's presence remains essential for maintaining stability and protecting civilians in a region plagued by ongoing conflict and instability. They   argued that premature withdrawal   led to a resurgence of violence or undermine progress made in peace building efforts. The 51 (16.5%) who were undecided   indicated a need for more information or a nuanced understanding of the

implications of MONUSCO's exit. They   recognized both the benefits and drawbacks of continued international intervention and   hesitated to form a definitive opinion without clearer insights into the potential consequences.

A small percentage 3 (1.0%) had no knowledge of the question, possibly indicating a lack of familiarity with the specific roles and impact of MONUSCO in the DRC or broader international perspectives on peacekeeping missions. Similarly, those who provided no response 3 (1.0%) chose not to engage with the question, potentially due to its complexity or their lack of interest or expertise in the topic. Consequently, the varying responses illustrate the complex attitudes within the international community regarding MONUSCO's presence in the DRC. While some advocate for withdrawal based on principles of sovereignty and local empowerment, others emphasize the ongoing need for international support in maintaining security and stability. These perspectives underscore the ongoing debate and considerations surrounding peace and security dynamics in post-conflict interventions. To corroborate findings on the international community's desire for MONUSCO to exit the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), it's crucial to analyze this issue through the lens of cooperative security theory and explore scholarly perspectives that both support and challenge this stance. Cooperative security theory posits that international peace and security are best achieved through collaborative efforts among states and international organizations, emphasizing local ownership, capacity-building, and diplomatic solutions over prolonged external interventions.

In the context of MONUSCO, this theory suggests that sustainable peace in the DRC should ideally be transitioned to local authorities once adequate stability and governance are established. Scholars who advocate for MONUSCO's exit argue that prolonged international intervention can undermine local sovereignty and perpetuate dependency. For instance, Autesserre 2010) argues that while MONUSCO has played a crucial role in stabilizing the DRC, its prolonged presence risks overshadowing efforts to empower local institutions and foster sustainable peace.

Conversely, opposing views, such as those presented by Carter (2013) highlight ongoing security challenges and governance deficits in the DRC that necessitate continued international support. Johnson argues that premature withdrawal of MONUSCO   led to a resurgence of violence and instability, underscoring the importance of gradual transition and capacity-building efforts. Moreover, scholars like Mohammed (2023) advocate for a phased approach to MONUSCO's withdrawal, emphasizing the need for comprehensive peace building strategies and local engagement to ensure a sustainable transition. This perspective aligns with cooperative security principles by prioritizing local ownership and gradual disengagement from external military presence. In summary, while cooperative security theory supports the eventual withdrawal of external peacekeeping forces in favor of local ownership and capacity-building, scholarly discourse on MONUSCO's exit from the DRC reflects divergent opinions regarding timing and conditions. By considering various perspectives, from sovereignty concerns to ongoing security challenges, the discussion underscores the complexities involved in achieving lasting peace and stability in conflict-affected regions.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The study concludes that MONUSCO should exit the DRC in order to   achieve peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). However, it is also essential to consider   the timing and modalities of MONUSCO's exit from the DRC, where cooperative security principles advocate for a gradual transition that enhances local capacities and promotes self-sustaining peace building initiatives. That the study concludes that MONUSCO'S presence in the DRC is both occupational and inconsequential. Therefore, MONUSCO has failed to intervene effectively in DRC and restore peace and security to a large extent.

5.2 Recommendations

The study recommends that   MONUSCO's Operational Capacity be boosted to enhance its mandate to include more robust peace enforcement measures, including disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs for ex-combatants. Besides, there is need to provide MONUSCO with the necessary resources and modern equipment to improve its rapid response capabilities and protect civilians effectively.

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