

EXAMINING UGANDA'S FOREIGN POLICY

Assessment of Uganda's Peace Support Operations and its Impact on Regional Peace and Security

Patricia Namakula

A parade of Ugandan soldiers serving with the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)

Source: AMISOM Public Information on <https://www.flickr.com>



Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction	50
2.0 Background	51
3.0 Findings and Discussion	51
4.0 The impact of Uganda's deployment of troops on regional peace and security	53
5.0 The role of multilateral actors in reinforcing Uganda's peacekeeping operations	54
6.0 Conclusion and Areas for Further Research	54
6.1. Conclusion	54
6.2. Areas for Further Research	55
7.0 Bibliography	56

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

- APSA:** African Peace and Security Architecture
- APSC:** African Union Peace and Security Council
- AMISOM:** African Union Mission in Somalia
- AU:** African Union
- BRICS:** Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
- CAR:** Central African Republic
- COMESA:** Common Markets for Eastern and Southern Africa
- DRC:** Democratic Republic of Congo
- EAC:** East African Community
- EU:** European Union
- G7:** The Group of Seven
- G20:** The Group of Twenty
- IGAD:** Intergovernmental Authority on Development
- LRA:** Lord's Resistance Army
- NATO:** North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- PSOs:** Peace Support Operations
- RECs:** Regional Economic Communities
- R2P:** Responsibility to Protect
- RTF:** Regional Task Force
- US:** United States
- UN:** United Nations
- UNGA:** United Nations General Assembly
- UNSC:** United Nations Security Council

1.0 Introduction

The term peace support operations (PSOs) mean organized international assistance initiatives to support the maintenance, monitoring, building of peace and the prevention of resurgent violent conflict. There are two categories of PSOs: peacekeeping and peace enforcement.

Peacekeeping is a tool in international conflict management, resolution and has been in existence since 1948 when the Security Council authorized the deployment of United Nations (UN) military observers to the Middle East. Since then, peacekeeping has gone through three distinct phases to match the challenges to peace and security presented by the changes in global politics. First generation of peacekeeping started at the end of World War II and lasted till the end of the Cold War. The main functions of the first-generation missions were to “monitor borders and establish buffer zones after ceasefires had been negotiated.”

The post-Cold War period ushered in the second generation of peacekeeping which authorized missions to coercive measures where necessary under chapter VII of the UN Charter, and lasted until the late 1990s. The third-generation peacekeeping started around the millennium shift and the priority of human security was one of the defining features. Peacekeeping under the UN is guided by three principles: (1) consent of the warring parties; (2) impartiality; and (3) non-use of force except in self-defense and in defense of the mandate.

Peace enforcement, on the other hand, involves the application of a range of coercive measures, including the use of military force. It requires the explicit authorization of the Security Council. It is used to restore international peace and security in situations where the Security Council has decided to act in the face of a threat to the peace,

breach of the peace or act of aggression. The Council may utilize, where appropriate, regional organizations and agencies for enforcement action under its authority and in accordance with the UN Charter.

At the time of its inception, peacekeeping was primarily limited to maintaining ceasefires and stabilizing situations on the ground. The post-Cold War environment was characterized by a change in the nature of conflict and this necessitated a dramatic change in peacekeeping due to an increase in intra-state conflicts in the Global South.

This explains why Africa has been home to the majority of the UN peacekeeping missions, currently accounting for six out of the twelve active UN peacekeeping missions.

Uganda has been able to play an active role in promoting regional peace and security through the hybrid peace support operations (PSOs) between the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN), the AU and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) or the UN and RECs. However, the country has also acted under bilateral arrangements through its foreign policy.

This paper draws from available literature that seeks to examine whether Uganda's foreign policy goals are consistent with its PSOs, impact of Uganda's troop deployment in regional peace and security. Since much of Uganda's peacekeeping is funded by external sources, this study analyzes the critical role of multilateral actors in supporting the country's peacekeeping efforts.

2.0 Background

Uganda got its independence in 1962 but owing to internal political upheavals that astounded the country between the 1960s through the 1980s, the country's ability to participate in international PSOs was truncated not until the 2000s after defeating the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), that the country started to engage in regional and international PSOs as part of the United Nations (UN), African Union (AU), East African Community (EAC) and Inter-government Authority on Development (IGAD). The Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF) has expanded its military footprint on the continent and the country has deployed soldiers in Liberia, Somalia and South Sudan among others.

Its contribution to PSOs stems from a pan-Africanist ideology in which the country continues to help other African countries in their quest for peace, prosperity and stability. Uganda's continued contribution to peace support operations has also been driven by its growing interest to strategically position itself as a strong advocate of African solutions to African problems as a powerful state in the region. President Museveni has been quoted on several occasions advocating for African solutions to African problems but this ideology remains abstract without clear roadmap to drive results.

In 2014, Uganda's then Foreign Minister Sam Kuteesa was unanimously elected as the President of the UN General Assembly and he attributed his victory to Uganda's positive role and contribution to the work of the UN. This international recognition was preceded by Uganda sending troops to South Sudan after fighting broke out between factions loyal to President Salva Kiir and those loyal to former Vice President Riek Machar in 2013.

This military intervention was attributed to many factors, including an invitation by the legitimate government to ensure order, need to evacuate Ugandans in the war ton area upon being requested by the UN Secretary General and IGAD to intervene.

Nonetheless, the legality of the intervention in South Sudan was questioned when Ugandan troops fought on the side of Salva Kiir. Critics noted that Uganda's actions violated the principle of impartiality in peacekeeping and this partly explains why Uganda has been accused of being both an arsonist and firefighter. This is due to inconsistencies in Uganda's adherence to international norms and standards when conducting peacekeeping or deploying troops.

3.0 Findings and Discussion

To what extent is Uganda's foreign policy goals consistent with its peace support operations?

Uganda's foreign policy vision is Africa-centric: (i) The Ring States (immediate neighbors, EAC, IGAD, the Nile Basin); (ii) The region (the rest of Africa, the AU, COMESA, the Middle East); and (iii) The rest of the world. These include the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), development partners (for example, bilateral / multilateral donors), international organizations and agencies and blocs (for example, the Group

of Seven (G7), the Group of Twenty (G20), Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

One of Uganda's foreign policy objectives as outlined on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website is to contribute to the building of a peaceful and secure world through its involvement in peacekeeping operations. The promotion of regional and international peace and security is one of the thematic areas through which the Ministry implements the country's foreign policy to help achieve its national

6. EXAMINING UGANDA'S FOREIGN POLICY

interests. Uganda prefers to work through the AU, regional mechanisms such as the EAC, IGAD, and coalitions of likeminded regional states.

Uganda is an active participant in PSOs in Africa and this has boosted its national prestige in the judgments of the international community and increased its leverage with regard to donors. Troop-contributing states to peace support operations appear to be upright international citizens offering a critical public good. This has given Uganda a grander voice on different regional security taskforces than it would otherwise not have in multilateral institutions like the AU and the UN. However, it remains important and an appropriate call for Uganda to first fix its domestic security problems before it embarks on providing solutions to its neighbors.

Deploying the UPDF to Somalia has been cast-off as part of Uganda's diplomatic and foreign policy strategy with donors and regional states. Uganda contributed a UPDF contingent to AMISOM in 2007, a year after President Museveni was elected for the second time, having obliterated presidential term limits.

This deployment came with growing international criticism over the closing of domestic political space and Ugandan military involvement in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), in which the government was being criticized for destabilizing the region by supporting the M23 rebel group in North Kivu. Since Uganda first deployed troops under AMISOM, some international actors have been more hesitant to criticize its domestic politics.

President Museveni, threatened to withdraw Ugandan troops out of Somalia in 2010 and 2012 when he got pressure from international donors. Hence, the Government of Uganda continues to use its peace-supporting role for strategic purposes in its foreign policy.

The criticism from the international community, especially donors regarding the state of

democracy and human rights back home continues to erode the positive image portrayed through peacekeeping. Country's foreign and domestic policies are interdependent and feed into each other.

The government's increased crackdown on political dissent has cast it in a bad light. The use of excessive force by the UPDF and the Uganda Police on the citizens undermines the claims of maintaining peace and building institutions for good governance as the case is in Somalia under AMISOM. This explains why many critics still question the agenda behind the country's peacekeeping operations.

Contributing to PSOs continues to reflect Uganda's broader international relations in dealing with the UN and other bodies based on a pragmatic strategy driven by national interests underscored by Pan-Africanism. Although Uganda has consistently contributed peacekeepers to UN missions, the numbers are lower than those from neighboring states and other countries with similar defense capabilities and budgets. For instance, 2022 UN statistics explain that Uganda contributes 646 troops while its neighbors Rwanda and Tanzania contribute 5,254 and 1,485 troops to the UN, respectively.

On the other hand, Uganda has been at the forefront of developing AU peacekeeping capabilities and contributes large numbers of troops to AMISOM and the Regional Task Force (RTF), reflecting a commitment on the part of the leadership to implement African-led initiatives. For example, Uganda was first the country to deploy troops under AMISOM in Somalia and the largest contingent in AMISOM with 6,223 troops. This trend is likely to continue with Uganda seeing mainly African Union PSOs serving its regional priorities and security concerns, but also as an invaluable bargaining chip with international donors.

4.0 The Impact of Uganda's Deployment of Troops on Regional Peace and Security

Uganda's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a department of Regional Peace and Security and one of its functions is to pursue the doctrine of regional solutions to regional problems supported by the international community in the management and resolution of regional conflicts. Uganda advocates for a regional-led peace process using examples of the African Mission in Burundi and AMISOM in Somalia, where the African Union leads with the rest of the international community to support peace efforts.

The other role of the department is to support the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Important APSA components like the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) and the African Standby Force (ASF) rely on institutional pillars in the different regions of the continent. Yet the degree of regional integration below the AU varies widely. While Western and Southern Africa have RECs with established security mechanisms, Northern and Eastern Africa lack such adequate mechanisms.

Such imbalances have affected the performance of African Union institutions like the African Union Peace and Security Council (APSC) since the continental body relies more on regional organizations for the provision of troops and security mechanisms. This, then, comes down to how effective Uganda's efforts under the leadership of President Museveni have been in building a strong community under the EAC.

Uganda's contribution of troops in Somalia can be viewed through the post 9/11 (September 11th attack) world and the war on terrorism. The UPDF deployment in Somalia is legitimized as part of the "Global War on Terrorism", with Uganda positioning itself as a frontline state against Islamic fundamentalism (Boko Haram) in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel. It is important to note that

Uganda just like the United States (US), suffered double terror attacks on its soil in July 2010, which resulted in the death of 74 people. Although the problems of instability are still prevalent, one should not undermine the role played by Uganda in building stability in some parts of Somalia.

While Uganda and its neighbor Rwanda are often cited as stable regimes by countries such as the United States, both countries have been criticized for destabilizing the DRC over the last 30 years, as successive incidents of Rwandan and Ugandan interference in the DRC's internal matters show.

The Rwandan and Ugandan armies' pretext regarding security concerns have acted as a cover for large-scale looting which is a form of "military commercialism", with "entrepreneurial profit" as a key consideration in the deployment of the national armies. Even after their withdraw from the DRC, both armies continue profiting through their proxies.

Despite its destabilizing role in the DRC over the last decades, Uganda has successfully built an image as a constructive, stable and cooperative partner in a conflict-prone region which includes South Sudan, the Central African Republic (CAR), the DRC, Burundi and Somalia. Its contribution to the AU-led PSO in Somalia – the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) – is an important factor in this image, as is the role Uganda has played in pre-and-post-independent South Sudan. The country gave moral and material support to the people of South Sudan against the lordship from the Arab North.

5.0 The Role of Multilateral Actors in Reinforcing Uganda's Peacekeeping Operations

The fears of Western countries such as the United States over rising Islamic radicalism and global terrorism has shaped renewed international engagements in Africa, particularly in Somalia and Mali. The prospects of success for interventions overseen by the AU, Africa's sub-regional bodies and the UN depend on developing effective divisions of labour for these operations and on mobilizing appropriate logistical and financial resources.

Chapter VIII of the UN Charter provides for cooperation between the UN Security Council and Africa's regional organizations to maintain international peace and security. The 22,000-strong AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) represents a promising peacekeeping framework established by a regional organization of the UN. The principle of burden-sharing between the UN and Africa's regional organizations has also facilitated support of Uganda in its peace-support endeavors. In some peace support operations that Uganda has participated in, for instance AMISOM, the UN has strengthened the mission by providing logistical and financial support, while AU countries like Uganda have provided troops.

Partnership peacekeeping has become the norm, and this entails collaboration of active military operations between two or more multilateral institutions or innumerable bilateral actors.

Several factors have driven this trend including widespread recognition that no single actor can handle Africa's security challenges and different actors bring comparative advantages. In Africa, the central partnerships involve relations among the UN, the AU, the RECs, the EU and important bilateral actors principally France, the United States and Britain. Partnership peacekeeping needs to be guided by the security needs and challenges of the countries experiencing conflict rather than the interests of the partners if it is to lead to sustainable peace and stability which remains a myth in many conflict zones.

For the United States, Uganda has been an important player in the fight against the spread of terrorism in the sub-Saharan region. This is a key reason why despite increasing concern over deteriorating political conditions in Uganda, countries like the US continue to relate with Uganda as a constructive player in the region.

This reputation as a stabilizing player has to a great extent, allowed Uganda to dodge criticism and sanctions for its three-decade-long history of interference in the DRC and the wider Great Lakes region and the stifling of opposition at home. It is such shortcomings that make one question the altruism of Uganda's peace support efforts and if they are not driven by the selfish interests of individuals.

6.0 Conclusion and Areas for Further Research

6.1. Conclusion

The study findings confirm a general observation by the AU, UN and other peace and security promoting institutions that Uganda has played a significant role in promoting peace and security across the African continent. This has been through contributing troops in AU's and UN's PSOs such as AMISOM, offering support and continuously advocating for African solutions to African problems.

On the effectiveness of the latter, as far as promoting peace and stability on the continent is concerned that is an area that needs further study. Uganda's role in promoting regional peace and security through its PSOs has not been without blemish. The pursuit of national and personal interests has had a destabilizing impact on the peace in the region. Uganda's deployment in the DRC has been judged to be destabilizing to the region with Uganda accused of supplying weapons to M23 rebels in North Kivu.



AU peacekeeping mission in action, with soldiers from various African nations, including Uganda, working together in a diverse and cooperative environment.

Source: AMISOM Public Information on <https://www.flickr.com>

As Uganda continues to get involved in increasingly complex PSOs, there is need for key players to address challenges related to the transition strategies for missions where a degree of stability has been attained. To be regarded effective, Uganda needs a withdrawal plan from Somalia. While it benefits politically and economically, Ugandan troops won't have permanent presence in Somalia. This is due to the fact that AMISOM is funded by the EU, despite being an African Union mission. Funding to the AU's PSOs becomes sustainable and predictable, failure to leave Somalia, will in the long run have financial and political implications to Uganda, especially when the funding is discontinued.

While conflicts between and within states are predicted to increase across Africa and the world as a result of COVID-19, Uganda continues to be a key player in regional PSOs, there is need to enhance the quality and success of the PSOs it participates in.

The involvement of multilateral actors such as the UN and the EU and donors like the US remains essential because Uganda can only provide troops but not the resources required. In addition, leading the implementation of complex and multi-dimensional mandates like AMISOM, Ugandan troops are required to carry out tasks that go far beyond traditional peacekeeping, such as counterinsurgency, counter-terrorism, state-building and other duties. In order to achieve this high standard of performance, the country needs more support in form of military training, logistics and funding from multilateral actors.

6.2. Areas for Further Research

Uganda claims to be providing leadership and solutions by participating in peace support operations in the region and its role has been guided by the notions of Pan-Africanism and "African solutions to African problems". Nevertheless, based on available literature, it's difficult to track the impact of Uganda's peace-supporting role towards regional security from troop deployment to withdrawal.

More research needs to be conducted to establish how effective Uganda has been in promoting peace and security on the continent. This can be done by undertaking a case-by-case study of the PSOs that Uganda has participated in under the UN, AU or RECs through key informant interviews as the available literature does not provide enough evidence backed by examples.

There has been paradigm shifts in Uganda's foreign policy in relation to promoting regional peace and security from being a passive player to an active player. Nonetheless, no recent research has been undertaken to establish a clear understanding and analysis of the strategic relationship between Uganda and the different stakeholders, their interests, either Uganda-AU, or Uganda-UN, or Uganda-RECs. There is an information gap on how multilateral actors have supported Uganda's contribution to PSOs and how that relates to Uganda's written and unwritten foreign policy.

7.0 Bibliography

Published Sources

1. Murray, E., Mesfin, B. and Wolters, S. (2016). *Weak Ugandan Democracy, Strong Regional Influence*, report (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace and Institute for Security Studies).
2. Kasajja, P. A. (2017). Uganda in Regional and International Peacekeeping Operations. *The Round Table*, 106:5, 505-515. DOI: 10.1080/00358533.2017.1368916.
3. Kasajja, P. A. (2014). Explaining the (il)legality of Uganda's intervention in the current South Sudan conflict. *African Security Review*, 23:4, 352-369. DOI: 10.1080/10246029.2014.951063.
4. Kuwali, D. and Nagar, D. (2014). *Towards a New Pax Africana: Making, Keeping, and Building Peace in Post-Cold War Africa*. Centre for Conflict Resolution.
5. Marco, J. (2018). *Country Profile: Uganda*, School of Oriental and African Studies & Africa Research Group.
6. Marco, J. (2014). *Country Profile: Uganda*. School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. IISS, *The Military Balance 2014* (London: IISS/ Routledge).
7. Marco, J. (2014). *Country Profile: Uganda*. School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. IISS, *The Military Balance* (London: IISS/ Routledge).
8. Marco, J. (2012, July and November). *Communication with Senior Political Affairs Officer, Security Council Affairs Division, UN, New York, & Diplomat, UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office, London*.
9. Marco, J. (2014). *Country Profile: Uganda*. School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. IISS, *The Military Balance* (London: IISS/ Routledge).
10. Williams, P. D. (2015). *Peace Operations in Africa: Enhancing U.S. Support for Peace Operations in Africa*, Council on Foreign Relations.
11. Ramsbotham, O., Woodhouse, T. and Miall, H., (2007). *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Polity Press.
12. Richmond, O. P., Newman, E. (2001). *The Limits of UN Multidimensional Peace Operations*. In: *United Nations and Human Security*. New York: Palgrave.
13. Sjöberg, T., Bokförlag, S. (2006). *From Korea and Suez to Iraq: Half a Century of United Nations Conflict Management*.

Online Sources

14. Briefing (2020, January 23). *Averting Proxy Wars in DRC and Great Lakes*. International Crisis Group <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/democratic-republiccongo/b150-averting-proxy-wars-eastern-dr-congo-and-great-lakes#:~:text=Three%20Great%20Lakes%20states%20E2%80%93%20Burundi,neighbouring%20Democratic%20Republic%20of%20Congo>.
15. Matovu, M. (2020). *Defence Minister and UN Special Envoy Discuss Peace Strategies for Great Lakes Region*. Nile Post <https://nilepost.co.ug/2020/10/06/defence-minister-unspecial-envoy-discuss-peace-strategies-for-greatlakes-region/>.
16. Nicola, J. (2012). *Peace Support Operations*. https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wpcontent/uploads/2012/04/38_peace_support.pdf.
17. Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Foreign Affairs website. <https://www.mofa.go.ug/data/smenu/70/Uganda's-Foreign-Policy,-Regional-and-International-Missions.html?option=smenu&id=70>.
18. Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Foreign Affairs web portal. <https://www.mofa.go.ug/data/smenu/76/Regional%20Peace%20and%20Security.html>.
19. United Nations. *United Nations Peacekeeping; What is Peacekeeping?* <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/what-is-peacekeeping>.
20. United Nations. *United Nations Peacekeeping web portal*. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors>.
21. United Nations. *United Nations Peacekeeping data, Peace Operations*. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/data>.
22. United Nations. *United Nations Peacekeeping terminology*. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/terminology>.
23. Vorrath, J. (2012, September) *Imbalances in the African Peace and Security Architecture: The Current Approach to Capacity Building Needs to Be Challenged*, Germany Institute for International and Security Affairs https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/comments/2012C29_vrr.pdf.



For more information, please contact us:



**Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
Uganda & South Sudan**

E: info.kampala@kas.de

51 A, Prince Charles Drive, Kololo
P.O. Box 647, Kampala, Uganda
www.kas.de/uganda

  @KasUganda

Centre for MultiLateral Affairs

E: info@theCfMA.org

T: +256-782-752198

T: +256-789-581006

Plot 67, Bukasa Road, Namuwongo
P.O. Box 4411, Kampala Uganda
www.theCfMA.org