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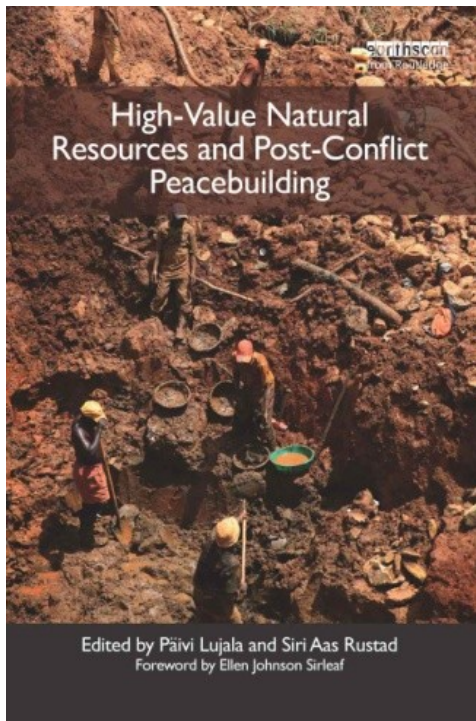
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This chapter first appeared in *High-Value Natural Resources and Peacebuilding*, edited by P. Lujala and S. A. Rustad. It is one of 6 edited books on Post-Conflict Peacebuilding and Natural Resource Management (for more information, see [www.environmentalpeacebuilding.org](http://www.environmentalpeacebuilding.org)). The full book can be ordered from Routledge at <http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9781849712309/>.

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### Bankrupting peace spoilers: Can peacekeepers curtail belligerents' access to resource revenues?

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Online publication date: June 2012

Suggested citation: P. Le Billon. 2012. Bankrupting peace spoilers: Can peacekeepers curtail belligerents' access to resource revenues? In *High-Value Natural Resources and Peacebuilding*, ed. P. Lujala and S. A. Rustad. London: Earthscan.

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# **Bankrupting peace spoilers: Can peacekeepers curtail belligerents' access to resource revenues?**

*Philippe Le Billon*

High-value natural resources—such as timber, minerals, and opium—are often sources of tension and violence during post-conflict transition periods. Resource production areas and trade routes are commonly hot spots for armed groups, including security forces that have been demobilized but not disarmed and reintegrated; they also tend to be theaters for clashes between competing groups that run protection rackets for illegal activities. Armed groups rely on resource sectors for survival; they may also engage in resource-related human rights abuses—as, for example, when security forces forcibly displace local residents or migrant workers, or compel them to engage in forced labor in order to open up land for resource projects.

Curtailling belligerents' access to weapons has been a major focus of international security actors. Although weapons embargoes and disarmament initiatives are important, they are difficult to implement and generally insufficient to secure long-term peace. Curtailling belligerents' access to resource revenues provides a complementary and possibly more effective approach, particularly when it is combined with reforms that address both the “enabling effect” of resources on armed violence and the broader economic, political, and environmental causes of conflict associated with resource sectors.

One approach to curtailling belligerents' access to revenues and reducing the human rights abuses associated with resource sectors is to mandate peacekeeping missions whose express responsibility is to prevent peace spoiling and protect civilians. Such a mandate could be backed by commodity sanctions that are contingent on (1) the achievement of peace-process benchmarks and (2) adherence to legal (or at least specified) practices in a given resource sector. A logging sector, for example, can be closed for exports until sound regulatory institutions are in place and until the state has the capacity, legitimacy, and stability to ensure

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their effectiveness. Although there are major obstacles to deploying peacekeeping forces to curtail access to resources, which will be discussed in the course of the chapter, the approach nonetheless offers a number of benefits.<sup>1</sup>

The chapter is divided into five major parts: (1) a brief review of the principal instruments that the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has used to address “conflict resources”;<sup>2</sup> (2) a discussion of strategies for controlling access to conflict resources; (3) a summary of the work of eight UN peacekeeping missions in contexts that involved conflict resources, with particular attention to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC); (4) a summary discussion of the issues associated with the deployment of peacekeepers in efforts to curtail access to conflict resources; and (5) a brief conclusion.

### UN INITIATIVES

UN initiatives to address the links between high-value natural resources and armed conflicts have included economic sanctions, expert panels, and specific measures undertaken as part of the peacemaking, peacekeeping, or peacebuilding tasks carried out by UN missions.<sup>3</sup> Through resolutions passed in the UNSC and General Assembly, the UN has also supported a number of other initiatives, such as the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, which is designed to stem the trade in conflict diamonds. And through the UN Global Compact, the UN has supported corporate social responsibility—most notably by raising awareness and standards of practice among extractive companies operating in conflict zones.

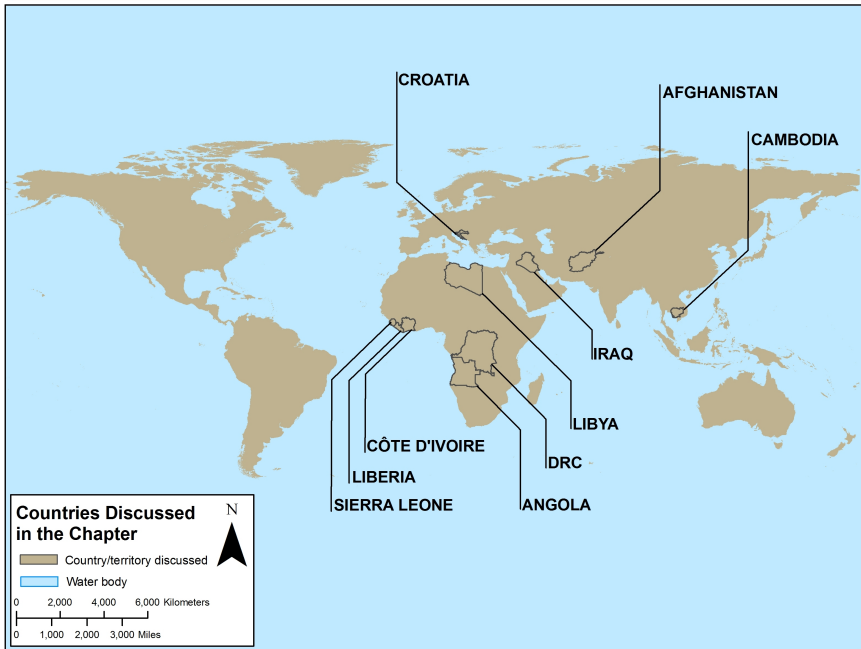
Commodity sanctions have targeted rebel groups by curtailing their access to resource revenues; examples include the Khmer Rouge, in Cambodia (logs); the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola, or UNITA), in Angola (diamonds); the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), in Sierra Leone (diamonds); the Taliban, in Afghanistan (opium production); and the New Forces (Forces Nouvelles), in Côte d’Ivoire (diamonds). Resource-focused sanctions have also targeted the governments of Iraq, Liberia, and Libya (the third for its involvement in the Lockerbie

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<sup>1</sup> The analysis in this chapter draws on primary and secondary sources, personal communications with staff at the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and on direct observation of, or participation in, peacekeeping operations in Angola, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, and the former Yugoslavia. The chapter does not present a comprehensive record of peacekeeping.

<sup>2</sup> *Conflict resources* are defined as “natural resources whose systematic exploitation and trade in a context of conflict contribute to, benefit from or result in the commission of serious violations of human rights, violations of international humanitarian law or violations amounting to crimes under international law” (Global Witness n.d.).

<sup>3</sup> *Peacemaking* seeks to facilitate the resolution of a conflict; *peacekeeping* seeks to prevent further violence; and *peacebuilding* is a long-term process that seeks to promote reconciliation and prevent future conflicts.



bombing, rather than for its training and funding of insurgent groups in civil wars) (Cortright and Lopez 2002).

With the exception of Cambodia, Iraq, and Libya, all these sanction regimes were associated with investigations by UN expert panels—consultants hired by the UN Secretariat to investigate war economies and sanction busting.<sup>4</sup> Because the panels’ reports are made public, they have been instrumental in successful “naming and shaming” campaigns. Even though fewer than a handful of sanction busters had been successfully prosecuted by 2006, the public reports had the desired chilling effect.

UN transitional authorities and specialized UN agencies have also engaged in other activities that are related to conflict resources, including partnering with national authorities and international aid agencies to reform resource sectors and build local institutional capacity in post-conflict settings.<sup>5</sup> For example, the UN Transitional Authority in Timor-Leste renegotiated the maritime boundary between Timor-Leste and Australia, which had implications for petroleum exploitation; and the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) supported the Governance and Economic

<sup>4</sup> The first such panel was launched in 1999 by Robert Fowler, chair of the Angola Sanction Committee. The UN Commission of Inquiry on Rwanda, established in 1994 (Boucher and Holt 2009), predated the investigation of the Angola Sanction Committee.

<sup>5</sup> The UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the UN Environment Programme, and the UN Development Programme are among the UN agencies involved in such efforts.

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Management Assistance Program (GEMAP) for Liberia. An initiative led by the World Bank, GEMAP is a quasi-trusteeship agreement that allows direct international supervision of most of the financial operations of the Liberian government. UN missions have also addressed conflict resources by deploying border monitors and troops; policing (e.g., deploying UN troops as backup for resource management officials); and providing supervision and technical assistance for economic reforms and resource management. Finally, the activities of some UN missions have had an indirect impact on resource sectors: for example, effective disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs often lead to employment for former soldiers, who might otherwise turn to illegal resource exploitation.<sup>6</sup>

Overall, the UNSC holds the greatest potential and has so far carried the most weight in efforts to address the linkages between high-value resources and armed conflicts. Not only does the Security Council decide whether to impose economic sanctions and dispatch UN expert panels, but it also decides on the size and mandate of UN missions in conflict-affected countries. Since the end of the Cold War, the UNSC has theoretically had greater freedom to impose sanctions and similar measures, because fewer members of the Security Council were inclined to veto such steps in order to support their allies. The UNSC has been somewhat slow, however, to take advantage of this potential. Meanwhile, the importance of resources to armed groups has grown rapidly since the late 1980s, as belligerents turned to natural resources to replace external political sponsorship. For most of the 1990s, the UNSC made increasing use of arms sanctions, negotiated settlements, and regional or UN peacekeeping missions, but rarely of commodity sanctions. Although arms sanctions may be more effective than commodity sanctions and may therefore continue to be the principal sanction strategy, that is not to say that the two approaches cannot be combined.<sup>7</sup>

Between 1989 and 2006, the UNSC used commodity sanctions in only about one-third of the conflicts involving resources (Le Billon 2007). Most of these sanctions have been imposed since the late 1990s, nearly a decade after resources came to play a major role in belligerents' finances. When the use of commodity sanctions finally increased, it was given a further boost by a more proactive use of sanctions committees and expert panels. Because of broader engagement on the part of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), conflict analysts, and resource industries, sanctions are now better targeted, monitored, and enforced, while their humanitarian impact is more carefully considered. The UNSC is now considering bolstering the authority and capacity of UN peacekeeping missions to more directly intervene in the control of resource sectors—a step that was recently taken in the DRC.

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<sup>6</sup> UN involvement in disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration dates back to the UN's first major, multidimensional peacekeeping mission, which was established in Cambodia in the early 1990s. (This mission is discussed later in the chapter.)

<sup>7</sup> On the cases of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, see Strandow (2006).

## **STRATEGIES FOR CONTROLLING ACCESS TO CONFLICT RESOURCES**

Experience with the imposition of sanctions, and understanding gained through investigations conducted by expert panels, conflict analysts, and NGOs, suggests that efforts to address the links between high-value natural resources and armed conflicts will be more effective if the approach is explicitly shaped by what is known about the situation, including the following factors:

- The characteristics of the resources (legality, accessibility, and geographical distribution).
- The structure of the industry and of the commodity chain (that is, the chain of supply between production and consumption): transportation routes, transformation sites, relative monopoly within the sector, level of concentration, and consumer awareness.
- The motivation and capacity of intermediaries and authorities along the commodity chain (e.g., domestic and regional governments, trade associations).
- The type of conflict and the types of armed groups being targeted.

Taking direct control of production sites allows peacekeepers to more readily prevent connections between resource production and armed groups. Control of production sites is extremely difficult, however, when resource operations are transient and when both workers and armed groups move rapidly. For example, mining operations that target easily reached minerals may be as short as a few days. Logging ventures may also be transient, especially when they can take advantage of an existing transportation network.

The sheer number, remoteness, insecurity, and transient character of production sites may render mapping difficult (Spittaels and Hilgert 2009); this not only increases labor demand but also increases the risk of casualties for both UN troops and the civilians who are brought in to regulate resource activities. Moreover, when peacekeepers attempt to control transient production sites in rebel-controlled areas, it may be difficult to distinguish between civilians and combatants. Finally, there is a risk of “mission creep,” in which the UN assumes responsibility for an increasing number of tasks, thereby creating further dependence on UN troops. Nevertheless, the presence of armed groups often increases poverty and the likelihood of abuse of local populations (Weinstein 2006); hence, for lack of an alternative, the direct deployment of UN peacekeeping troops in resource production areas may make sense.

A second, related approach is to control key points in trade and transportation routes, such as trading houses; storage locations; and major roads, bridges, rivers, and airports. This approach has two main difficulties, however: determining where resources have come from and whether they are legitimate, and avoiding delays for legitimate entrepreneurs (Crossin, Hayman, and Taylor 2003). Working with expert panels and local authorities, peacekeeping missions can help identify

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and, if given the necessary authority, arrest traders who are dealing in conflict resources. Trade controls at national borders, in particular, can simultaneously stem the flow of revenues to armed groups and assist the government to improve revenue collection. Peacekeepers posted at control points may also support sanction schemes or verify that certification measures are in effect. It is important to note, however, that most UN missions have limited mandates and operational scope. Border controls, for example, have focused mostly on controlling imports (such as incoming weapons), rather than exports (such as smuggled natural resources), although there have been some exceptions, most notably in the case of missions that assume governing functions, including the provision of border security (Walsh et al. 2007).

The first two approaches—taking control of production sites and of key points in trade routes—involve *direct* control over natural resources; a third approach should be considered when belligerents obtain funding through *indirect* control over natural resources. For example, armed groups may impose “taxes” on supplies destined for mining camps; extort funds from municipalities that are in proximity to natural resources (or that receive revenue from natural resources); or engage in other forms of extortion and racketeering. In such cases, peacekeeping forces are needed to improve security, severing the indirect control of resources and decreasing belligerents’ opportunities to threaten, intimidate, or harm civilians, companies, or government institutions. Peacekeepers may also step in for local police forces when it is necessary to make politically charged arrests.<sup>8</sup> Field investigations have revealed dangerous complicities with belligerents—notably among local officials—that must be taken into account in the peacebuilding process (e.g., when officials are engaging in sanction busting or providing fuel to armed groups).

While the first three approaches deal with supply-side issues, a fourth approach is needed to tackle the demand side—that is, helping importing countries implement resource control measures such as sanctions or certifications. Typically, demand-side enforcement mechanisms include sanctions on specific commodities from particular countries (e.g., timber from Liberia); information sharing between peacekeeping forces, customs offices, importing governments, UN missions, and UN expert panels; and the monitoring of both upstream and downstream channels, through due diligence processes, to determine the legality of the extraction process and identify any human rights abuses.

Although the lack of territorial and institutional access to neighboring countries has so far prevented peacekeeping missions from implementing these approaches, specific mandates for peacekeeping missions, combined with formal

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<sup>8</sup> When organizations or individuals are attempting to survive (or even prosper) in the midst of conflict, boundaries between belligerent groups, government officials, and civilians may become blurred; this is particularly the case when the belligerent groups’ “frontlines” are shifting or nonexistent.

requests to neighboring governments from the UNSC, may secure such access. As noted earlier, sanctions are one of the Security Council's main tools; thus, the UNSC has, on occasion, imposed so-called secondary sanctions on neighboring states. These secondary sanctions target countries that have failed to block the import of conflict resources and continue to export them as a legal commodity, or that have refused access to peacekeeping missions attempting to implement sanctions on a commodity. Although secondary sanctions are effective when targeted to very specific commodities (as was the case in Liberia, where diamond exports were sanctioned as a result of the government's support of the rebellion in Sierra Leone), broader secondary sanctions raise ethical issues.

On the basis of past UN experience, a possible strategy for controlling access to conflict resources would involve the following sequence of initiatives:

1. An investigation by an expert panel.
2. The imposition of targeted commodity sanctions.
3. The establishment of peacekeeping missions authorized to engage in resource control.
4. If necessary, the imposition of secondary sanctions on sanction busters.

One way to strengthen this sequence is to encourage greater collaboration between expert panels and peacekeeping missions (Holt and Boucher 2009). Efforts to curb access to conflict resources are often combined with a post-conflict review of all resource sectors, and support for local authorities' efforts to recover looted assets and renegotiate resource contracts signed during hostilities.<sup>9</sup>

## **UN PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS AND CONFLICT RESOURCES**

UN peacekeeping operations have been established in at least eight countries where conflict resources contributed to prolonging hostilities. This section briefly reviews the mandates, specific measures, and effectiveness in each case; examples are presented in chronological order (see table 1).

### **Angola**

UNAVEM, the UN Angola Verification Missions (1988–1997), and MONUA, the UN Observer Mission in Angola (1997–1999), had limited mandates (mostly observation and facilitation of demobilization) and little military capacity. Neither mission took major steps to prevent diamonds from financing UNITA, either before or after 1997, when the UN imposed an export ban on diamonds that were not certified by the government (uncertified diamonds were presumed to come

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<sup>9</sup> For further discussion of contract renegotiation and asset recovery, see Philippe Le Billon, "Contract Renegotiation and Asset Recovery in Post-Conflict Settings," in this volume.



Table 1. Control of conflict resources by UN peacekeeping missions, 1988–2009

<i>Mission</i>	<i>Type of mandate</i>	<i>Measures</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
Angola: UNAVEM <sup>a</sup> (1988–1997), MONUA <sup>b</sup> (1997–1999)	Observation	Ban on noncertified diamond exports	The missions had very limited effectiveness, but the ban was effective—partly because of military pressure on UNITA from the Angolan government, and partly because the governments in Kinshasa (DRC) and Brazzaville (Republic of the Congo), which had provided conduits for UNITA’s diamond smuggling, were toppled; peacekeepers provided some assistance to UN expert panels.
Cambodia: UNTAC <sup>c</sup> (1992–1993)	Transitional authority	Ban on logging exports (sawn timber exempt)	Limited effectiveness because the ban was not implemented for long enough, and there was no UN enforcement of the ban in Khmer Rouge areas along the Thai border; the UN mission provided some assistance as a transitional authority in the area of environmental and resource management.
Croatia UNTAES <sup>d</sup> (1996–1998)	Transitional authority	Border monitoring	Limited support for local police forces.
Sierra Leone: UNAMSIL <sup>e</sup> (1999–2005)	Assistance	Ban on noncertified diamond exports	Peacekeepers provided some assistance with monitoring and conflict resolution in the diamond sector.
DRC: MONUC <sup>f</sup> (1999–2010), MONUSCO <sup>g</sup> (2010–present)	Assistance	Curtailing financing of illegal groups	Monitoring, border control at airports, some military assistance to Congolese army to curtail armed groups’ access to natural resources.
Afghanistan: UNAMA <sup>h</sup> (2002–present)	Assistance	Counternarcotics operations	Policy coordination and technical cooperation; no military component.
Liberia: UNMIL <sup>i</sup> (2003–present)	Assistance	Ban on timber and all diamond exports	Limited assistance in key areas; UNMIL also maintains an Environment and Natural Resources Unit, which assists UN expert panels.
Côte d’Ivoire: MINUCI <sup>j</sup> (2003–2004), UNOCI <sup>k</sup> (2004–présent)	Assistance	Ban on all diamond exports	Embargo-monitoring unit; no mandate to address key resource sectors (e.g., cocoa) from which rebels obtain financing.

*Notes:*

- a. UN Angola Verification Missions.
- b. UN Observer Mission in Angola.
- c. UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia.
- d. UN Transitional Administration in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja, and Western Sirmium.
- e. UN Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone.
- f. UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- g. UN Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- h. UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.
- i. UN Mission in Liberia.
- j. UN Mission in Côte d’Ivoire.
- k. UN Operation in Côte d’Ivoire.

from UNITA-controlled areas). MONUA did, however, provide logistical assistance to a UN panel of experts in 1999.

## **Cambodia**

In Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge (also known as the Party of Democratic Kampuchea, or PDK) was financed by logging and, to a lesser extent, gem mining. Using military observers and aerial surveys, UNTAC, the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (1992–1993), documented the extent of the exploitation, thereby increasing the (mostly ineffective) pressure that environmental and human rights groups had been putting on the transitional government, the Supreme National Council, to declare a moratorium on the export of logs from Cambodia—which it did, on September 22, 1992. On November 30, 1992, the UNSC supported the moratorium through resolution 792, which requested “States, especially neighbouring States, to respect . . . [the] moratorium by not importing such logs” and further requested “UNTAC to take appropriate measures to secure the implementation of such moratorium” (UNSC 1992). The resolution also extended the moratorium to the export of minerals and gems.

Although the resolution was carefully phrased as an effort to protect Cambodia’s natural resources, the fact that it was not vetoed by China, the PDK’s main backer, sent an important political signal to the PDK. Nevertheless, the resolution was largely useless: UNTAC was unable to gain access to smuggling areas, either from PDK-controlled territory or from the Thai side; the transitional government’s implementation of the moratorium was erratic; and sawn-timber exports were exempt from the moratorium. Moreover, immediately after the UN-sponsored elections in May 1993, the transitional government expanded exemptions even further. In addition to its limited involvement in the moratorium, UNTAC provided some guidance to local authorities in environmental and resource management, as part of its mandate as a transitional authority.

## **Croatia**

Like UNTAC, the UN Transitional Administration in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja, and Western Sirmium, or UNTAES (1996–1998), also had to deal with illegal logging, but on a much smaller scale; as Serbian-held territories reverted to Croatia, local “mafia” groups engaged in a pattern of “looting before leaving.” Timber smuggling appeared to be mostly criminally motivated, with limited consequences for the evolution of the conflict. While border monitors were checking for incoming weapons, valuable hardwoods, including oak, were being smuggled to Serbia for eventual export to Europe. Trafficking routes were known, but neither UN border officers nor UNTAES military personnel were authorized to take action, other than to provide limited support for local police forces; Serbian militias also refrained from intervening. Joint Serbian-Croatian police forces, however, did conduct some operations, including border patrols, which

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apparently had some success in countering illegal logging and smuggling (UNSC 1997).

#### Sierra Leone

The UN Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone, or UNAMSIL (1999–2005), actively engaged in diamond sector regulation only in the last stages of its operation. Before that point, peacekeeping forces had intervened in an ad hoc fashion to prevent the escalation of resource-related conflicts,<sup>10</sup> but the UN mission remained wary of overstepping its mandate,<sup>11</sup> antagonizing local interest groups, exposing UN troops to criminal violence, or reinforcing rumors that peacekeeping forces were involved in diamond deals (UNAMSIL 2001). Although some of these concerns were legitimate, reports from military observers about diamond-related conflicts (including ongoing armed skirmishes) and requests for assistance from the government and from the donors who were funding diamond reforms eventually led UNAMSIL to take on a more proactive role. In 2003, two years after hostilities had ceased, UNAMSIL began conducting aerial surveys, deploying foot patrols, and engaging in targeted conflict-settlement interventions in the diamond sector—most notably, working with local youths who were in conflict with mining groups made up of former RUF soldiers. These efforts were often undertaken jointly with the Ministry of Mines, but UNAMSIL occasionally served in a supervisory capacity for that ministry (DFID 2006).

#### Democratic Republic of the Congo

Since its establishment in 1999, the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies en République Démocratique du Congo, or MONUC) repeatedly confronted conflict-related resources issues. During the first war (1996–1997), the second war (1998–2003), and the aftermath of the second war, mineral resources financed both local and foreign armed groups, especially in the eastern part of the country. Although the UN has used expert panel investigations and public reporting to address this connection, it has not imposed sanctions on conflict resources.<sup>12</sup>

By 2008, MONUC was already planning joint operations with the Congolese army, the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC), to disrupt the presence of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda

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<sup>10</sup> Peacekeepers intervened, for example, in the clashes between local youths and demobilized rebel soldiers during the 2001 diamond rush in Koidu, Sierra Leone's diamond capital.

<sup>11</sup> This reluctance was despite the fact that the mandate included coordinating with, and assisting, Sierra Leonean law enforcement in the discharge of its responsibilities (UNAMSIL 2005).

<sup>12</sup> The DRC is part of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme; thus, its official exports ought to exclude diamonds that come from rebel-controlled areas.

(Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda, or FDLR) “in mining areas . . . [to drive] them away from their most important trading routes” (Doss n.d.).<sup>13</sup> In December 2008, with Resolution 1856 the Security Council gave MONUC a mandate to

coordinate operations with the FARDC integrated brigades deployed in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and support operations led by and jointly planned with these brigades in accordance with international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law with a view to . . . preventing the provision of support to illegal armed groups, including support derived from illicit economic activities (UNSC 2008f, para. 3(g)).

MONUC was also given authority to “use its monitoring and inspection capacities to curtail the provision of support to illegal armed groups derived from illicit trade in natural resources” (UNSC 2008f).

In Resolution 1857, the UNSC extended the list of individuals and companies subject to travel sanctions, financial sanctions, or both, to “individuals or entities supporting the illegal armed groups in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo through illicit trade of natural resources,” thus sending a strong signal to companies involved in trading conflict resources (UNSC 2008g para. 4(g)).<sup>14</sup> The UNSC also requested that MONUC, governments in the region, and the group of experts “cooperate intensively, including by exchanging information regarding . . . the illegal trafficking in natural resources” (UNSC 2008g, para. 11).<sup>15</sup> Military cooperation between MONUC and the Congolese government has not been straightforward, however; in a joint Congolese-Rwandan operation undertaken in January and February 2009 against the FDLR, for example, MONUC was largely excluded from planning and implementation.

Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1856 involves some major difficulties:

- The resolution calls for MONUC to work “in close collaboration” with the Congolese government and to intervene “in support of” FARDC-led operations (Peleman 2009). While this requirement recognizes the sovereignty of the Congolese state, it has led to delays that might not have occurred if MONUC troops been able to intervene autonomously.
- Many of the new FARDC officers are former members of armed groups that continue to have a stake in illegal exploitation, and some FARDC units are directly involved in such exploitation. As noted by Global Witness, “in parts of Mwenga and Kalehe, Congolese army units . . . have started taking over

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<sup>13</sup> The FDLR is a militia made up of chiefly Rwandan Hutus, many of whom have lived in the DRC since the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

<sup>14</sup> An earlier resolution, 1807, had established the initial list (UNSC 2008d). The only companies on the list were from the DRC, Rwanda, or Uganda (UNSC 2009a).

<sup>15</sup> “Group of experts” is the new name for UN expert panels.

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mining sites after dislodging the FDLR” (2009b, 3). In response to criticism of such actions, Joseph Kabila, the president of the DRC, ordered all military personnel to vacate mining sites (Global Witness 2009a).<sup>16</sup>

- The situation in the DRC is complicated by the fact that natural resources are not the only source of finance for armed groups. Some militias also derive income from illegally taxing the local population. Curtailing access to resource revenues may therefore, at least in the short term, increase predatory behavior toward local populations—which might, in turn, increase the workload of the UN mission, whose main task is to protect the civilian population. MONUC has limited capacity, and needs to prioritize its activities. As of this writing, MONUC is placing priority on protecting civilians and curbing the activities of armed groups (chiefly the FDLR), even if curtailing armed groups’ access to resources would improve medium-term prospects.
- Not all mining sites and links in the trading network can be brought under control. Systematic mapping of mining- and mineral-trade routes in North Kivu and South Kivu (in the eastern DRC) identified 215 mining sites, 45 trading houses, 10 airports, and 6 major border crossings (IPIS 2008). In July 2009, Lt. Col. Jean-Paul Dietrich, a MONUC military spokesperson, noted that while Kimia II, a joint FARDC-MONUC military operation undertaken in 2009, “aimed at recovering the main mining sites . . . there are other sources of income [still available] for the FDLR and the armed groups” (IRIN 2009). A report from Global Witness also stressed that while Kimia II

appears to have temporarily disrupted the FDLR’s mining activities in certain other areas, . . . the longer-term effect is not yet clear. The FDLR have abandoned some mines in parts of Mwenga (South Kivu), in anticipation of the deployment of [Kimia II], only to continue mining in nearby areas. The FDLR have turned increasingly violent against the civilian population since the start of [Kimia II] (2009b, 3).

- Despite nearly a decade of media, UN expert panel, and NGO reports stressing the importance of conflict resources, and despite the UNSC resolutions of late 2008 (UNSC 2008a, 2008b, 2008d)—which encouraged MONUC, more strongly than ever before, to cooperate with the FARDC to curtail the illegal resource trade—the UN has not taken the step of imposing sanctions, which would have made it easier to distinguish between legal and illegal

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<sup>16</sup> Because MONUC is required to collaborate with the Congolese army, President Kabila’s order effectively prevented MONUC troops from intervening at mine sites, giving a potential advantage to illegal armed groups that have sufficiently reduced their military presence to prevent the president from reversing his policy (and sending Congolese troops back to the mines), but that are nevertheless continuing their economic activities.

resources, exploitation, and trade.<sup>17</sup> In the absence of official sanctions, many resource companies, faced with accusations of complicity in war crimes, claim to have stopped importing minerals from conflict zones in the DRC—in particular, tantalite, from the eastern DRC. Thus, a poorly implemented de facto sanction regime is currently in place that obstructs even the legal traders, who then shift toward, or are replaced by, informal (and in some cases criminal) trading networks. The economic ascendance of informal or criminal networks, in turn, drags down miners' incomes (because these networks are associated with both lower prices and lower demand), and undermines the formal economy, governing institutions, and government revenues.

- Finally, implementation of UNSC Resolution 1856 is complicated by the involvement of Congolese military, political, and business leaders in “illegal” trade—an issue that is rendered even more complex by the difficulty of defining legality in the DRC, where political legitimacy (that is, the standing of the authorities that passed the laws) is uncertain, and where international, national, provincial, and customary laws may simultaneously apply (Cuvelier 2004). A 2009 UN report noted that “conducting random checks at port, airport or border posts can . . . have serious consequences for the Mission’s relations with the Government and the FARDC” (JMAC 2009, 4). In 2008, a UN expert panel argued that “targeting companies complicit in systematically trading minerals with FDLR and promoting due diligence within the international minerals supply chain represent effective ways of cutting off the financial support of FDLR” (UNSC 2008h, 19). Such efforts are complicated, however, by the fact that many of the businesspeople involved in conflict resources are also major subcontractors or landlords for MONUC and aid agencies. Thus, MONUC is in a somewhat difficult position: to accomplish its mandate, it must maintain a good relationship with the government of the DRC; but it may not always be in the interests of the government to have MONUC on board.

To address these problems, MONUC staff have recommended the following strategies (JMAC 2009):

- Training MONUC staff, especially military observers and civil police, in the monitoring of conflict resource trade (e.g., how to identify trade vectors—such as vehicles, planes, and companies—and how to recognize legal documentation).

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<sup>17</sup> There were three reasons for the UN’s resistance to the imposition of an embargo: concerns about its feasibility in the absence of support from neighboring countries; concerns about the embargo’s effects on livelihoods and the overall economy; and the fact that regional political and economic elites—upon which both the political process and the logistics of the UN mission depend—may have been implicated in questionable activities.

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- Deploying military observers at key locations (including airports), and providing support for unannounced inspections (e.g., of aircraft) by Congolese security forces.
- Removing armed groups and army checkpoints that are illegally taxing the resource trade.
- Assisting with capacity building for Congolese police, military personnel, and customs officers, through the provision of training and equipment.
- Profiling peace spoilers and key economic actors who are likely to be involved in the production and trading of conflict commodities.
- Undertaking satellite observation of mining sites and transportation corridors.
- Undertaking centralized data gathering and analysis.
- Building awareness, among local businesses, of illegal exploitation.<sup>18</sup>
- Engaging in broader collaboration with development agencies and local authorities to regulate and bring trade into the formal economy.

The Congolese government has also given attention to resource issues as part of its Programme of Stabilization and Rebuilding of Former Conflict Zones (STAREC). The program calls for Congolese security forces to monitor mining sites operated by armed groups; for government services (specifically, the mining registry; the Center of Evaluation, Expertise, and Certification, the DRC's regulatory mining body; and the Ministry of Mines' antifraud office) to be strengthened in the provinces; and for controls to be established on airfields and roads leading to mine sites (Custers 2009). As part of the STAREC initiative, the Congolese prime minister has asked MONUC to assist in the transportation and deployment of mining inspectors, but MONUC staff does not feel that such an effort can be undertaken until road projects are completed and police forces and credible public administrators are in place in areas where mines are located.

#### Afghanistan

UNAMA, the ongoing UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, was established in 2002 and faces the most difficult conflict resource issue of any current peace-keeping operation: in 2008 alone, opium is estimated to have provided between US\$250 and US\$470 million to the Taliban (UNODC 2008).<sup>19</sup> UNAMA's mandate is to cooperate with the Afghan government in "identifying individuals and

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<sup>18</sup> This would involve, for example, helping businesses to understand that conflict resources are used to finance armed groups, to grasp the importance of legitimate government taxation, and to be aware of the risk of being sanctioned for dealing in conflict resources.

<sup>19</sup> Timber and other resources are also at issue, but to a much smaller degree (UNODC 2008).

entities participating in the financing or support of acts or activities of al Qaeda and the Taliban using proceeds derived from illicit cultivation, production and trafficking of narcotic drugs and their precursors” (UNSC 2009b, para. 31).<sup>20</sup>

Narcotics—in Afghanistan, most notably opium production and trafficking—have long been monitored by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which closely cooperates with UNAMA and with a growing number of international development organizations. UNAMA’s director for narcotics is also the UNODC director, and both organizations engage in policy coordination and technical cooperation but have no peacekeeping military component; most of the international troops in Afghanistan are part of the UNSC-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which is under the command of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).<sup>21</sup>

Until 2008, the ISAF limited its role to the support of Afghan-government drug-eradication policies, most visibly through the military protection of crop eradication units. Since then, NATO has taken a more direct approach, targeting drug laboratories and traffickers; however, each country that sends troops to the ISAF can choose its own level of involvement in counternarcotics activities, and interventions “can be taken only upon request of the Afghan Government and with the consent of the national authorities of the forces involved” (NATO n.d.).<sup>22</sup>

Several studies have pointed out that unless eradication programs improve the broader agricultural, economic, and, most importantly, institutional context of narcotics production, they are counterproductive (Byrd 2008; Goodhand 2008).<sup>23</sup> Although opium poppy cultivation declined in 2008, opium production had exceeded external demand for several years, primarily because of a lack of effective counternarcotics policies;<sup>24</sup> the resulting massive stockpiles have led to a drop in prices, which has contributed to an increase in the use of opium within Afghanistan (UNODC 2009).

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<sup>20</sup> See also UNSC Resolutions 1267, 1735, 1806, and 1822 (UNSC 1999, 2006, 2008c, 2008e).

<sup>21</sup> For further discussion of counternarcotics policies and the organizations that are implementing them, see David M. Catarious Jr. and Alison Russell, “Counternarcotics Efforts and Afghan Poppy Farmers: Finding the Right Approach,” in this volume.

<sup>22</sup> ISAF describes its direct military intervention in this area as “providing in-extremis support to the Afghan National Security Forces’ counter-narcotics operations,” although it will also provide “enhanced support” that includes “the destruction of processing facilities and action against narcotic producers if there is a clearly established link with the insurgency” (NATO n.d.).

<sup>23</sup> For more information on the role of opium in Afghanistan, see Adam Pain, “The Janus Nature of Opium Poppy: A View from the Field,” in this volume.

<sup>24</sup> During the initial years of NATO’s presence in Afghanistan, the primary focus was on political stability and antiterrorism—which led NATO countries to turn a blind eye to the involvement of supposed allies in the opium trade. NATO also wished to avoid upsetting the opium-based rural economy in many parts of the country.



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### Liberia

UNMIL, the ongoing UN Mission in Liberia, was established in 2003; its mandate is “to assist the transitional government in restoring proper administration of natural resources,” as part of the implementation of the peace process (UNSC 2003, para. 3(r)). Conflict resources—mostly timber, but also rubber and diamonds—had played a major role in the Liberian conflicts between 1989 and 2003.

Because of the rapid cessation of hostilities and improving security after 2003, UNMIL did not confront extensive problems with conflict commodities—which was a positive factor, considering that UNMIL’s full deployment took nine months, largely because UN member countries failed to provide the pledged troops.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, UNMIL was subject to criticism for failing to do more to address the problem of conflict resources. Among its critics was Global Witness, the leading NGO in the realm of resources and armed conflicts. In 2005, Global Witness wrote a letter to the UNSC, stating that UNMIL had failed to implement its mandate because

they have not been given the legal authority to act as independently and proactively as they need to effectively seek out and stop illegal timber or diamond operations. . . . UNMIL’s ability to fulfill its mandate is further undermined by its lack of deployment in diamond- and timber-rich areas, particularly along Liberia’s porous border regions with Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone (Global Witness 2005).

If UNMIL did not undertake sufficient efforts to secure conflict commodities, it did create an environment and natural resources unit, although the unit’s work on conflict resources is largely limited to assisting with the investigations of UN expert panels.<sup>26</sup> Arguably, other UN agencies—such as the UN Environment Programme, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, and the UN Development Programme—have a more general mandate to engage in environmental protection and resource management, but the creation of the environment and natural resources unit was in line with UNMIL’s quasi-trusteeship functions during the transition period from 2003 to 2005.

UNMIL did carry out some aerial reconnaissance to monitor mining, along with occasional (but rare) ground patrols. On some occasions, it also deployed troops in resource-rich areas—for example, to remove artisanal diamond miners operating illegally within an oil palm plantation; to close a large artisanal diamond mining site that had been identified by an expert panel but had not been shut down by the transitional government (allegedly, diamonds were being stockpiled

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<sup>25</sup> The deployment of UNAMSIL, in contrast, was delayed in part because the RUF maintained control of diamond-rich territories, notably in Kono District.

<sup>26</sup> The unit has also helped the mission to minimize the environmental impact of peacekeeping operations and has conducted an environmental baseline survey; see Ravier (2008) and UNMIL (n.d.).

at the site while the owners waited for sanctions to be lifted) (UNSC 2004; Powell and Yahya 2006);<sup>27</sup> and to protect the interests of a U.S. diamond company and restore calm and order after demonstrations at a Firestone rubber concession in 2007. Some troop deployments have sparked controversy; in particular, Liberian mining interests and company employees have accused UNMIL of protecting the interests of foreign companies over those of local populations (Mines and Communities 2007; *News* 2007). Such accusations demonstrate that UN peacekeeping deployment in resource sectors can generate new conflicts, and should therefore be considered from a political perspective instead of being narrowly conceived as a law-and-order measure.

### **Côte d'Ivoire**

The UN Mission in Côte d'Ivoire, MINUCI (2003–2004) and the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, UNOCI (2004–present), faced limited direct hostilities between the government and the Forces Nouvelles, the rebel group that controlled the northern part of the country. A UNSC resolution banned all diamond exports in 2005, and a UNOCI embargo-monitoring unit was established in 2006 to collaborate with UN expert panels; however, most of the funding for belligerents—especially the Forces Nouvelles—comes from illegal taxes on primary commodities (primarily cocoa, but also coffee, timber, and cotton) and transportation fuel (Global Witness 2007; Powell and Yahya 2006; UNSC 2005).

The cocoa sector has been singled out for its contribution to a parallel economy that feeds corruption and hostilities, but because of massive employment in that sector, cocoa sanctions would have devastating consequences. Although UN expert panels and NGOs have recommended the investigation of rebel financing, corruption, land conflicts, and human rights abuses in the cocoa sector, UN officials have expressed reluctance to work on such politically sensitive subjects (Global Witness 2007). MINUCI did take some limited actions with regard to the cocoa sector—to help reduce poverty among farmers, for example, MINUCI provided training in income management—but these measures did not directly address other, potentially controversial issues associated with resources (APO 2009; ONUCI 2009).

## **ISSUES AND PERSPECTIVES**

As an international military force deployed to keep the peace, UN peacekeeping operations—and, more broadly, non-UN peacekeeping forces (such as regional peacekeeping forces)—have a unique ability to help sever links between resources and peace spoilers. Although peacekeepers could theoretically be deployed to

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<sup>27</sup> UN sanctions were imposed on diamond exports from 2001 to 2007, and on timber exports from 2003 to 2006.

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control diamond mining, logging, or drug trafficking operations that finance armed groups, the governments that are mandating peacekeeping operations—through the UNSC, for example—are often reluctant to assign peacekeepers such roles.

At the mission level, operational staff, both at headquarters and on the ground, recognize the importance of curtailing peace spoilers' access to high-value resources, but they are also aware of the difficulties associated with intervention. Mission staff, including military observers monitoring military activities and, to a lesser extent, UN civil police monitoring and assisting local police forces, often report on the role of resources in local skirmishes—not only between armed groups but also between rival government security agencies, private militias, and criminal gangs. This low-level violence rarely receives political attention, but political affairs officers at UN missions have nevertheless warned of the potential for escalation; they have also noted the broader implications of resource revenues for relations within and between armed groups. Such issues have also received greater consideration because UN intelligence efforts have been boosted by Joint Mission Analysis Cells, which are charged with assessing the overall political and security situations of UN missions and reporting to the Special Representatives of the UN Secretary-General that head the missions.

The deployment of UN troops for combat operations intended to curtail rebel access to resources raises a number of questions. Is direct intervention legal? How might it affect relations between the UN mission, the host government, and local populations? Might such intervention further military dependence on UN troops? Do the peacekeeping missions have the necessary capacity to intervene successfully? Finally, is it worth the risk—both for the troops and for civilians in the targeted area?<sup>28</sup>

Answers to these questions depend, in large part, on the specific circumstances. Legally, local authorities have the right to prohibit unilateral deployment, unless the country is under a UN trusteeship mandate, under which sovereign authority is vested in a UN administrative body. Moreover, because most missions prior to 2000 were carried out under chapter VI of the UN Charter, which addresses pacific settlement of disputes, rather than chapter VII, which addresses forceful settlement of disputes, peacekeeping missions are prevented from engaging in any “offensive” combat role—including taking control of resource production areas. Despite the recent use of chapter VII authorizations, out of the half-dozen peacekeeping missions established since 1988 in countries where hostilities had been financed, in large part, by conflict commodities, only one—MONUC—has been specifically mandated to address the financing of illegal groups by illicit economic activities, which included the provision of military support to DRC government troops. Although the UN Head of Mission and the UN

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<sup>28</sup> Some regional and UN peacekeeping units have allegedly been involved in resource trafficking (diamonds in Sierra Leone, and arms for gold in the DRC) (Montague 2002; Basanisi 2008). Thus, there is the additional risk that, through closer involvement with conflict resources, UN personnel will become embroiled in corruption.

Mission Chief of Staff, as well as individual UN-mandated military contingents, or even officers, have used their room for maneuver to investigate, report on, or stop illegal practices,<sup>29</sup> decision makers within UN missions have generally been wary of overstepping their mandate, overextending or diverting resources, alienating economic or political stakeholders, or putting both peacekeepers and civilians at risk by interfering with the economic interests of criminals and armed groups.

Sovereignty issues (including sovereignty over resources) have also discouraged sending and receiving governments from assigning UN peacekeepers an active role in preventing conflict resources from funding peace spoilers.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, because the economic interests of governments and companies may conflict (either because a company and a host government are competing producers, or because a sending government also happens to be the home government of investors), there is a risk that, if peacekeepers are directly involved in conflict resources issue, there may be allegations that the peacekeepers are serving the interests of their home countries—specifically by protecting those countries' access to resources. Although the U.S. invasion of Iraq was not a “peacekeeping” mission, the non-UN mandated and U.S.-led “coalition of the willing” was the subject of such allegations. On the other hand, shared economic interests could create an incentive for granting peacekeeping missions broader mandates and thereby increasing their effectiveness.<sup>31</sup>

Most governments provide troops to UN missions on the assumption that the risk of casualties is very low. In addition, the military capacity of most UN contingents is usually limited, especially for offensive combat operations. Many

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<sup>29</sup> Given the wide variations in the behavior of individual missions or elements within those missions, the review provided in this chapter is only preliminary; a systematic assessment of the involvement of UN missions in resource sectors could contribute to more effective future peacekeeping operations.

<sup>30</sup> For example, Russia was initially very reluctant to support and participate in the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme because it viewed transparency about production volume and diamond prices as an infringement on its sovereignty and commercial interests.

<sup>31</sup> Most accusations of resource appropriation have been made under the following circumstances: when mining was being undertaken by mercenary companies (as was the case with the South African mercenary group Executive Outcomes, in the mid-1990s); when neighboring countries have conducted military interventions (as both Uganda and Rwanda did during the late 1990s, in the former Zaire/DRC); and when non-UN-mandated foreign military interventions have been conducted, as was the case with the United States in Colombia and Iraq (Le Billon 2005). Concerns about resource appropriation may be valid for UN-mandated peacekeeping contributors with large mining investments. In the case of the DRC, relative stability in the most significant mining areas (especially in Katanga) may have contributed to the neglect of “local” violence, most of which was concentrated in the eastern part of the country and affected artisanal mining. As long as key mining projects were not under threat, the country was considered “at peace.” For the argument that peacekeeping in the DRC failed largely because the broader implications of local conflicts and local violence were ignored, see Autesserre (2006).

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governments that send troops to UN peacekeeping missions view resource control not only as a high-risk option, but as a distraction from, or even as counterproductive to, peacekeepers' principal political and humanitarian mandates. "Robust" peacekeeping—entailing combat operations in mining or logging areas, for example—is thus unlikely, in part because of the risk of casualties among both civilians and UN troops.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, in some cases, the deployment of UN troops in resource areas has been viewed as a necessity.<sup>33</sup> Where such efforts have been undertaken, however, they have occasionally met with determined resistance from armed groups, and the resource-rich areas have often been the last ones to come under UN control.<sup>34</sup>

One of the most pressing issues is whether intervention will make a substantial contribution to a speedier end to the conflict, without creating harmful consequences in the future—loss of livelihoods, for example, or abuse by rebel groups. When armed groups' access to conflict resources is curtailed, they sometimes turn on the local populations, either to obtain funding or simply for revenge—events for which the UN would bear some responsibility. There is another perspective on this problem, however: Weinstein (2006) has found that rebel groups that emerge in resource-rich environments tend to commit worse abuses against civilians. This behavior appears to be associated with a membership pool of "consumers" rather than "investors"—that is, combatants who are drawn to the rebellion by short-term, opportunistic economic objectives rather than by long-term political objectives.<sup>35</sup> In the short term, UN military interventions in resource sectors may risk exacerbating abuses by rebels against civilian populations; but in the long term, such interventions may not only reduce the capacity of rebel groups but may also help focus rebel movements on political objectives—and therefore on negotiations, rather than on survival and profiteering.<sup>36</sup> Thus, intervention needs to be carefully considered from a number of perspectives, including ethical, military, political, and economic.

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<sup>32</sup> Potential alternatives include targeted interventions at key sites and backing for judicial procedures against traders involved in conflict-resource trafficking.

<sup>33</sup> For example, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, has stressed that peacekeeping deployment should take mining areas into account, a consideration that he considered particularly important in the case of the DRC (UNSC 2007).

<sup>34</sup> This was the case, for example, in Sierra Leone, where the RUF maintained control of the Kono diamond mines. Resources are not the only consideration, however. In Angola, UNITA units moved from diamond-rich areas to the homeland of its leader—a choice that was criticized from within the movement (UNITA 2001).

<sup>35</sup> In resource-rich areas, a higher incidence of abuses against civilians may also be linked to low dependence on local populations for sustenance; this is in contrast to rebellions that operate in resource-poor areas or that lack access to external sponsors.

<sup>36</sup> This effect works by weeding out "consumers," including those in leadership positions. Such "repoliticization" of rebel movements, however, may foreclose the option of "buying out" movement leaders through economic and security incentives—an approach that has sometimes led to key defections.

## CONCLUSION

Requiring peacekeepers to prevent resources from financing peace spoilers is part of a growing effort, since the early 1990s, to strengthen peacebuilding by improving the developmental outcomes of resource exploitation. Overall, much can be achieved if peacekeeping missions directly address conflict resources. Attention must be paid, however, to the characteristics of the resource sectors, the specific incentives that shape the post-conflict situation, and the capacity and determination of local and international institutions. Although much experience has been gained, the establishment of study groups, within UN missions, that have specific expertise on resource sectors in the post-conflict setting would help to identify further constraints and opportunities.

The preliminary review provided in this chapter gives rise to several general observations and recommendations. Most broadly and most importantly, peacekeeping forces can play a role in curtailing peace spoilers' access to resource revenues. Meeting this objective requires identifying actors in the extractive industries, demilitarizing resource production areas, and closing down activities that benefit spoilers. The capacity of peacekeepers should be reinforced so that they can more effectively engage in observation, mediation, and policing. Further attention should be given to the resource areas in which peacekeepers can be more efficiently deployed. The experience of MONUC, in the DRC, will be of major interest in this regard, especially given its specific mandate from the UNSC. The investigative role of expert panels should be further strengthened through greater collaboration with peacekeeping missions; expert panels should also engage in the collection of evidence for the purpose of prosecution.

As part of their peacebuilding mandate, UN mission staff should seek to address broader linkages between resource revenues and conflicts by assisting (1) local authorities who are in charge of resource sectors and (2) international transitional authorities and aid agencies that are engaged in these sectors. Monitoring, logistical support, and the "good offices" of the UN Head of Mission can all contribute to such efforts. In the DRC, for example, MONUC shares information collected on illegal logging with several UN agencies, NGOs, and government authorities.

The UNSC has an extensive, if controversial, track record in seeking to curtail belligerents' access to resource revenues. The experience of peacekeeping forces, in contrast, remains very limited. Peacekeepers have only recently been specifically mandated by Security Council resolutions to address resource financing; previously, such efforts were generally ad hoc measures undertaken at the mission level or at the direction of local UN commanders.

The evidence reviewed in this chapter suggests that traditional peacekeeping missions are generally poorly prepared to forcefully and effectively curtail peace spoilers' access to resource revenues. Such interventions must be (1) carefully considered from humanitarian, political, and economic standpoints before being carried out; (2) preceded by careful operational planning; and (3) conducted by

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adequately trained, equipped, and disciplined international forces—so that the risks of human rights abuses, military failure, and corruption are minimized. Collaboration with local forces should also be monitored, and should be subject to stringent guidelines. Short of engaging in interdiction, peacekeepers do have the potential to help collect information on resource sectors, remove peace spoilers from important resource extraction areas, and back up police efforts to arrest illicit traders.

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