



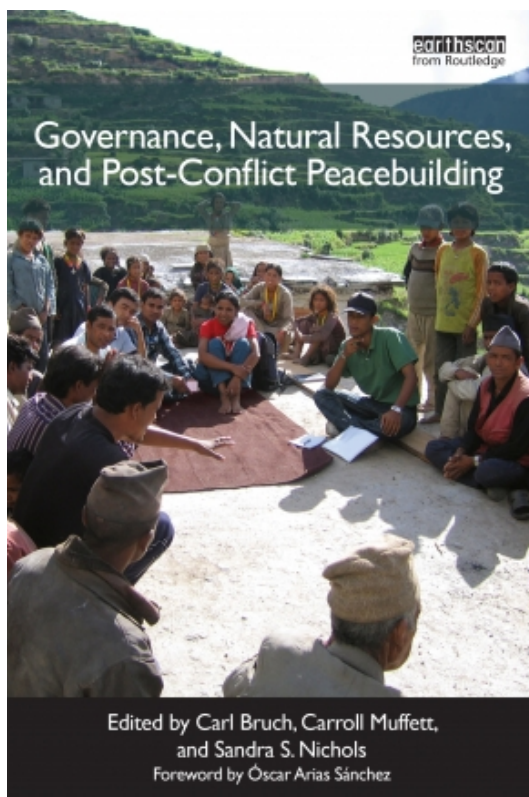
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**Taking the Gun out of Extraction: UN Responses to the Role of Natural Resources in Conflicts**

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# Taking the gun out of extraction: UN responses to the role of natural resources in conflicts

*Mark B. Taylor and Mike Davis*

Conflict resources are a problem for peace. In the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), civilians die on a daily basis because of a conflict that has been sustained, in part, by the international trade in minerals. Although the conflict's economic dimension and the identity of those fueling it have been known for many years, increased awareness of the problem has not triggered effective action. Experiences to date suggest a number of ways that the United Nations could more effectively address conflict resources. This chapter examines these experiences and identifies opportunities for strengthening the coherence and effectiveness of UN interventions to address conflict resources. Looking at a range of cases, this chapter focuses on the international peace and security architecture's response to natural resource-fueled conflicts and suggests ways it can be strengthened. Following a background survey, the discussion is organized into sections relating to the four principal domains of the international conflict management system: (1) sanctions, (2) peacemaking, (3) peacekeeping, and (4) peacebuilding. This chapter closes with a review of lessons learned and a discussion of the way forward. It highlights that although the UN has made progress on each of these fronts, there remains room for significant improvement.

## **BACKGROUND: BREAKING THE LINKS**

In the past twenty years, almost one in three UN peacekeeping operations worldwide, and just over one-half of those in Africa, have concerned conflicts sustained by revenues from primary commodities such as oil, diamonds, minerals, and

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timber (DPKO n.d.).<sup>1</sup> It has long been clear that this self-financing aspect of post-Cold War conflicts—and the central role of natural resources—has become a permanent feature on the international security landscape. The UN’s High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change recommended that “[t]he United Nations should work with national authorities, international financial institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector to develop norms governing the management of natural resources for countries emerging from or at risk of conflict.” (UNGA 2004, 35).

A 2007 statement by the President of the United Nations Security Council (Security Council) noted that “in specific armed conflict situations, the exploitation, trafficking, and illicit trade of natural resources have played a role in areas where they have contributed to the outbreak, escalation or continuation of armed conflict” (UNSC 2007, 1).<sup>2</sup>

The Security Council has authorized investigations and sanctions, and in some cases, mandated peacekeeping missions to get involved in disrupting the illicit trade in natural resources.<sup>3</sup>

These steps by the Security Council do not reflect a specific strategy. The UN has improved its operational capabilities through reforms in the arenas of sanctions and peacekeeping, but its efforts to counter the natural resource–conflict

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<sup>1</sup> According to the UN, there have been fifty peacekeeping operations initiated since 1990, of which twenty-seven have been deployed in Africa. Out of the fifty missions, seventeen have concerned conflicts sustained by revenues from primary commodities: Angola (three); Cambodia (two); Liberia (two); Sierra Leone (two); Somalia (two); Abyei (one); Côte d’Ivoire (one); Democratic Republic of the Congo (one); Mali (one); South Sudan (one); and Sudan (one).

<sup>2</sup> Since 2002, UN member states such as Belgium, Canada, Germany, and Norway have taken the opportunity of their presence on the Security Council to raise awareness about the issue.

<sup>3</sup> Security Council Resolution 1509, adopted September 19, 2003, authorized the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) “to assist the transitional government in restoring proper administration of natural resources” (UNSC 2003, 4); Security Council Resolution 1562, adopted September 17, 2004, authorized the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to “support the Sierra Leone armed forces and police in patrolling the border and diamond-mining areas” (UNSC 2004, 2); Security Council Resolution 1856, adopted December 22, 2008, authorized the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) 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 2008a, 5); Security Council Resolution 1990, adopted June 27, 2011 (UNSC 2011a), authorized the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) to “monitor the flashpoint border between [N]orth and [S]outh [Sudan]” (UN Peacekeeping n.d.a); Security Council Resolution 1996, adopted July 8, 2011, authorized the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) “to consolidate peace and security, and to help establish conditions for development” (UNSC 2011b); and Security Council Resolution 2100, adopted April 25, 2013 (UNSC 2013), authorized the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to “support the political process and carry out a number of security-related stabilization tasks” (UN Peacekeeping n.d.b).

nexus remain fragmented and characterized by ad hoc policy measures. Earlier solutions have been overlooked, only to be rediscovered later, and few lessons have been learned. In fact, there has been no attempt at all to develop a comprehensive approach to the natural resource dimensions of self-financing conflicts.

Despite the ad hoc policy responses, a consensus has emerged in recent years around two main conclusions concerning the political economy of armed conflict. The first is that the problem with natural resources is not so much the nature of resources themselves, their abundance, or their scarcity, but how they are governed, who is able to access them, and for what purposes.<sup>4</sup> In many places, predatory natural resource exploitation has contributed to the loss of sovereign control over the resources, undermined social and economic development, enabled crippling levels of corruption, and helped sustain armed violence. This dynamic of exploitation and violence is in reality a downward spiral in which the informalization of the state—what is sometimes referred to as “state fragility”—leaves people to fend for themselves while natural resource production falls under the control of those with access to coercive force. If the state is not an effective provider of services, security, or legitimacy, armed groups will often claim those roles, reinforcing the strength of the latter vis-à-vis the state (Bøås and Dunn 2007).

The second conclusion is that economic activity, in particular the extraction and trade in natural resources, can be a driver of conflict. The outward appearance of conflict zones as chaotic and violent masks the fact that commerce continues. Such natural resource extraction and commerce can help to sustain households in the midst of a crisis, but can also be used to finance the fighting. In some cases, the political grievances that helped to galvanize the parties to the conflict may merge with economic agendas. In this way, natural resources become crucial to the sustainability of the fighting, as well as one theater in which the struggle for power is played out.

These insights suggest that delinking armed violence and natural resource exploitation is critical to resolving conflict and relaunching development and democracy; in other words, taking the gun out of natural resource management is necessary for taking the gun out of politics.

To break the links in the natural resource–conflict nexus, international responses have generally fallen into three broad categories: (1) economic governance responses, (2) human rights responses, and (3) peace and security responses. In economic governance responses, state or international development institutions attempt to redirect natural resource exploitation toward supporting social and economic development and pro-poor policies, rather than reinforcing corruption and a negative cycle of exploitation and conflict. Human rights approaches involve

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Ballentine and Sherman (2003); Bannon and Collier (2003); Ross (2004); Ballentine and Nitzschke (2005); Malone and Nitzschke (2005); and Suhrke and Samset (2007).

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setting down rules for behavior in domestic and international law and seeking to hold states and nonstate actors accountable for international crimes and other serious human rights abuses. The third approach is concerned with threats to international peace and security. Working with or alongside the authorization of the Security Council, peace and security approaches seek to deal with threats to states and people through a range of tools usually grouped under the categories of sanctions, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. This chapter addresses these peace and security approaches to delinking natural resources and conflict.

### **SANCTIONS: COMBATING ILLICIT INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

UN sanctions aim to weaken their targets' ability to resist the decisions of the Security Council, or at least to raise the costs of noncompliance (Cortright and Lopez 2000). Their immediate objective is to curb those flows of resources that matter to the target. If applied properly, sanctions can address breaches of international law in a manner that is less costly than military action (Wallenstein, Staibano, and Eriksson 2003).

Commodity sanctions are one of the most powerful instruments at the Security Council's disposal. Their effectiveness in helping to weaken the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) rebel movement in the latter stages of the Angolan civil war, and in forcing parties to the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone to find alternative sources of income, has been examined in some detail (Cortright and Lopez 2002; Le Billon and Nicholls 2007; Le Billon 2012).<sup>5</sup> By seeking to exclude particular commodities of a specific origin from global markets, commodity sanctions send a clear signal to governments, industry, and consumers about what not to buy. More broadly, commodity sanctions demonstrate how economic decisions can affect international peace and security and human rights.

Experience has shown, however, that embargoes on commodities can be blunt instruments. Some have been poorly crafted, while others have suffered from inappropriate targeting and timing, or insufficient flexibility to match the agility of their targets, who may have access to other sources of income. In Iraq, for example, faulty design and implementation of an oil trade embargo allowed the country's political elite to abuse exemptions, while ordinary citizens were hit with the sanctions' punitive impact (Katzman and Blanchard 2005; U.S. GAO 2004; Volcker, Goldstone, and Pieth 2005).

Getting commodity sanctions right means asking some basic questions about the particular situation: Do the targets have alternative sources of revenue? Is the commodity production and trade largely dominated by abusive state or

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<sup>5</sup> In general, sanctions have a spotty record but targeted commodity sanctions have had measurable effects on commodities trade associated with particular conflicts.

nonstate armed groups, such as military units or rebel groups? What would be the unintended impacts on those not involved in illicit trade? Are there reasonable expectations of enforcement; for example, are neighboring countries willing and able to control border crossings?

Targeted sanctions are often more effective and appropriate than commodity bans, with fewer unintended side effects. These types of sanctions aim to modify the behavior of specific actors, for example, political and military leaders, insurgents, and their financial backers—whom the Security Council has deemed threatening to international peace. These sanctions are directed at particular people (that is, the leaders of a regime, or members of a rebel group) and the specific resources used by those people to advance their inimical or hostile behavior. By restricting these actors' access to particular goods, travel opportunities, and sources of revenue, the sanctions strive to negatively impact particular individuals or groups without hurting the general population (Wallensteen, Staibano, and Eriksson 2003). Like commodity bans, targeted sanctions make it clear to the private sector whom they should not be dealing with (Tostensen and Bull 2002).

Commodity sanctions and targeted sanctions are not mutually exclusive. Targeted trade sanctions aim to stop specific actors from obtaining revenue from particular commodities. In some instances, such as the Angola and Liberia conflicts, both approaches have been used simultaneously to reduce the flow of natural resource–derived funding to rebel groups. Targeted sanctions avoid many of the problems associated with general commodity sanctions, since they do not harm the entire economy.

However, implementing targeted trade sanctions can be problematic. First, natural resources subject to targeted sanctions, whether diamonds, timber, or oil, are nearly impossible to distinguish from natural resources that are being exported legally by individuals who are not the target of sanctions. Banned goods may be mixed with nonbanned goods, creating trading issues. Certification systems—like the Kimberley Process for diamonds, which requires careful documentation of where the diamonds originated—can be helpful for distinguishing between the resources that fuel conflict and nonconflict resources.<sup>6</sup> However, sanctions evasion can still be possible through the use of false documentation. A second problem with targeted trade sanctions is that actors can frequently shift to trading a different, nonsanctioned natural resource in order to finance the conflict (Wallensteen, Staibano, and Eriksson 2003).<sup>7</sup>

The UN's use of commodity and targeted sanctions has often been slow-moving and inefficient. For instance, in Côte d'Ivoire, the rebel group known as New Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (Forces Nouvelles de Côte d'Ivoire, or FNCI) took control of the country's diamond mines in 2005, and the Security Council

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<sup>6</sup> For analyses of the Kimberley Process, see Grant (2012) and Mitchell (2012).

<sup>7</sup> For an example of shifting in trade from one natural resource to another in Somalia, see Webersik and Crawford (2014).



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responded with an embargo on the country's diamonds. However, investigations by Global Witness revealed that the sanctions imposed on diamonds in 2005 had merely made the FNCI shift to trading cocoa. Global Witness calculated in 2007 that the FNCI were deriving approximately US\$30 million per year through the cocoa trade (Global Witness 2007b). A UN panel of experts report also confirmed the rebel group's reliance on cocoa for financing their activities (UNSC 2009a). At the time of writing, the Security Council has taken no action on this issue. Resolutions concerning the DRC suggest that the Security Council may be willing to make greater use of targeted sanctions to address natural resource-fueled conflicts. In December 2008, it extended existing targeted sanctions to cover "[i]ndividuals or entities supporting the illegal armed groups in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo through illicit trade of natural resources" (UNSC 2008b, para. 4g).

To complement this adjustment of the sanctions regime, the Security Council simultaneously mandated the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) peacekeeping operation, to "[u]se its monitoring and inspection capacities to curtail the provision of support to illegal armed groups derived from illicit trade in natural resources" (UNSC 2008a, para. 3j). The December 2008 sanctions resolution also included some significant language on due diligence. Taking up a suggestion by the UN Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Security Council encouraged member states to take measures to ensure that "importers, processing industries, and consumers of Congolese mineral products under their jurisdiction exercise due diligence on their suppliers and on the origin of the minerals they purchase" (UNSC 2008b, para. 15). In other words, states should make sure that companies based in their jurisdictions are not violating the sanctions through their transactions or business relationships.

The follow-up resolution on sanctions involving the DRC, passed on November 30, 2009, reinforces these measures and goes further. The Security Council instructed the Group of Experts to "produce . . . recommendations to the [Sanctions] Committee for guidelines for the exercise of due diligence by the importers, processing industries and consumers of mineral products regarding the purchase, sourcing (including steps to be taken to ascertain the origin of mineral products), acquisition and processing of mineral products from the Democratic Republic of the Congo" (UNSC 2009b, para. 7). It also recommends "that importers and processing industries adopt policies and practices, as well as codes of conduct, to prevent indirect support to armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo through the exploitation and trafficking of natural resources" (UNSC 2009b, para. 16).

These Security Council actions are significant and positive steps. By linking sanctions implementation and due diligence by international companies, it has recognized that private-sector operators are one of the principal entry points for conflict resources to the global economy and that state regulation is one of the most

effective ways to ensure due diligence is implemented.<sup>8</sup> It also reinforces the consensus reached in 2008 at the United Nations Human Rights Council concerning business responsibilities for due diligence for human rights in general (Human Rights Council 2008a, 2008b). And by mandating a peacekeeping mission to get involved in monitoring illicit trade, the Security Council took an important step toward closing the gap between sanctions and peacekeeping strategies in the case of the DRC.

However, despite these encouraging developments, there remain significant obstacles to implementation. First, and most seriously, many UN member states—including Security Council members—have proved unwilling to comply with those provisions that concern individuals or entities based in their own jurisdictions. Notwithstanding development of national regimes to impose due diligence requirements, to date, none of the traders or companies that support armed groups in the DRC through illicit natural resource transactions has been placed on the targeted sanctions list. The member states are ultimately responsible for implementing Security Council decisions. Their political will and ability to implement sanctions determines whether the sanctions will succeed or fail (Wallenstein, Staibano, and Eriksson 2003).

Second, while the Security Council's efforts to ensure coherence of sanctions and peacekeeping mandates are both laudable and necessary, and have resulted in good collaboration between the Group of Experts and MONUC's Joint Mission Analysis Cell (JMAC), there remain limitations on MONUC's capacity to interdict illicit natural resource trade. Peacekeeping missions like MONUC are staffed with military or civilian protection officers, who may lack the expertise necessary for tracking and monitoring natural resources.

A third constraint, which extends beyond the particular case of the DRC and requires reform at an institutional level, concerns the flow of information to the Security Council about the implementation of sanctions by governments and about the activities of the parties that are targeted. Monitoring of sanctions implementation and the activities of the sanctioned parties is carried out for the Security Council by expert panels or groups: teams of independent specialists appointed on an ad hoc basis by Security Council sanctions committees. Although not used in every sanctions regime, these expert panels increasingly play a key role in identifying what kinds of sanctions are most appropriate, investigating violations once sanctions are in place, and publicly "naming and shaming" those responsible. The publication of the panels' findings is one of the few brakes on the tendency of member states to leave implementation to somebody else (although the lack of follow-up on successive DRC panels' findings since 2002 is a reminder that

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<sup>8</sup> Member states have started to adopt legislation requiring the due diligence called for by the Security Council. In the United States, the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act imposes due diligence requirements for companies sourcing minerals from the DRC and surrounding countries. U.S. Code 15 (2010), sec. 78m. As of early 2014, the European Union is developing similar regulations (Steinweg and ten Kate 2013).



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this remains the default response of most governments) (Boucher and Holt 2009; Global Witness 2004b; HRW 2005). Information about sanctions violations is one of the few elements that constrain the tendency of member states not to act, yet this monitoring of governments' implementation of sanctions is not enforced in any regular manner. And still, expert panel reports are often the only way that the Security Council stays informed about sanctions-busting and, as such, are the basis for its timely and coherent response. Expert panels are also an important source of information about the course of the conflict, human rights abuses, and international crimes.

While the expert panels frequently do excellent work, the institutional framework for tracking sanctions implementation is weak. One of the reasons is its ad hoc nature. Expert panels are mandated to operate under a limited time frame and, while their mandates can be renewed, there is often a lag time between the end of one mandate and a panel's redeployment. The result is that months and years may pass with no investigation or monitoring.

This same ad hoc quality hampers the pooling of information that may be critical to more than one sanctions regime. Sanctions regimes and expert panels are configured on a country-by-country basis, but some sanctions violators are highly mobile and their operations are usually transnational in scope. Furthermore, the panels serve as fact finders rather than law enforcement investigators, thus limiting their scope and cooperation with police and prosecutors at a national level. As a result, issues are often left unresolved from one year to the next and sanctions targets may go underground after one report only to resurface later.

Efforts to institutionalize support for the expert panels within the sanctions branch of the UN Secretariat have so far made limited headway. Some progress has been made, for example, in the clarification of evidentiary standards used in panel investigations, and a database is now in place. However, while the number of sanctions panels has doubled in recent years, staff levels in the Secretariat have remained the same. Most professional staff are thus overstretched, handling all political, diplomatic, communications, and administrative support for two panels at a time. This has resulted in a severe underutilization of the panels' work and a real risk to the effectiveness and fairness of the sanctions themselves.

In addition, questions remain as to how to manage such tasks as listing and delisting targeted individuals and organizations (Lopez et al. 2009). Today, the idea of a permanent body dedicated to support and oversee the work of the panels is not even on the Security Council's agenda. Despite the obvious challenges faced by the Secretariat, the Security Council has shown little inclination to sufficiently support the Secretariat to perform these tasks properly or to authorize some other institutional arrangement. In effect, it has accepted a status quo in which sanctions regimes are more or less flying blind, with only ad hoc information being provided regarding the targeted parties and their financial and commodities traffic which sustains their war-fighting capabilities.

## **PEACEMAKING: REMAKING THE RULES OF THE GAME**

Conflicts can be fought over natural resources, as well as financed by them. Natural resources are, in this sense, an important source of power for state and nonstate armed groups. Strategies for shifting an armed conflict toward peaceful forms of political competition risk failure if they ignore how this source of power complements the warring parties' political and military capabilities. Some peace accords, such as Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which lays out a mechanism for wealth sharing from oil reserves, are built around agreements governing natural resources.<sup>9</sup> Many more ignore the issue altogether.<sup>10</sup> A 2009 United Nations Environment Programme report reviewing data on intrastate conflicts of the past sixty years observes that "fewer than a quarter of peace negotiations aiming to resolve conflicts linked to natural resources have addressed resource management mechanisms" (UNEP 2009, 5).

Where peacemaking strategies do not take into account the economic elements of a conflict, natural resources that previously financed the military campaigns of the warring parties may be used for rearming. This can leave the movement toward peace and democratic political process fraught with the risks of a return to armed violence. The situation in Côte d'Ivoire illustrates this problem. Investigations by both the UN Panel of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire and Global Witness suggest that the economic interests of key FNCI rebel commanders are one of the main threats to a peaceful reintegration of the rebel-held North and the government-controlled South of the country. The peace process has no means of addressing this issue, and FNCI commanders are using their control over natural resources such as cocoa, diamonds, and gold to finance renewed weapons purchases (UNSC 2009a; Global Witness 2009a).

On the other hand, peace agreements that formalize and consolidate a particular elite's control over natural resources bring their own risks, which include systemic corruption that weakens governance, while giving a significant advantage to the corrupt parties in any electoral process. In an attempt to control natural resources, the short-term stability often purchased via a *de facto* division-of-spoils approach, may in fact be a recipe for conflict in the medium to long term. At a minimum, it can leave a toxic political and economic legacy for any government that is subsequently elected.

The risks that a peace agreement may consolidate control over natural resources by an unaccountable elite became reality in Sierra Leone. The 1999 Lomé Peace Agreement established a commission to manage control over the country's diamond mining, significant parts of which had been controlled by the

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<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of wealth-sharing provisions in Sudan's CPA, see Wennmann (2012).

<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of natural resource provisions in peace agreements, see Simon J. A. Mason, Damiano A. Sguaitamatti, and María del Pilar Ramírez Gröbli, "Stepping Stones to Peace? Natural Resource Provisions in Peace Agreements," in this book.

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Revolutionary United Front (RUF).<sup>11</sup> The peace agreement also appointed RUF leader Foday Sankoh to head up the commission. The UN Panel of Experts on Sierra Leone Diamonds and Arms reported Sankoh's approach as "clutching at financial opportunities for personal and political gain, outside the governmental framework in which he was ostensibly working. Most of this related to the diamond trade" (UNSC 2000b, para. 3). Within a year, the RUF had broken the accord, and conflict had resumed.

The effectiveness of arrangements agreed to under peace accords often hinge on the legitimacy and track records of those put in control in the eyes of their constituencies (Le Billon 2012). With that in mind, there is a clear need for peace agreements to set out standards of acceptable behavior for those who control natural resources. These new rules of the game with respect to natural resource governance should be designed so that the parties can hold each other accountable. For this to work, conflict resolution mechanisms should be built into agreements to handle the disputes that will inevitably arise. International backing, revenue transparency, and capacity building for civil society will be key elements in keeping such arrangements on track and maintaining their credibility.

### PEACEKEEPING: DISRUPTING ILLICIT TRADE AT THE SOURCE

Peacekeeping operations are traditionally deployed as part of international efforts to support peace agreements or ceasefires. However, peacekeepers have often found themselves faced with no peace to keep. Sierra Leone's civil war continued for three years after the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) arrived; UNITA kept fighting in Angola for three years after the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA) left; and the Khmer Rouge kept up their military operations for five years after the withdrawal of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). Today, the conflict in eastern DRC remains unresolved, fifteen years after MONUC was first deployed in 1999.

Natural resources—a driver of conflict in all four countries mentioned above—are part of the reason why peacekeepers have faced an uphill battle. Yet, rarely do UN peacekeeping mandates acknowledge this problem. On the contrary, the UN has often specifically avoided involvement in natural resource issues. For example, in 1999, the Security Council authorized UNAMSIL to help implement the Lomé Peace Agreement, which addressed the illicit trade in natural resources between the government of Sierra Leone and the RUF rebels. The Security Council, however, failed to include any reference to the issue in UNAMSIL's original mandate (UNSC 1999). Indeed, a Secretary-General's report on Sierra Leone in 2000 framed natural resources as a concern of sovereign states only, arguing that responsibility for natural resource exploitation lay entirely with

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<sup>11</sup> For the text of the Peace Agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone, dated July 7, 1999, see [www.sierra-leone.org/lomeaccord.html](http://www.sierra-leone.org/lomeaccord.html).

the government. “[I]t should be underlined,” said the report, “that UNAMSIL has neither the mandate nor the intention to stop or interfere with any economic activity” (UNSC 2000a, para. 49). It was not until 2004 that the Security Council included a reference in UNAMSIL’s mandate to “support the Sierra Leone armed forces and police in patrolling the border and diamond-mining areas . . .” (UNSC 2004, 2).

The first peacekeeping mandate to grapple with the problem of natural resources that finance conflict was given to the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in September 2003. The mandate specifically requested that the peacekeepers “assist the transitional government in restoring proper administration of natural resources,” and the UN staffed the mission with dedicated environment and natural resource advisors (UNSC 2003, para. 3r). After the change of government in Liberia in 2006, UNMIL provided input on natural resource policies, helped train Liberian officials and police on natural resource-related issues, established a system of checkpoints to curtail illegal logging, and ran joint patrols with the Liberian National Police to help restore the government’s control over major rubber plantations (Kim and Hecht 2008). In settings where threats to security emanate from parties whose operational capacity is linked to their access to natural resource revenues, peacekeepers need mandates that authorize them to include those resources—and the capacity to respond to the challenges they pose—in their mission strategies. UNMIL’s experience suggests that peacekeepers can help prevent conflict from recurring by denying warring parties access to natural resource revenues.

But should peacekeepers seek to secure valuable resources? In December 2008, the Security Council mandated MONUC in the DRC to prevent “the provision of support to illegal armed groups, including support derived from illicit economic activities” (UNSC 2008a, para. 3g). In 2009, the peacekeepers assisted in *Kimia II*, the Congolese military offensive against the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda, or FDLR), in part to dislodge the armed group from mining sites in order to diminish its resource base. Through its involvement in *Kimia II*, MONUC engaged in—and then partially withdrew from—operations which resulted in severe human rights abuses by government forces and large-scale population displacement (HRW 2009; Refugees International 2009). Moreover, soldiers of the Congolese army involved in the offensive took over mining sites previously occupied by the FDLR and began exploiting them, in defiance of Congolese law. This simply recast the existing conflict resource scenario; the only differences being that the armed group in question wore a different uniform and claimed allegiance to the state, as well as having the support of the UN (Global Witness 2009b).

MONUC’s experiences are a reminder that when peacekeepers are authorized by the Security Council to help government armies take control of natural resources, the latter may prove to be just as corrupt and abusive as the rebels. Whether by wresting control of natural resource revenues away from armed groups by force, or by a more politically oriented process in which deployment

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of troops is one component, the main challenge for peacekeepers is ensuring that they achieve a genuine demilitarization of natural resource–production sites, rather than simply a changing of the guard.

Peacekeepers may not be above temptation themselves, as exemplified by the reports of diamond trading by Economic Community of West African States peacekeepers in Sierra Leone in 1991, and gold smuggling by members of MONUC (Keen 2005; Gberie 2005).<sup>12</sup> More generally, taking and holding territory in a manner akin to fighting an insurgency will always be a risky strategy for a peacekeeping operation (Le Billon 2012). Where such operations challenge the strategic position of armed groups in the area—militarily or in terms of control of populations or natural resources—they may prompt a rise in violence. The violence may be directed not only at the mission, but also against civilians as a means of undermining the population’s confidence in the peacekeepers’ capacity to protect them.

It need not always turn out this way, however. UNMIL’s experience in patrolling Liberian rubber plantations indicates that peacekeepers can sometimes play a crucial role in helping governments to secure valuable natural resources. This example suggests that peacekeepers can be most effective once the fighting has stopped. In addition, a major element of the success in the Liberian case was that the physical occupation of the plantations was the culmination of an incremental, politically led process, rather than a military frontal assault.

The Security Council responded to the outcome of Kimia II by specifically requiring MONUC to suspend its cooperation with army units that are suspected of breaching international humanitarian law, human rights law, and refugee law. The mandate also tightened the focus of MONUC’s cooperation with Congolese armed forces operations against illicit economic activities. It requested that MONUC coordinate with the army “with a view to . . . [c]arrying out enhanced efforts to prevent the provision of support to armed groups, including support derived from illicit economic activities and illicit trade in natural resources” and also to help the government restore its authority over “key mining areas” (UNSC 2009c, paras. 21(d), 21(c)). But the Security Council could do more, such as clarify the conditions under which it will authorize such operations in the future.<sup>13</sup>

An alternative to peacekeepers taking and holding the territory where valuable natural resources are located would be to monitor the trafficking of these resources and support law enforcement officials in their efforts to combat

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<sup>12</sup> For further discussion of involvement of individual peacekeepers in illicit natural resource management, see Annica Waleij, “Crime, Credibility, and Effective Peacekeeping: Lessons from the Field,” in this book.

<sup>13</sup> Such conditions might include, for example, a high probability of tactical success; an overall political strategy that supports the sustainability of the operation; commitment by the government and relevant businesses to manage the resource well; and capacity for verifying those commitments through monitoring.

illegal trafficking (Cockayne and Lupel 2009). In 2008 and 2009, MONUC's JMAC began monitoring and inspecting the trade in natural resources in eastern DRC. This involved using joint military and civilian teams working with DRC government counterparts (including police and customs officers) to carry out random inspections of mineral cargoes, especially at airports. The focus of these inspections was ascertaining the origins of the materials and the identity of the parties involved in transacting and transporting them. The JMAC teams sought to establish a setting in which traders were regularly sourcing minerals from areas held by nonstate armed groups and to develop an approach to support Congolese authorities in regulating the trade through the creation of regional trading centers.<sup>14</sup>

Such operations can add substantially to the data available on the illicit natural resource trade. The random inspections element may also have some utility as a deterrent to traders who purchase minerals from zones controlled by armed groups. However, such activities must be supported by appropriate resources. In the case of the DRC, JMAC lacks sufficient staff to maintain a robust on-the-ground presence. The problem of resources is compounded by limits in technical capacity. As discussed above, peacekeepers may not know what to look for when seeking to interdict illicit commodities. There is a significant analytical task involved in tracking and monitoring the minerals trade, and the teams assigned to do this must have expertise that the average peacekeeper lacks.

The example of MONUC illustrates the extent to which UN peacekeeping has evolved in regard to the challenge of conducting peace operations in situations in which natural resource exploitation is helping to sustain conflict. Peacekeepers in the DRC are likely to continue to be authorized to disrupt the trade in natural resources where it is contributing to ongoing violence, but the legitimacy and effectiveness of attempts to do so will depend on the capacities of the mission and the tactical situation on the ground. Functions such as monitoring, inspecting, and supporting civilian authorities in attempting to regulate the trade in natural resources and enforce the law are sensible approaches for peacekeepers.<sup>15</sup> But peacekeepers cannot do it alone; cooperation with national law enforcement and UN expert groups and panels will be crucial to the effectiveness of attempts to disrupt the trade.

## **PEACEBUILDING: TRANSFORMING THE CONFLICT ECONOMY**

Peacebuilding is the set of activities which, first and foremost, are directed at preventing a return to armed violence. It aims to find incentives and build structures that divert the conflict dynamic onto a peaceful, political, and sustainable

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<sup>14</sup> Interview by Mark Taylor with MONUC official, October 2009.

<sup>15</sup> For more analysis of natural resources and peacekeeping, see UNEP (2012).



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track (Smith 2004; UNSG 2009).<sup>16</sup> The functions of peacebuilding often overlap with peacekeeping (at the beginning of peacebuilding) and development (at the end).

In many cases, the overwhelming preoccupation of peacebuilders is staging set-piece political events such as elections. When it comes to economic issues, however, efforts typically concentrate on generating an immediate peace dividend—kick-starting economic growth to build popular support for the peace process. Few economic peacebuilding programs have any strategy to deal with the illicit exploitation of natural resources or the conflict economy more generally. This is a potentially fatal flaw. In conflicts with a significant natural resource dimension, the economic interests of parties can threaten stability long after the signing of a peace agreement. There is also a risk that without such a strategy, attempts to provide a peace dividend through the provision of development assistance may strengthen the structures of conflict, through corruption of aid flows, rather than undermine them (Shearer 2000; Berdal and Malone 2000; Weiss et al. 1997). Rather than pursuing an approach that hinges on immediate delivery of an economic peace dividend, peacebuilding strategies should instead focus on managing the transformation of economic activities that fuel armed violence into ones that build stability. Such a strategy should pursue two principal objectives. The first of these is demilitarization of natural resource production. The second is overarching governance reforms, particularly in relation to the allocation of these resources, wealth sharing, and fiscal transparency.

### Demilitarizing natural resource exploitation

The militarization of natural resource exploitation and trade is a common legacy of self-financing conflicts. As experiences in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire demonstrate, it is a problem that can get worse after peace agreements have been signed. Militarization poses the risk of peace spoilers using control of natural resources to finance renewed conflict. Even when peace deals seem robust, and peacebuilding processes on track, failure to tackle warring parties' access to natural resources can derail the political process, not to mention the exit strategy of the international peacebuilders.

Elections, for example, are often seen as the climax to peacebuilding efforts and the point at which peacekeepers can start packing their bags. But unless

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<sup>16</sup> This chapter adopts a functional approach to peacebuilding and is not restricted to post-conflict peacebuilding only. For a big-picture articulation of UN peacebuilding doctrine see, for example, *Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict* (UNSG 2009). This report mentions natural resources in three places but does not promote or elaborate a strategic approach for the UN to deal with them. Perhaps the most coherent functional description of peacebuilding is the overview report of the Joint Utstein Study of Peacebuilding, a study of the peacebuilding experiences of Germany, Norway, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom—all of which are donor members of the Utstein Group (Smith 2004).

illicit exploitation of natural resources is addressed before the polls, it can provide politicians and warlords with the opportunity to access quick cash to resume fighting. After winning Liberia's presidential election in 1997, Charles Taylor consolidated control over the country's natural resources (Global Witness and ITF 2001) and used timber revenues to fund counterinsurgency operations that terrorized civilians.

Beyond the immediate danger it poses to security and human rights, militarization of natural resources also represents a longer-term threat: the retrenchment of a criminalized economy which stunts development via the systematic theft of public assets and the loss of potential revenues to the state. Such criminalized systems of natural resource management can undermine democracy as well. Government institutions are corrupted, and the consolidation of economic power by a kleptocratic elite helps the latter evade accountability to the public at large. In Cambodia, the creation of institutions, regulations, and accountability mechanisms to promote natural resource governance did not begin in earnest until several years into the international reconstruction efforts. The consequence was highly abusive patterns of natural resource management becoming so entrenched as to be almost irreversible, with ordinary citizens unable to hold their leaders to account (Global Witness 2007a; Le Billon 2000).

The initial focus of this asset-stripping process was the country's forests, which were parceled out as logging concessions to opportunistic foreign companies and cronies of senior officials. Many of these simply subcontracted to military units that were already engaged in their own illegal logging operations. The concessionaires all broke the law or the terms of their contracts and were responsible for much of the plunder of the forests which ensued (Le Billon 2002). What the World Bank had described as "Cambodia's most developmentally important natural resource" was seriously degraded, destroying the livelihoods of rural communities, while generating minimal returns to government coffers (World Bank 1999, para. 19).

Peacebuilding efforts to tackle the militarization of natural resources require a particular emphasis on strengthening relevant law enforcement agencies and the judiciary. This is not just about building institutional capacity, however. As suggested in the previous section, law enforcement officers may require operational support from peacekeepers to protect them as they go about doing their job. This protection may not only be necessary to assure physical security, but also to deter the less direct forms of coercion or inducement that officials may encounter.

Security sector reform (SSR) and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) efforts must also address the militarization of natural resources. SSR is unlikely to succeed if it fails to consider the financial resources available to spoilers. For their part, DDR programs will not be sustainable if they do not take into account the realities of the local labor market. As the experience of Liberia shows, excombatants often continue illicit natural resource exploitation after the fighting has ended, particularly if there are few alternative sources of

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employment. Commanders will not want to curtail these activities if they do not receive something in exchange, and their ranks may not easily be satisfied with lower wages and a sense of diminished (civilian) status.

SSR and DDR programs should therefore be formulated with an eye to the particular role of illicit exploitation in the organization of the fighting units they are engaging. For instance, the type of natural resource concerned will affect peacebuilders' ability to forestall spoilers on the one hand and offer incentives, such as employment opportunities, on the other. It matters, for example, whether the resource commodity is easily trafficked, like diamonds, or less so, like timber or oil; whether it is found in concentrations or is diffused over a large area; whether its extraction is labor intensive; and whether there is a ready labor supply (Le Billon 2001).

As the cases of Cambodia and the DRC show, the militarization of natural resource production involves not only nonstate armed groups, but also the armies of national governments. In eastern DRC, the militarization of mines is increasingly driven by the Kinshasa government's own armed forces (OHCHR 2010; Global Witness 2009c). Disassociating government units from natural resource production will require some of the more technical elements of peacebuilding—such as improved law enforcement, SSR, and DDR—mentioned above. The greater determinant of success of these peacekeeping efforts is the willingness of the international donors that bankroll the government, and in some cases underwrite the national army, to insist on demilitarization of natural resource production as a condition of their continued support. This highlights the crux of the matter: demilitarizing natural resource production—and, indeed, reforming natural resource governance—is a process that requires peacebuilders to engage first and foremost at a political, rather than a technical level.

### **Reform of natural resource governance**

Bad natural resource governance is rarely the sole cause of armed conflict. However, it has been an important precursor to the conflicts discussed in this chapter and throughout the book, and should be recognized by peacebuilders as a potential source of instability. Sierra Leone's Truth and Reconciliation Commission identified "years of bad governance, endemic corruption and the denial of basic human rights," as root causes of its civil war (Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2004, para. 11). Some of the worst manifestations of this endemic corruption were to be found in the country's diamond sector (Smillie, Gberie, and Hazleton 2000; Gberie 2005). An approach to natural resource governance based on elites' seizure of state assets likewise prefigured the conflicts in Liberia and the DRC (Reno 1999; Prunier 2008). In Côte d'Ivoire, competition over productive land was an underlying cause of the civil war (Global Witness 2007b).

As already noted with respect to Cambodia, even when poor natural resource governance may not pose an immediate threat of renewed violence, it undermines

development and democracy in a way that poses risks to stability over the medium to long term. In post-conflict countries, the damage is often done early on, with peacebuilders overeager to kick-start the economy via the extractive industries and inclined to relegate natural resource—governance reforms several years down their list of priorities. This opens the door to military and political leaders capturing valuable state assets and harnessing them for their own agendas, as in Angola in relation to oil and diamonds, in the DRC with respect to forests and minerals, and in Cambodia regarding a range of natural resources (Global Witness 2004a, 2006).

Peacebuilding policy and practice to date have not focused on such tasks as ensuring transparent and accountable allocation of natural resource concessions and transparent management of the revenues derived from their exploitation. Basic steps, such as assessing what natural resources the country has, or what laws or institutions govern these resources, are rarely taken. Peacebuilding in such situations should pursue an institution-building agenda, helping to foster the government's capacity to negotiate equitable contracts governing the exploitation of natural resources with private-sector operators. In recent years, the DRC, Liberia, and Sierra Leone have undertaken processes of renegotiating concession contracts and allocating new ones. The conduct and outcome of these processes can be critical to post-conflict countries' development, not least given the fact that natural resource concession contracts typically bind the parties for a quarter of a century or even longer.

Crucial to ensuring accountability is the early establishment of monitoring mechanisms and support to enable local civil society to play a watchdog role.<sup>17</sup> Again, leaving these kinds of initiatives until some years into peacebuilding programs can be very damaging. If they start to bear fruit only after most of the critical decisions have already been taken—on how and by whom natural resources will be allocated, managed, and regulated—it may be too late for them to have much impact.

While there is a wealth of recent examples of how to get post-conflict natural resource governance wrong, peacebuilders can nonetheless draw on a range of international initiatives and precedents which provide some clues as to how to get it right, or at least do better. The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) is an international mechanism aimed at increasing transparency in the management of oil, gas, and mining revenues. It involves governments, industry, and civil society. For governments to be fully compliant with EITI criteria, they must ensure the full engagement of independent civil society organizations (Rich and Warner 2012). While EITI helps build accountability in the management of payments made by companies to governments, it does not address the way in which exploitation rights are allocated. The Kimberley Process—the international

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<sup>17</sup> See Koffi K. Michel Yoboué, "Stopping the Plunder of Natural Resources to Provide for a Sustainable Peace in Côte d'Ivoire," in this book.

scheme set to combat the trade in conflict diamonds—has the same tripartite quality as EITI. It is less effective at a national level as an accountability mechanism, but does have value as a means of standardizing and strengthening controls on the trade in rough diamonds.

Other policy frameworks can provide useful points of reference for peacebuilders as well. One example is the International Monetary Fund's 2005 *Guide on Resource Revenue Transparency* (IMF 2005). Another is the Natural Resource Charter, an initiative launched by an independent group of high-profile economists, lawyers, and political scientists in 2009, which sets out principles of sound natural resource governance and emphasizes the need for public oversight and transparency (Natural Resource Charter n.d.).

Peacebuilding approaches to natural resources will be most successful when they can build on sound rules of the game set by peace agreements and be integrated with sanctions and peacekeeping as part of an overall strategy (Wennmann 2008). A positive example of this kind of integration is provided by post-conflict Liberia. After the civil war ended, the Security Council kept timber sanctions in place for almost three years, and maintained the diamonds embargo for the better part of four years. This retention of sanctions was not a punitive measure, but rather a protective framework within which natural resource-management systems could be reformed without coming under immediate pressure to generate cash returns. During this period, management of the diamonds sector was overhauled to the degree that Liberia became eligible to apply for membership in the Kimberley Process. In the forest sector, meanwhile, existing logging concession contracts were reviewed and annulled (due to the failure of contracts to comply with the law) and new legal and regulatory frameworks were put in place.

In the case of Liberia, the maintenance of sanctions demanded a political commitment to natural resource-governance reform not only from the Liberian government, but also from the UN, neighboring countries, importing countries, and the private sector. This political commitment was ultimately much more significant than the technical inputs that came with it. While Liberia is, relatively speaking, a success story in this regard, it is striking how quickly the level of international interest fell away after sanctions were lifted. Recent violations of Liberian law in the allocation of new logging contracts suggest that—absent a high level of international engagement—much of the important work of the past few years may now be undone, with serious consequences for the country's rural population in particular.

In summary, the twin objectives of demilitarizing the exploitation of natural resources and reforming governance structures can go a long way to reducing the risk of a relapse to conflict, particularly when they form part of an integrated international strategy. However, most cases are not “best” cases. In practice, sanctions, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding do not happen in a phased manner, but often run on parallel tracks without adequate coordination.

Monitoring, protection, law enforcement, and negotiation of rules governing the exploitation of natural resources should all take place in concert with one another. But peacebuilders should operate on the assumption that the likelihood of a coherent international strategy is very low.

## **LESSONS NOT LEARNED**

In recent years, there have been innovations in international policies and practices that seek to break the links between natural resources and conflict. This chapter has described some examples of effective responses to the problem. But the international capacity to deal with the problem of natural resources connected to conflict remains weak and fragmented.

There are serious deficiencies in international institutional capacity that remain unaddressed across all four areas discussed above—sanctions, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. Where this capacity does exist, there is often a significant lack of political willingness to use it to deal with armed conflicts sustained by natural resource exploitation. A first step toward addressing the problems of both capacity and political will would be to start talking about a coherent approach by the UN and its member states to ending natural resource-fueled conflicts. There are a number of ways to begin to build such a policy dialogue including, for example, the establishment of a high-level panel with a mandate to draw up a comprehensive strategy for responding to the self-financing aspects of today's conflicts.

In the absence of a policy dialogue about coherent approaches to the problem, there are still concrete steps that could be taken to improve the UN responses to the problem. Some suggestions for next steps in each practice area follow.

### **Sanctions**

Sanctions play a crucial role in international responses to self-financing conflicts in general, and those involving illicit trade in natural resources in particular. They are one of the few coercive measures at the disposal of the Security Council. However, without information and analysis of the trade flows and actors targeted by sanctions, international efforts at peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding will be flying blind. Likewise, without information and analysis of the nature and extent of sanctions implementation by states, there can be little confidence that the sanctions are achieving their objectives. As noted above, the Security Council has to date been unwilling to authorize a more systematic approach to sanctions monitoring. The implication is that progress in this area may have to come in the form of an independent third-party monitoring mechanism. Such a mechanism would provide data-gathering and analytical support to panels of experts in the monitoring of sanctions regimes. Such a mechanism should meet the following criteria:



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- **Mandate:** it should be authorized to provide analytical support, including database management, and trend and network analyses.
- **Competence:** it should include analysts with competence in law enforcement intelligence, illicit financial flows, arms trafficking, sanctions violations, international crimes, and human rights abuses.
- **Independence:** it should be separate from individual member states, particular industries, and single civil society organizations.
- **Access:** it should be authorized to participate in exchange of information with existing law enforcement institutions (such as Europol), UN agencies and missions in the field, other multilateral and regional organizations, industry, and other relevant sources of information.
- **Capacity:** it will require human and financial resources provided by member states, multilateral bodies, and regional organizations.

Member states have a fundamental but largely unrealized role to play in enforcing sanctions. It will be important for governments to build the capacity to track companies headquartered in, or operating from, their jurisdictions that are active in, or sourcing materials from, conflict zones. One way to do this would be to compel companies operating in conflict zones to carry out due diligence on their operations and supply chains to ensure that they are not handling conflict resources, and to require such businesses to make declarations to state authorities on the basis of their due diligence efforts.<sup>18</sup> Member states can and should actively investigate reports of sanctions violations by their nationals and, where appropriate, prosecute violators. The Security Council, meanwhile, could facilitate this process by mandating a team to report on the implementation of due diligence measures by companies active in, or sourcing materials from, conflict zones. This mandate will have to include a definition of conflict resources based on universally accepted principles of international law to inform and guide the imposition of sanctions.

### Peacemaking

Peacemaking efforts should ensure that peace agreements include terms for the demilitarization of natural resource exploitation and that these form the basis for a strategy for bringing such exploitation into the formal economy. Far too often, international mediation focuses exclusively on the political and military dimensions of the relationships between the parties, without considering the economic resources at their disposal. Between 1990 and 1996, for example, eleven peace agreements were signed to end Liberia's civil war. All of them failed to address the economic interests of the two conflicting sides (Alao 1996). Peacemakers

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<sup>18</sup> As mentioned above, in footnote 8, the United States and Europe have taken measures to require due diligence, at least with respect to minerals from eastern DRC and the surrounding region.

can benefit from familiarizing themselves with expert natural resource assessments, such as those on the UN Mediation Support Unit roster,<sup>19</sup> that provide a description of what resources are at issue, their potential values, and their relevance to the negotiations. In countries where control over natural resources is a significant element of political power, addressing the question of who gains, or who retains, control is likely to be fundamental to an agreement to take the gun out of political competition for good. Peace agreements should set the rules of the game for the transition away from conflict, and in doing so address the economic interests of warring parties as a central part of the overall approach to conflict resolution.

All of the usual tensions that exist for post-conflict political-military dimensions of peacemaking—for example, the complex dynamics involved in transitional justice<sup>20</sup>—will also apply to economic peacemaking. The ways in which these tensions are handled must be context specific. At a minimum, a strategy of formalizing the illicit trade in natural resources should be targeted at achieving their transparent and accountable management over the medium term. It is important to limit the ability of unelected transitional governments to allocate natural resource concession contracts in order to avoid peace agreements that lock in poor natural resource governance. Peacemakers should ensure that any attempt to bring informal and illegal activities relating to natural resources into the formal economy are based on clear and verifiable standards of behavior that are backed by regulation.

To ensure that the economic dimensions of peace agreements are adhered to, it may be that the Security Council or regional powers, or both, will have to maintain certain sanctions measures until progress toward key resource or other governance objectives are met by whoever controls the resources. One way to address this issue is to build an independent monitoring mechanism into natural resource wealth-sharing provisions of a peace agreement. Such provisions should also incorporate a dispute resolution mechanism, which might consist of an agreement to refer disputes to an arbitration tribunal. Peacemakers can support these efforts by requiring international guarantors of a peace agreement to play a role in enforcing provisions concerning natural resource management. The cost to the parties of a failure to adhere to these provisions should be clear, significant, and enforceable by law.

## **Peacekeeping**

The lack of explicit authority for peacekeeping missions to address the natural resource dimensions of conflict can prevent effective peacekeeping. Such mandates

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<sup>19</sup> See [www.un.org/wcm/content/site/undpa/standby\\_team](http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/undpa/standby_team) and <http://peacemaker.un.org/mediationroster>.

<sup>20</sup> See Emily E. Harwell, “Building Momentum and Constituencies for Peace: The Role of Natural Resources in Transitional Justice and Peacebuilding,” in this book.

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should be more consistently incorporated into broader peacekeeping objectives. Rather than being an add-on to a long list of tasks for a mission, authorization to deal with natural resource problems that sustain challenges to the mission's objectives should be a normal part of the mission's mandate.

Effective mandates in this regard are those that authorize peacekeepers to work with local, national, and regional customs and law enforcement officials, and international monitors or panels of experts, to investigate, to monitor trade routes and border crossings, and to assist in law enforcement and inspections. Where operational considerations allow, peacekeeping missions should be further authorized to enforce sanctions and laws governing the exploitation and trading of natural resources, including the interdiction and confiscation of shipments. Expanded mandates must be accompanied by the increased funding and human resources that such demanding activities require.

Security Council mandates could go a step further and authorize peacekeepers to deploy to natural resource–production sites to protect these sites from exploitation by abusive state or nonstate armed groups, and to protect people living and working at these sites. It will be important for the Security Council to clarify the conditions under which it will grant such authority. Conditions might include: (1) a high probability of tactical success, (2) an overall political strategy that supports the sustainability of the deployment, (3) commitment by the government and relevant businesses to manage the resource well, and (4) capacity for verifying those commitments via international monitoring.

The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations could support these efforts by establishing operational guidelines for peacekeepers on how to respond to the problem of illicit natural resource exploitation and trade in theaters of operations.<sup>21</sup> For its part, the Security Council could require cooperation between joint mission analysis cells, expert panels, and local and regional customs and law enforcement agencies to track and intercept shipments of conflict resources. Authorizing peacekeepers to deploy to protect those international and local officials seeking to police the exploitation and trading of natural resources will promote local enforcement capacity.

A separate problem that plagues peacekeeping missions is that of corruption. The Secretary-General could address this issue by agreeing to a memorandum of understanding with troop-contributing countries to clarify their legal obligation to investigate and prosecute peacekeepers if they are involved in the exploitation and trading of natural resources. UN personnel under investigation for such offenses should immediately be suspended. Meanwhile, the United Nations General Assembly should establish a professional monitoring body to investigate these cases. Such a mandate could be integrated into the Office of Internal Oversight Services or into the mandate of an independent third-party monitoring mechanism.

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<sup>21</sup> See Sophie Ravier, Anne-Cecile Vialle, Russ Doran, and John Stokes, “Environmental Experiences and Developments in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations,” in this book.

## **Peacebuilding**

The challenge of peacebuilding is to design, negotiate, and help manage a transition from conflict which both demilitarizes natural resource management and ensures that this management creates value for the economy, decent work for people, and revenues for the state (as opposed to a source of loot for rebels and dictators).

In many places, natural resource governance deserves to be accorded a high priority from the outset of the peacebuilding process, rather than being relegated to later stages of post-conflict reconstruction efforts, as has often been the case. While perspectives vary widely, the authors believe that the best way for peacebuilders to improve their leverage with the parties to the conflict is by placing governance of natural resources at the center of the political process. By doing so, peacebuilders signal to the parties that the international community will play a role in deciding who has access to these important sources of political and economic power.

A main focus of peacebuilding should be ensuring transparent and accountable allocation of natural resource concessions and transparent management of the revenues derived from their exploitation. This will involve supporting assessments of what natural resources the country has and their best possible usage; assisting in the creation of laws and regulations that require transparency and accountability; and building institutional capacity to manage natural resources wisely and enforce the law effectively. Donors can bring their influence to bear by making their financial support and the lifting of sanctions conditional on the establishment of institutions and laws that ensure transparency, as well as on post-conflict governments removing their armed forces from any involvement in natural resource exploitation and trade.

Where natural resources have played a role in sustaining the conflict, donors should prioritize supporting efforts to build capacity to govern natural resource production and trade. Financing efforts targeted at enhancing capacity to negotiate natural resource concession contracts with international companies, monitoring borders, and managing customs can have a significant impact. In particular, funds directed toward supporting law enforcement agencies that police natural resource exploitation and trade can yield substantial peace dividends. In addition, efforts to build civil society capacity to monitor natural resource allocation, exploitation, and trade, and the management of the revenues generated by these activities, will go a long way toward ensuring that governments meet their commitments.

## **CONCLUSION**

Taking the gun out of natural resource management is necessary for taking the gun out of politics. Breaking the links between armed violence and natural resource exploitation is critical to resolving conflict and relaunching peaceful political processes. In response to the continuing challenges of conflicts sustained

in part by natural resources, the UN has slowly—and unevenly—strengthened its policy and practice in the areas of sanctions and peacekeeping. But there is less evidence of similar efforts to reform UN peacemaking or peacebuilding to respond to these challenges. As a whole, the UN response to counter the natural resource–conflict nexus remains fragmented and characterized by ad hoc policy measures. Earlier solutions have been overlooked, only to be rediscovered later, and few lessons have been learned. In fact, there has been no attempt to develop a comprehensive approach to the natural resource dimensions of self-financing conflicts. At this stage, a serious attempt by the UN to develop for itself a strategic approach to breaking the links between conflict and natural resources would be a significant step forward.

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