Handover from International to Local Actors in Peace Missions

Lessons from Burundi, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste

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Executive Summary

This report focuses on the handover process from international to local actors at the end of peace missions. Three case studies from past UN peace operations are used to extract concrete lessons: the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB: 2004–2006), the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL: 1999–2005) and the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET: 2002–2005). The emphasis is on the security dimension of the withdrawal phase. Various factors in the handover process in the three missions are identified. The report compares the experiences of the three missions, and analyses how these cases dealt with recurrent operational dilemmas involved in a handover. Taking account of country developments after the missions and the current situation, an assessment is made of the importance of these factors to a successful handover.

The resultant empirical findings indicate several lessons relevant for peace operations in general and allow cross-fertilization between the various international organizations involved in peace missions.

Abbreviations

AMIB	African Mission in Burundi
BINUB	United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (Bureau Intégré des Nations Unies au Burundi)
CNDD-FDD	Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie-Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FNL	Forces Nationales de Libération (Burundi)
IMATT	International Military Assistance Training Team
MONUC	United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
ONUB	United Nations Operation in Burundi
Palipehutu-FNL	Peuple Hutu-Forces Nationales de Libération
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UN CDW	United Nations Consolidation, Drawdown and Withdrawal
UNMISET	United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIOSIL	United Nations Integrated Office for Sierra Leone
UNOTIL	United Nations Office in Timor-Leste
UNTAET	United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor

1. Introduction

Today various international organizations conduct peace missions, but the United Nations remains the principal institution providing peace operations. Further to the UN, the African Union, the European Union, NATO and UN-authorized multinational forces are also undertaking peace missions. All these different peace missions are confronted with similar problems. One of these challenges is how to ensure sustainable peace after the closing down of a peace mission. A good handover process from international to local actors is instrumental in this process.

The existing literature and peacekeeping doctrines have not focused on what constitutes a good handover. The bulk of the literature deals with the start-up phase of peace operations, motivated by the correct observation that quick deployments are essential to settle conflicts. Yet, the other end of the spectrum should not be forgotten. Well-conceived transition phases are crucial to consolidate international peace efforts in the long term. The handover matters even more in today's multidimensional peace missions, where international actors are no longer responsible for traditional peacekeeping tasks alone, but also for the execution of some state services. This allows government structures some breathing space to build up their capacity amidst the remaining destruction of the conflict. The departure of a peace mission initiates the return to normality. At this point, local actors need to take back the responsibilities for state services temporarily under the peace mission. The handover should thus be carefully planned to define the right time and means to transfer the authority. Should the handover fail to provide the required security guarantees, a relapse into conflict is possible and even highly probable.

The aim of this report is to add to our understanding of the handover process. The emphasis of the study is on the security dimension, because security aspects are central, both during the withdrawal phase and for the long-term viability of the state structures. The methodology involves examining empirical data on handover processes in three selected case studies were selected: the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB: 2004–2006), the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL: 1999– 2005) and the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET: 2002– 2005). All three are now-concluded UN operations of the same generation of robust peace missions, but differ in the reasons for intervention. By investigating both their similarities and their differences, this report identifies a number

of specific lessons on the handover process. However, the aim is by no means to provide comprehensive guidelines on managing a handover process. Further research is needed for that. The outcome of this report should be rather seen as a snapshot of empirical data. Experiences from some UN missions will allow cross-fertilization between the various international organizations involved in peace missions.

We begin by introducing the subject of handover and the case studies. In the main part of the report, several factors affecting the handover process are examined and placed in the context of the case studies. We also describe some recurrent operational dilemmas. A further section evaluates developments in the three countries since the closing of the peace missions. This effort enables us to make a statement on the importance of the factors for a successful peace mission. The conclusion offers a range of concrete lessons identified in the case studies.

2. The subject of handover

This report focuses on practical examples of handovers in peace missions. In order to understand the importance of the handover phase for establishing a safe and secure environment after a conflict, we should begin by conceptualizing the issue within conflict resolution frameworks. That will allows us to identify the requirements and priorities of a transition phase. On the other hand, it must be admitted that such conceptualizing is not always possible on the ground.

A post-war reconstruction process can be divided into three main phases: *intervention, stabilization* and *normalization* (or *consolidation*). It is mainly the two first phases that are relevant here. The final phase, normalization, focuses on social and economic progress and falls outside the framework of this report.

The focus of the intervention phase lies on security and law and order, so as to prevent an immediate relapse into conflict. *'It is the immediate priority of peacemakers and peacekeepers in peace support operations to stabilize the country until such a stage that national institutions can assume their security, administrative and other state functions. This includes not just the military, but also the police and the judiciary.'* (Gambari, 2002) The intervention phase ends with the handover to local actors. The stabilization phase *'is defined as the point at which enough progress has been made in stabilizing the domestic political situation to enable a safe handover of power to a host government and to undertake the first stage of international withdrawal.'* (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, & Miall, 2005)

The process of transferring authority from international to local actors is crucial to the entire peace process. If the peace mission withdraws precipitately, the society might relapse into conflict. A carefully planned exit strategy is important to prevent disruption of the peace process. (United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 2008) Whereas the first phase tends to be top–down and driven by external actors (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, & Miall, 2005), the handover should occur in close consultation with all relevant actors and national stakeholders. Local ownership and capacity-building create legitimacy for both the government and the peace force, and sustainability after the mission had left. (Wilén, 2009)

Assessing the degree of progress is a complex matter. There is no fixed list of target benchmarks, nor are they always easily measurable.

In general, sustainable peace can be said to exist within a state when the conflicts in that society are no longer resolved by violence, but are regulated through government institutions. (Secretary-General, 20 April 2001) Based upon the priorities of the intervention phase, the stability requirements for a solid handover process rely mainly, but not exclusively, on the progress of security sector reform. *'Peacekeeping transition and exit strategies depend on countries providing for their own security, and the UN will need to find effective ways to support this goal through better rule of law and security sector reform assistance.'* (Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support, July 2009) The national army and police should have gained enough capacity and credibility to perform their internal and external security tasks. (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, & Miall, 2005) Once this stage is reached, the international military troops can pull out and the focus can shift from peacekeeping to peacebuilding activities. The society will require continuous support from the international community in dealing with the social and economic root causes of conflict in the stabilization phase.

It seems thus that a handover has the difficult task of reconciling the military-oriented exit mission with the 'new' civilian-focused actors. This concept of peace operations relies on the assumption that security is a precursor to the reconstruction and development dimensions of peacebuilding. In this reasoning, development activities cannot take place in an environment where fighting is still going on. Efforts will focus on ending the conflict, while long-term development goals may be sacrificed in favour of immediate stability needs. However, between the point when military operations stop and when civilian peacebuilding takes over, there is a risk of a vacuum. (Gueli & Liebenberg, 2007) This brings us to the midst of the debate about the 'gap' between peacekeeping and peacebuilding, also involving the *'perennial challenge of linking peacekeeping and broader peacebuilding strategies into a coherent whole.'* (Center on International Cooperation, 2009)

Yet, the days of traditional UN peacekeeping missions are over, and the gap has been partly filled. Despite the evident importance of security aspects in the first phase, it is generally agreed that security alone cannot create a sustainable state. Finding the balance is crucial. Today's peace operations are thus no longer solely military. Civilians are playing a growing role, working on programmes that last longer than the individual peace missions. Current peace operations have units to deal with political affairs, HIV/AIDS, gender, civil affairs and elections. Especially programmes such as Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and Security Sector Reform (SSR) are crucial for the bridge between military and civilian parts of a mission and

consequently between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Such pro-grammes offer concrete areas where peacekeepers, humanitarian workers and development workers can work together.

The whole handover can thus be divided into two succeeding parts. At first, the responsibilities handed over to the local actors immediately after the departure of a peace mission are mainly security-oriented. It is this activity and associated issues that will be the focus of our re-port. In a second phase, civilian tasks will be handed over. Humanitar-ian and development tasks will remain the prerogative of international organizations for much longer after the peace mission has left. This may in some cases be under the umbrella of a follow-on mission. It can only be expected that the national government will supply full so-cial services to its population in the longer term. However, these as-pects of the 'second', more civilian-oriented, handover fall beyond the scope of this research report.

3. Case studies

3.1. Sierra Leone

Rebels, mining interests, coups d'état and mercenaries are terms that best capture Sierra Leone's collapse into turmoil and conflict in the 1990s. Various international efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the UN to settle the conflict between the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the government of Sierra Leone failed. But when, in 1998, the previously elected president Kabbah returned to power in

Figure 1: Map of Sierra Leone (ICG)

Freetown, the UN saw a first real chance for peace. The United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone, UNOMSIL, was established to disarm the combatants and to rebuild the country's security forces. Fighting did not stop, however. Rebels took control over Freetown once again. International troops ousted them soon afterwards and reinstalled Kabbah to power. Diplomatic efforts were scaled up, resulting in the Lomé Agreements in July 1999. The ceasefire included a strengthened role for the UN peace mission to assist with the implementation of the Lomé Agreements.

The Security Council established the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) on 22 October 1999 through Resolution 1270. The mission was mandated to implement DDR programmes, to ensure the security and freedom of UN personnel, to monitor the ceasefire, to create confidence-building mechanisms, to facilitate humanitarian assistance, to support human rights operations and to provide support to the elections (UNAMSIL, 2009). The original mandate soon proved to be too weak and, in February 2000, stronger security tasks were added. These included the provision of security and assistance to the national law enforcement authorities. The number of military personnel was raised from 6,000 to 11,000, including 260 military observers. In March 2001, the Security Council further increased the number up to 17,500. This was the result of the kidnapping of hundreds of peacekeepers by the RUF in May 2000. To that event, the United Kingdom

sent in a military force to restore the ceasefire, and subsequently took responsibility for restructuring the army. In 2002, the war was officially declared over, and successful elections were held later that year. UNAMSIL started a gradual drawdown, and left the country at the end of 2005. Security functions were handed over to national structures. Stability concerns did remain, however, mainly resulting from economic and social factors. Therefore, a follow-up mission was established, the UN Integrated Office for Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL). (Center on International Cooperation, 2006)

Thus, UNAMSIL intervened to back a previously elected government and to restore democracy. This case study puts forward some specific factors. First, we need to investigate whether the former rebels can be considered as spoilers in the handover process. Also the dynamics around the mining industry must be taken into account, since competition over mining industry was a key motive for the conflict. Another characteristic is the regional dimension, with lingering conflicts in neighbouring countries. Finally, the role of the UK in the restructuring of the army deserves some attention.

3.2 Timor-Leste

The involvement of the UN in Timor-Leste dates back to the 1960s. At that time, East Timor was a non-self-governing territory administered by its former colonizer, Portugal. When in 1975 a part of the population declared independence, the country was promptly occupied by neighbouring Indonesia, and was annexed in 1976. For the next two decades, the issue lingered on the agenda of the UN. Indonesia's

Figure 2: Map of Timor-Leste (ICG)

intervention was not recognized, but despite a series of talks with Indonesia and Portugal a solution was not found. A breakthrough finally came in 1999, when both countries agreed to a referendum in which the population could opt for autonomy under Indonesian rule, or independence. The UN was asked to organize this consultation, and in June 1999, the Security Council established the United Nations Mission in East Timor – UNAMET. When the results of the referendum expressed an overwhelming aspiration for independence, pro-Indonesian militias threw the country into chaos, causing considerable

devastation. Indonesia was unable to halt the violence and accepted an international security presence. The Australian-led multinational force INTERFET was authorized by the Security Council under Chapter VII. In October 1999, the authority vacuum left by Indonesia was filled by the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), which governed the country until its official independence on 20 May 2002. When UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan handed over political authority to the local government, the infant nation was still weak in terms of security and safety. (Center on International Cooperation, 2006)

On 17 May 2002, the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) was authorized by the Security Council by Resolution 1410. The mandate of this new mission consisted of granting assistance to core administrative structures, providing interim law enforcement and public security, assisting in the development of a new law enforcement agency, and contributing to the maintenance of external and internal security. The operation was to consist of 1,250 civilian police and 5,000 military troops, including 120 military observers, as well as several civilian components. UNMISET completed its mandate in May 2005, one year later than expected. Since some issues remained outstanding, the United Nations Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL) was mandated to support administrative and justice systems, to continue the development of law enforcement agencies and to support security and stability in the country. (UNMISET, 2009)

In this situation, the UN executed transitional assistance for postcolonial independence in East Timor. This situation is different from other contexts since all institutions needed to be established: the former ones had ceased to exist with the departure of the Indonesians. The concept of the handover was first to transfer basic political responsibilities to the local authorities and consequently strengthen security functions. Here we may note that the mandate of UNMISET was considered successful, while some parts of the mandate were consequently transferred to the follow-on mission.

3.3 Burundi

The conflict in Burundi must be seen in light of the regional ethnical tensions between the Hutu and the Tutsi ethnic groups. After the assassination of the democratically elected president Melchiro in October 1993, violence broke out between the government and several Hutu and Tutsi groupings. Only in 2000, under the auspices of former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere, were the Arusha Accords signed. However, two main Hutu

Figure 3: Map of Burundi (ICG)

rebel groups – the Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie-Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie (CNDD-FDD) and the Peuple Hutu-Forces Nationales de Libération (Palipehutu-FNL) – did not sign the agreement. Fighting continued to endanger the peace process, when a transitional government was established in 2001. Two years later, the CNDD-FDD eventually signed a ceasefire agreement. In 2003, the first-ever African Union peacekeeping mission, the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB), was deployed. (Center on International Cooperation, 2006) In December 2003, the African Union asked the UN to take over the peacekeeping responsibilities due to logistical and financial constraints. (Jackson, July 2006)

The United Nations Operations in Burundi (ONUB) was established by Security Council Resolution 1545 on 21 May 2004 to assist in the implementation of the Arusha Accords. ONUB was mandated to ensure respect for ceasefire agreements, to carry out disarmament and demobilization parts of the national DDR programme and to monitor the illegal flow of arms across the borders. The mandate also included assistance to humanitarian assistance and peaceful elections. Finally, ONUB was tasked with supporting the government in extending its authority throughout the territory, including police and judicial institutions. Authorization was given for a maximum of 5,650 military personnel, including 200 military observers and 125 staff officers, 120 police and civilian staff. During the operations of ONUB, successful elections were conducted and the leader of the former CNDD-FDD was elected as president. The Burundian government and the UN set the departure of ONUB to 31 December 2006. A ceasefire with the Palipehutu-FNL was signed in September 2006. After the departure of ONUB, an integrated office, the Bureau Intégré des Nations Unies au Burundi (BINUB), started working from January 2007 onwards. The

mandate of BINUB included continuation of DDR and SSR programmes. (ONUB, 2009)

ONUB intervened in Burundi to provide post-settlement peace support. This different kind of intervention offers several topics for research. Firstly, the continuation of rebel activities also during the mission is remarkable. Although the last rebel force had signed a ceasefire months before the end of ONUB, the integration process could not have been finished, as violence continued during the handover process. Secondly, the border areas are of significance, as combatants operated from neighbouring countries. Thirdly, it is also relevant to consider the influence of the political change on the future presence of the UN in the country.

4. Factors in the handover process

4.1. Planning the mission's departure

In 2001, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan defended a report to the Security Council titled 'No Exit Without Strategy'. The report analyses when a peace mission should withdraw and concludes that *'a good exit or transition strategy depends on a good entrance strategy.'* (S/2001/394 - No exit without Strategy) The point is clear: the withdrawal should be planned prior to when Blue Helmets set foot in the conflict zone. Despite Annan's recommendation, exit strategies are not necessarily a part of a mission's mandate. Here we examine when exit strategies were planned in the three case studies, and highlight the differences.

UNMISET occupies a rare position in the field of peace missions, since a complete exit strategy was already contained in the establishment plans for the mission. The planning for UNMISET started a year earlier through working groups in the field and in New York, and a wide range of civilian, police and military stakeholders were consulted. Consequently, the objectives and the timeline for UNMISET were concise and clear. The mission would gradually reduce the UN peacekeeping presence in the country and lead Timor-Leste into the traditional development framework. It was envisaged that UNMISET would be able to withdraw in two years when local authorities assumed responsibility for ensuring stability in the country. (S/2002/432) *'The Council agrees that the new mission should be based on the premise that operational responsibilities should be devolved to the East Timorese authorities as soon as this is feasible, and it supports a continuing process of assessment and downsizing over a period of two years, starting from independence.'* (S/PRST/2001/32)

The handover to national authorities was planned. An agreement between the UN and the Transitional Government of Timor-Leste outlined the modalities for transferring police executive tasks. The gradual handover of responsibilities would proceed in parallel with the certification of police officers and the accreditation of their districts. The first district would be handed over already at the time of independence, the following four districts in December 2002, and the last eight in November 2003. By January 2004, only 100 international officers would remain in an advisory role. At that time, the local authorities would also be able to assume the responsibility for guaranteeing the external security of the country. The withdrawal of the UN military

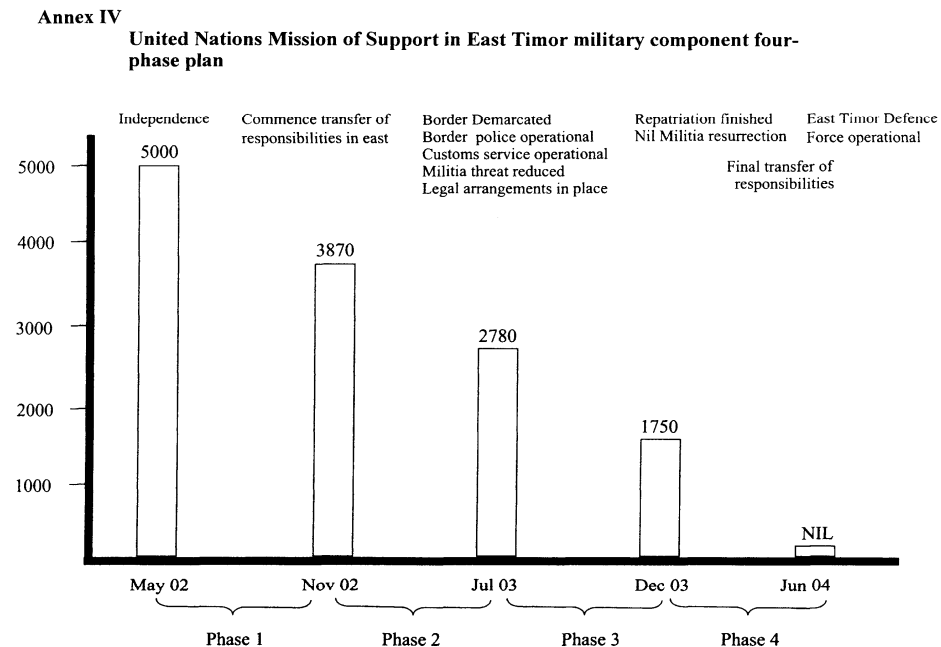troops and military observers was to occur in four phases, as shown in Figure 4.

Annex IV

United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor military component four-phase plan

	Independence	Commence transfer of responsibilities in east	Border Demarcated Border police operational Customs service operational Militia threat reduced Legal arrangements in place	Repatriation finished Nil Militia resurrection	East Timor Defence Force operational
					Final transfer of responsibilities

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5000 —        5000
              ┌──┐
              │  │
4000 —        │  │        3870
              │  │        ┌──┐
              │  │        │  │
3000 —        │  │        │  │        2780
              │  │        │  │        ┌──┐
              │  │        │  │        │  │
2000 —        │  │        │  │        │  │        1750
              │  │        │  │        │  │        ┌──┐
              │  │        │  │        │  │        │  │
1000 —        │  │        │  │        │  │        │  │              NIL
              │  │        │  │        │  │        │  │              ┌─┐
        ══════╧══╧════════╧══╧════════╧══╧════════╧══╧══════════════╧═╧═════
            May 02        Nov 02        Jul 03        Dec 03        Jun 04

              Phase 1        Phase 2        Phase 3        Phase 4
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Figure 4: UNMISET military component four-phase plan (S/2002/432)

Such detailed exit planning did not characterize the deployment plans of ONUB and UNAMSIL. For Sierra Leone, proposals for reducing the mission were made in September 2002, more than three years before the mission finally left the country. The presidential and parliamentary elections in May 2002 had been successful and the enhanced security situation continued to hold. By January 2003, the disarmament process was completed and the first deployments of the local security sector agencies were a fact. Humanitarian access had also improved considerably. While serious security challenges remained, these developments were considered sufficient to start planning the final phase of the operation. *'The task of downsizing the Mission, while at the same time consolidating the peace and addressing the remaining security challenges, will be a delicate one requiring careful assessment and balancing.'* (S/2002/987) Two scenarios were suggested. The worst-case scenario relied on the assumption of a weak security sector. In this case, the timeline given was not more specific than 'a considerable time'. The second scenario was held more likely, namely that the military troops could withdraw in approximately two years, in December 2004. This would demand significant international investments in the development of police and armed forces. In both cases, UNAMSIL would be withdrawn in three phases. The first phase would consist of withdrawing 600 troops from the Bangladeshi and

Nigerian contingents by the end of 2002. The second phase would lead to drawing down 3,900 troops between January and August 2003. The third phase was planned for late 2004, with the reduction from 13,000 to some 2,000 forces. (S/2002/987)

Likewise, no exit plans were made before the start of ONUB. One explanation is that time was short between the decision to intervene and the actual deployment, leaving little opportunity for exit planning. The quick deployment was possible due to the re-hatting of AMIB peace soldiers to 'Blue Helmets' and the previous UN involvement. (S/RES/1545 (2004)) A first recommendation to adapt ONUB was finally made in November 2005 after an UN assessment mission had visited Burundi. The initial exit-planning process was immediately accelerated, due to the pressure exerted by the newly elected government for an early exit of the peace mission, to which we return in the next section. The government demanded the departure of all ONUB personnel by the second half of 2006. The first national contingent of ONUB would therefore still withdraw at the end of 2005. A second phase would then occur during April to June 2006, involving an additional 2000 troops. (S/2005/728) The final phase of withdrawing 3000 troops had to be finalized by December 2006, as agreed between the UN and the national authorities. (S/2006/163)

The planning for the handover of responsibilities occurred at different points in the timelines of the three cases. While for Timor-Leste a well-thought plan was available before the start of the mission, that was not the case with the other two missions. Plans for withdrawing UNAMSIL were made in the middle of the mission at a point when satisfactory progress in the peace process was observed. The exit strategy for ONUB was planned towards the end of the mission. In all cases, the importance of local actors and developments is evident – be it in the development of the security sector, the successful completion of elections or the interaction with the national government.

4.2 Driver of the handover process

Planning is necessarily a continuous process, since new information may emerge or unforeseen events occur, forcing the plan to be changed during its implementation. Planning also depends on who drives the process and who consequently defines the withdrawal schedule. This driver may be the national or the international actors, or can be based upon consensus involving both. Here we will situate the case studies within one of these three possibilities and indicates the danger of an unbalanced exit of a peace mission.

The most straightforward example is ONUB. The government of Burundi asked a visiting mission of the Security Council in November 2005 that the UN should focus solely on development and reconstruction assistance in the country. The UN assistance in conducting elections had been appreciated, but the government believed that the transition phase was now over. The government argued that the national security forces were now capable of independently ensuring the county's security. Moreover, they take over other tasks of ONUB, such as guaranteeing the security of humanitarian personnel and the demobilization centres, as well as the provision of logistics and transport support for the return of refugees. The military components of ONUB were thus requested to pull out as soon as possible. The Security Council warned the government of the dangers of a quick withdrawal, but the tone was set. Joint consultations took place to define a gradual but prompt exit of the UN peace mission. (S/2005/728).

The explanation for this change in attitude is to be found in political developments. The recent elections had brought the former leader of the rebel movement CNDD-FDD, Pierre Nkurunziza, to power, and the newly elected government wanted to consolidate its authority. Since ONUB had been working closely with the Transitional Government, it believed that ONUB would hamper this process. The population reflected the opinion of their government. A public opinion survey conducted in March 2006 concluded that the population did indeed observe an improvement in the security situation and appreciated the role of the peace mission in the elections. Yet three-quarters of the respondents considered it time for ONUB to leave the country. (Krasno, June 2006) The UN could not fully counteract this mistrust, and for the remainder of ONUB's duration, the decision of the government influenced the operation. *'Thus, the second half of 2006 was mainly dedicated to the transition and planning for integration and restoring and sustaining a cooperative trusting working relation between the Government and the UN.'* (United Nations Peace Operations, February 2008)

Some argue that ONUB failed to realize in time the direction of political developments, due to weak and understaffed intelligence gathering. (Jackson, July 2006) Others say that ONUB was not able to grasp local ownership in the peace progress since the UN owned most of the decision-making process. In a country that had had functioning institutions in the past, such 'assertive' behaviour was not welcomed. (Wilén, 2009) As a result, the timing of the exit of ONUB became directed by bottom–up demands through the pressure of the newly elected government.

The opposite situation can be observed in Timor-Leste. Here, pressure to close the mission came from the top, from UN headquarters, due to overstretch and financial reasons (Jones, Gowan, & Sherman, April 2009). The authorities of Timor-Leste, lacking self-confidence, would have preferred the peace mission to stay. As in Burundi, the population shared the concerns of their government. This observation indicates that legitimacy and credibility of the new institutions in the perception of the local population are not to be forgotten in the handover phase. This is especially important in the light of peace-building tasks in current peace-keeping missions. Without the support of the population, it becomes difficult to sustain the achievements of the peace mission. (Higashi, March 2009)

Figure 5: SC votes Res 1543 to extend the mandate of UNMISET for another six months (UN Photo)

The intermediate solution can be seen in Sierra Leone. More than the other two missions, UNAMSIL seems to have been driven by developments on the ground. The handover of the mission in Sierra Leone was the result of a dialogue between the government and the UN. Withdrawal plans were set up in consultation with the national authorities, the police and army, and suggestions made by the President were taken into account (S/2002/975). International partners, such as ECOWAS, donors and the diplomatic community, were also consulted (S/2002/987).

The examples of Timor-Leste and Burundi indicate that a peace mission never enters into a vacuum. At the same time, the example of UNAMSIL shows that it is possible to integrate local dynamics and local ownership in the planning. In order to avoid a request for leaving early or staying longer, a handover plan has the advantage of being context-sensitive. To measure developments on the ground and set the right time to handover, clear benchmarks can be set. These benchmarks are the topic of the next section.

4.3 Benchmarks to measure progress of the mission

The UN Security Council has the final responsibility to decide when a peace mission should transfer authority. The Security Council takes such a decision after being briefed by the UN Secretariat about the progress in the peace process, although no generic check-list exists to identify the optimal time to withdraw. (United Nations Department of

Peacekeeping Operations, 2008) Since every mission takes place in a unique setting, peace missions can use context-sensitive benchmarks. The theory, as explained in the introduction to this report, would expect security indicators to be crucial in measuring the progress of a peace mission. In the following, we investigate the importance of security indicators versus development benchmarks in the three case studies.

In Sierra Leone, the exit of UNAMSIL was guided by five clear and concise benchmarks. Those benchmarks were defined by the Secretary-General in September 2002 to form the key measures for the handover process. The measures made it possible to pinpoint which sectors still required additional support and investments from national and international stakeholders. The principal benchmark was indeed security-related and dealt with the capacity-building of the national army and police. The reform of the security forces was the subject of cooperation between bilateral and multilateral investment. Firstly, the restructuring of the army was led by the United Kingdom, as explained above. This International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT) made progress up until September 2002, but continued efforts were required before UNAMSIL could withdraw. Solutions had to be found for the remaining gaps in accommodation and equipment. Secondly, police reform was a task of UNAMSIL, but suffered from the same problems. The target size of the police force was fixed by the government at 9,500 staff. This size was supposed to be reached before UNAMSIL withdrew. But as of September 2002, a further 3,000 cadets still had to be found and trained. (S/2002/987)

The other four benchmarks were aimed at reducing the remaining security challenges. They included completing the DDR programme through reintegration of disarmed and demobilized soldiers. As of September 2002, however, 24,000 of the 55,000 former combatants were still awaiting reintegration into society. As long as they were not integrated, they were seen as a possible source of instability. A next benchmark, distinctive for Sierra Leone, concerned diamond mining. This sector needed to come under government control to prevent further conflicts, and the revenues were also needed to complement the state budget. Remaining challenges were caused by the ill-equipped infrastructure in the mines and the absence of a functioning system to provide mining licences. The next benchmark, also part of the Lomé Agreements, was the consolidation of state authority over the entire country. A fully functioning local administrative structure was impeded by vacant posts and, once more, a lack of infrastructure. Finally, the continuing conflict in neighbouring Liberia risked endangering the handover process, out of concern for renewed spill-over of the conflict. (S/2002/987)

From September 2002, gradual process occurred in the five benchmarks in Sierra Leone. The DDR programme was closed in March 2004 when all former soldiers were reintegrated. The mining industry came increasingly under government control and profits accrued to the state budget. Support to the local administration became more and more a prerogative of other international actors, like the World Bank and UNDP. Yet, at the end of 2004, a residual UNAMSIL presence of 4,000 troops was maintained to focus on three outstanding benchmarks: strengthening the capacity of the army and the police, consolidating state authority throughout the country, and consolidating the deployment of the peace mission in Liberia. (S/2005/273) Further investments were made in these three sectors during that final year. (S/2005/777)

In Timor-Leste, the mission was oriented around three core programmes, and withdrawing the mission had to be measured against these three benchmarks. The first programme focused on stability, democracy and justice, including continuous support to the newly established public administration structures and assistance in investigations of serious crime cases. The second programme on internal security and law enforcement is more relevant for this report. This task involved both the execution of policing tasks as well as the development of the police forces. The target strength of the police force in Timor-Leste was 2,830 staff and included border and immigration officers. The third programme dealt with external security and border control. The main threat at the time was the militia operating from West Timor in Indonesia, and a secure border became a condition for UNMISET to pull out. The UNMISET military component would guarantee the territorial integrity of the country until the East Timor Defence Force was capable of taking over. Responsibility for border patrolling and immigration would be transferred to the police, so the development of national border security was also instrumental in this matter. This task was, however, dependent on the demarcation of the border between Timor-Leste and Indonesia. (S/2002/432) UNMISET would be guided by these benchmarks, even though they would not be fully completed by the end of its mandate.

As to Burundi, the UN Secretary-General indicated before the start of ONUB that the force would stay until when the likelihood of ethnic rivalries had decreased. (S/2004/210) While this benchmark was rather general and difficult to measure, it would also not be achieved, as ONUB left before the ceasefire with the last rebel force could

Fig 6: Disarmament in Burundi (UN Photo)

be implemented. In reality, there was no time for ONUB to set clear benchmarks, since the peace process was overrun by the government pressure for the peace keeping troops to leave the country. For the last remaining months of ONUB, it would become more a matter of what benchmarks could still be achieved in the time remaining. (Jackson, July 2006) Some key security challenges were put forward in September 2005 and were used to measure progress on the ground.

Firstly, the inclusion of the remaining rebel force Forces Nationales de Libération (FNL) in the peace process was considered a major security threat, especially in the western border provinces. Secondly, SSR was both an opportunity and a challenge, providing the basic for stability, but also endangering it unless properly implemented. Capable and functioning national security agencies were considered essential for maintaining stability in the country, but as of September 2005 the government did not yet have a comprehensive implementation programme. At that point, the National Defence Force counted 33,000 personnel, too large for Burundi. The aim of the government was to reduce this number to 25,000 by the end of 2007. A third concern was the completion of disarmament and demobilization and progress in the reintegration programme. The disarmament process was hampered by incorrect data, while small arms remained widely spread in society. Reintegration assistance had started only recently through the National Commission for DDR, funded by international donors. Furthermore, the return of refugees increased significantly with the improved security situation after the elections. However, it was uncertain whether the country, even with international support, would be able to absorb such a large number of refugees. Finally, the regional security situation in the Great Lakes Region was a challenge, especially due to the proximity with the Kivu regions of the Democratic Republic of Congo (S/2005/728) The remaining challenges for ONUB in this limited time framework were thus sizeable. It is thus not surprising that not all of them had been dealt with by the time ONUB left.

We can conclude that in all three situations, security concerns were indeed considered principal benchmarks guiding the handover process. The political and economic benchmarks were only a function of the stability situation. The peace missions mainly implemented their exit strategies based upon the progress of SSR and DDR.

4.4 The influence of violence during the handover process

From the conclusion above, we could expect the continued occurrence of violence to influence exit planning. Violence in the transition phase was indeed present in all three peace missions. Subsequently, some security incidents caused the withdrawal schemes to be postponed,

whereas other missions seemed unaffected by the volatile situation. In this section, we will categorize the security incidents in the peace missions and link them with the flexibility of the withdrawal scheme.

Firstly, security threats can originate from within society, and the causes may be economic or social distress. In Sierra Leone, for example unemployed youth groups caused considerable instability. Another factor can be continuing popular support for former rebels when they are brought to trial. The activities of the Special Court in Sierra Leone were closely followed by UNAMSIL out of fear of security incidents. In March 2003, a plan by former combatants and active soldiers to hinder the function of the Court was discovered, even prior to the start of the Court's activities. (S/2003/321) Yet, despite the existence of these security threats, the extension of UNAMSIL remained mainly guided by concerns as to the capacity of the security sector. Security threats were carefully monitored within the set benchmarks.

Similar security threats had far greater influence in Timor-Leste. In March 2003, the UN Secretary-General reported that the current security situation did not allow the withdrawal schedule to be maintained, and that *'the mandate implementation plan that was endorsed by the Security Council was prepared at a time of optimism.'* (S/2003/243) The reason for this statement was the occurrence of several security incidents and the related inadequate reaction by the national security agencies. Departure of the peace mission could thus lead to a relapse in the stability of the country. This led to a serious recoil in the withdrawal plan of the mission, which was postponed by a year. The composition and strength of UNMISET police component was adjusted to focus more on capacity-building. (S/2003/243)

UNMISET Adapted Withdrawal

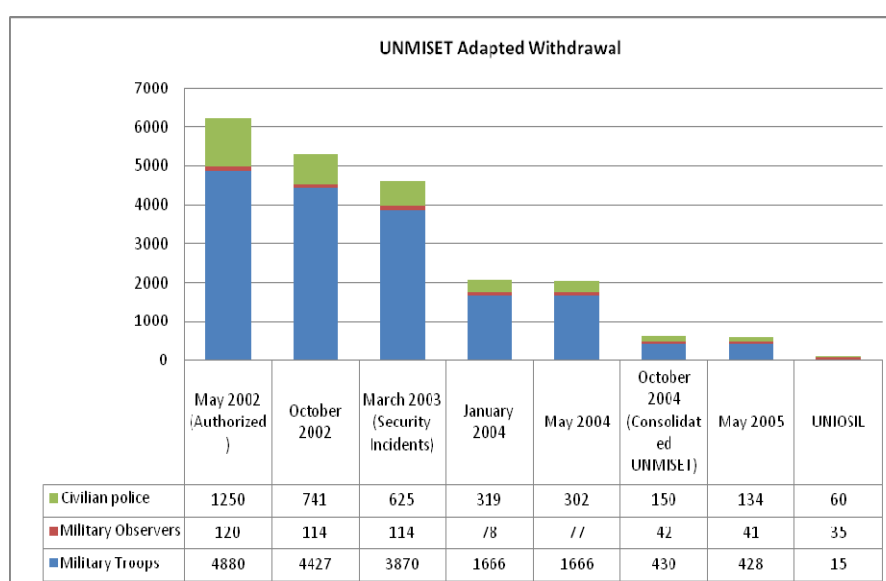|	May 2002 (Authorized)	October 2002	March 2003 (Security Incidents)	January 2004	May 2004	October 2004 (Consolidated UNMISET)	May 2005	UNIOSIL
Civilian police	1250	741	625	319	302	150	134	60
Military Observers	120	114	114	78	77	42	41	35
Military Troops	4880	4427	3870	1666	1666	430	428	15

Figure 7: Source: (S/2004/333)

A second type of security threats may come from parties to the conflict who refuse to cooperate in the peace process. In Timor-Leste, evidence indicated that former militia and armed groups were scaling up their capacity inside the country in March 2003. Such movements could have found support in the refugee population still located in Indonesia and also amongst groups of youths inside the country. (S/2003/243) The case study that best points up the risk of spoilers of the peace process is Burundi, where the rebel movement FNL remained active in the northwestern border provinces. Towards the end of the ONUB mission, security concerns increased due to continuous violence between the government and the FNL. Despite the ceasefire in September 2006, the implementation of the mutual agreement lingered behind. The FNL refused to cooperate based upon a demand to release its prisoners. The ceasefire actually assigned additional responsibilities to ONUB, in contrast to its rapid downsizing. The peace mission was tasked with ensuring the security of the assembly areas of the FNL rebels, while a special South African task force was assigned to guarantee the safety of the rebels moving to these areas. One additional ONUB battalion was asked to remain in the country until December 2006. (S/2006/842) In the end, ONUB was not able to perform any of these tasks. The process was repeatedly postponed, and ONUB still had to pull out. The timeline for withdrawal, in agreement with the national government, allowed no flexibility in planning beyond 31 December 2006. (S/2006/994)

Thirdly, security threats can be driven by external events, be they regional conflicts or friction with a neighbouring country. For example, Burundi is situated in the volatile Great Lakes Region, where external threats abounded. ONUB continued to redirect adequate attention and resources to the border area, and the cooperation between the peace missions on both sides of the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo functioned well. Regional cooperation between peace missions to reduce the risks associated with the border also took place in Sierra Leone after the set-up of the peace mission in Liberia in 2003. (S/2002/1417) Before that, the border was insecure, with regional conflicts providing opportunities for new recruitment to the rebel movements. (S/2003/944) Another kind of border problem occurred in Timor-Leste. The full demarcation of the border between Indonesia and Timor-Leste remained outstanding at the time of UNMISET's departure. (S/2005/310) The peace mission tried to compensate for the related insecurities by setting aside more resources for executive tasks late in the handover phase and by keeping the military surveillance at the border. (S/2003/243)

We can conclude that security concerns make flexible planning necessary. However, it is not the type of security incidents that determine

whether the withdrawal scheme will be adjusted or not. Any security incidents need to be viewed in the context of the mission, and other factors have to be taken in consideration as well. It appears crucial to have security concerns properly included in the benchmarks for the handover timing. Nevertheless, in some cases, security incidents did create a highly insecure environment at the time of mission closure. But when exit was not solely dependent on progress in the benchmarks, troop withdrawal occurred as planned.

Poorly managed security incidents can break the confidence of the local actors. On the other hand, the occurrence of security incidents during a peace mission may also be perceived as an opportunity. Mitigation actions can still be undertaken by international actors, if local actors are not capable of providing a response adequate to the incident. When civil disturbance cases are the problem, greater investments should be made in training the police. When the border is instable, the border control and/or the army require more attention. It is essential that security incidents be dealt with properly, leaving no room for recurrence. A good security assessment is instrumental. But even when security incidents are taken into serious consideration, does this automatically lead to a stable environment? What other indicators of stabilization played a role in the case studies? To this question we now turn.

4.5 Situating the handover in the overall peace process

Thus far, we have focused on the security requirements for a good handover process. The exit of a peace mission must also be linked to the broader process of democratization in the country. The absence of violence is only one indicator of the regulation of conflicts within a society into political procedures. Other stability indicators include democracy, good governance, transparency in public administration, human rights, rule of law and development. The security aspects alone do not make a successful peace operation. (Curran & Woodhouse, 2007) Without delving too deeply into this peacebuilding dilemma, some observations from the case studies are relevant for the development of the security sector. This section offers a brief look at the link between the handover process and political developments.

Figure 8: UN Military Observers convey to Sierra Leonean Police Officers voters' complaints about organizational problems, Freetown. (UNMASIL Photo, 2004)

The timing of elections has been widely discussed. Should elections mark the start of the democratization process, or can successful elections guarantee a sustainable result only after a gradual and controlled liberalization phase? The latter has been argued by Roland Paris, who holds that precipitate elections may endanger the peace process: institutions should be sufficiently strong to sustain the democratic outcome of the elections. (Paris, 2004) For peace missions, elections are perceived as the point at which sustainable peace is possible and a peace mission can start to withdraw. (S/2001/394 - No exit without Strategy) The end of the electoral process is seen by the international mission as the fulfilment of its most important task. Also, in practical terms elections often, but not always, mark the start of the handover phase.

In our three case studies, the holding of elections influenced the withdrawal schemes. Significant resources are needed to guarantee a successful electoral process. In both Burundi and Sierra Leone, the moment of elections represented the point of maximum deployment. Afterwards, large numbers of troops were no longer required and the first contingents could be repatriated. In Sierra Leone, the exit strategy of the mission was not discussed until after the elections had proven successful and a stable environment had been created. The local population and the newly elected government may also perceive the elections as the main reason for the peace mission to be present. Therefore it should not be surprising if the local population and national actors want the peace mission to leave once the electoral process has been completed. That was the case in Burundi, where the newly elected government demanded mission withdrawal barely a few months after the elections.

Elections are more than a visible event: they also confirm the legitimacy of the newly elected government. This is important in terms of the capacity-building of the security agencies of the state. The police and military are from then on the legal providers of security. In the mind of the population, their legitimacy leads to acceptance and the perception of the security agencies as a neutral service. This outcome is also relevant when the opposition is elected. The experience in Burundi showed how elections may trigger an over-hasty handover process when a government wants to prove its capacity to rule, after years of international intervention. (Jackson, July 2006)[1]

Other stability indicators cannot be overlooked, according to Roland Paris. The development of the security sector depends on the proclamation of a new constitution and laws, as the lack of legislation can

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[1] The same could be observed after the elections in Timor-Leste in August 2007, when the new government scaled down cooperation with the UN mission on SSR. (International Crisis Group, 3 December 2009)

seriously hinder the capacity-building of the security sector. The operational effectiveness of the police in Timor-Leste was impaired by lack of a suitable legal framework, and improvement could be noticed only after the establishment of the Police Organic Law and Disciplinary Code in 2004. (S/2004/888) Moreover, the national institutions are expected to be strong before a peace mission leaves the country. Considerable attention was given to institution-building by the international community in Timor-Leste, and the UN assumed full responsibility for various government tasks. Nevertheless, the reports of the UN Secretary-General show that these institutions were still weak when UNMISET decided to withdraw. In Timor-Leste, *'institutional development was even more urgently needed than skills development'.* (International Crisis Group, 3 December 2009) Roland Paris therefore argues that it is crucial to focus on building up all essential government institutions (Paris, 2004). In Sierra Leone, considerable attention was given to building up the army so that they could play a effective role during the elections. However, UNAMSIL could have further strengthened youth empowerment, justice, democracy consolidation and good governance. (Curran & Woodhouse, 2007) At the other end of the spectrum, the experience of ONUB in Burundi does indicate that overly direct involvement may upset the political environment. By working closely together with the transitional administration, ONUB compromised the dialogue with potential successor administrations. (Jackson, July 2006).

Here we have only briefly shed a little light on the major debate of the link between peacebuilding and peacekeeping. It can be concluded, from the case studies, that a stable environment in country cannot be achieved by guaranteeing security alone. Security factors need to be complemented with other stability factors to identify the appropriate point for handover – and these stability factors include more than merely holding successful elections.
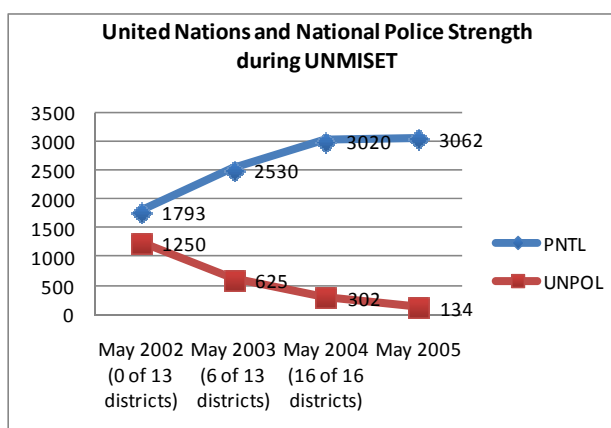
5. Handling operational dilemmas

Peace forces are confronted with several crucial operational difficulties during the implementation of exit strategies. Several dilemmas were recurrent in the three case studies. Firstly, how to organize the shift in task division between international and local actors and how to hand over the actual responsibility. A second dilemma involves geographical factors – how to continue to ensure security in the entire country while reducing forces. A third question concerns the friction between the internal and external security requirements. We will look at how the case studies tried to deal with these dilemmas and consequently describe some challenges for the first two dilemmas.

5.1 First dilemma: Altering the task division of international and local actors

The first dilemma deals with the gradual shift in the division of tasks between the international and the local actors. Between the time where the international actors have the full responsibility and the point where the local actors are made responsible, there are phases of co-responsibility and mentoring, according to the UN Consolidation, Drawdown and Withdrawal (UN CDW) concept. The local security agencies will gradually take over responsibilities, and peacekeepers will phase out their executive tasks. Two complementary dynamics need thus to be reconciled: the capacity-building of the local security forces, and the phasing-out of international forces. International and national forces need to agree upon the best moment for the practical handover of security responsibilities. This process is not easy, however. A study of RAMSI, the Australian Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands, described the difficulty as follows: '*It has been difficult for RAMSI personnel to make the transition from often doing the job themselves – the hallmark of the initial days of the operation – to a role more characterized by mentoring and skills transfer. Such a role takes more time, and can sometimes be frustrating. But it is critical to the ultimate success of the mission.*' (Wainwright, April 2005) Our case studies provide some examples of how to make this transition as smooth as possible.

The transformation of executive to advisory tasks by international actors will generally run over or in parallel with training functions. Training is an important part of SSR, and its progress is often seen as a measure of capacity building. As a result, the training capacity of international missions is scaled up to fill the capacity-gaps before the

handover date. In UNAMSIL, an additional 128 UN police officers were sought to enhance the capacity of the police in Sierra Leone. (S/2003/663) As there were 60 UNAMSIL police officers present at the time, that meant more than a doubling of the number. Also, ONUB intensified its police training work just before exiting. 330 Burundian police members were trained to take over security arrangements in Bujumbura and the provinces for when ONUB left. (S/2006/842) In Timor-Leste, police officers with specialized qualifications were deliberately retained longer in the withdrawal phase. (S/2002/1223)

United Nations and National Police Strength during UNMISET

PNTL	1793, 2530, 3020, 3062
UNPOL	1250, 625, 302, 134

May 2002 (0 of 13 districts) — May 2003 (6 of 13 districts) — May 2004 (16 of 16 districts) — May 2005

The training consisted of basic training, but further specialized training could be added to fill some gaps in the delivery of security functions and to meet the needs of the society. In Sierra Leone, special training was sought in the matter of the diamond trade. However, that post was never filled. (Secretary-General, 19 March 2004) In Timor-Leste, courses were added on how to address civil disturbances and on crowd-control techniques, police administration, border security and community policing in response to the demonstrations. (S/2003/243) Additional training also concerned human resource management, ethics, sexual violence, human rights, etc.

The number of trained cadets can be used as an initial measure to define the right point for handing over responsibilities in various areas. More substantive developments can also be taken into consideration before deciding to transfer authority. This decision-making process is best for ensuring the involvement of local ownership. In Sierra Leone, joint monitoring mechanisms between national and international actors were set up to monitor the progress made in the training of the police and army. They held regular meetings to follow up on the training needs of the security sector and provide guidance on the withdrawal scheme. (S/2002/1417) As a result, a joint decision was made amongst national and international stakeholders to extend the mandate of UNAMSIL until the end of 2005, by which time it was expected that the security sector would be able to assume effective security responsibility over the entire country. (S/2005/273)

When local actors have taken over responsibility, mentoring and advising is a method that provides low-profile but efficient support. An additional advantage is that it can be done by a reduced number of police officers on the ground. In Burundi, 15 police officers provided mentoring in investigation tasks, patrols, report writing and supervision in Bujumbura in March 2006, when the rest of their 120 colleagues had already left the country. (S/2006/163) Mentoring works even better if combined with a back-up force. An international response unit of 125 police officers remained available in Timor-Leste for some months after the official handover of all districts, to provide back-up in cases of exceptional need. In parallel, 200 police advisers continued to be present in all districts and provided in-service training to the deployed national police. (S/2004/117) These remaining advisers conducted train-the-trainers programmes as well. Similar training ensures sustainability in capacity-building and moves away from the international–national divide.

Another tactic for avoiding an abrupt handover between international and local actors is joint operations. This option offers several advantages in the transition phase. Not only do such operations allow international actors to continue to guarantee security, they are also a good tool for capacity-building and confidence-building. Local actors learn more in such operations. And if they do fail, the international actors can still step in. In UNAMSIL these joint patrols proved successful. When they identified considerable shortcomings in the capacity of the police, UNAMSIL's participation was able to deter the threat. In the beginning, the visibility of the UN acting with the national actors is important for legitimacy and effectiveness. (S/2003/321) Towards the end, international forces can then gradually tone down their participation and visibility.

The specific circumstances in Timor-Leste allowed the situation to go one step further in the cooperation between international and local actors. Building further on the administration of the country by the UN, the international and national police operated as a joint service with a unified chain of command. As a result, the mission provided a well-planned education scheme for police officers. After their basic training, officers were co-located with their UN peers to receive on-the-job training. (S/2002/432) The management of the police was executed by the UN Police Commissioner until 20 May 2004. (S/2004/117)

5.2 Challenges for the first dilemma

The dilemma of executive versus training tasks is made difficult by various factors. First, in such moments, the process driver can overrule set criteria. This was the case in Burundi. Training tasks became

almost the only way to alleviate the risks involved in the swift hand-over process. The national security agencies were prematurely perceived by the government as capable of taking over security responsibilities in the provinces where safety had been restored. Although the UN did not necessarily agree with this assessment, executive security tasks were handed over to the national authorities in the first half of 2006. (S/2005/728) The UN's cautious reaction can be observed in ONUB's continued patrolling . Despite restrictions by the government, ONUB perceived these patrols as a visible effort at providing confidence in the more secure eastern provinces and having a positive effect on security in the volatile western provinces. (S/2006/163) But even training aspects became restricted. The ONUB police component was forced to reduce from 120 to 15 police trainers by March 2006, who, moreover, could operate only in the capital. (S/2005/728)

Second, handover of security responsibilities to local actors depends on the progress in SSR and DDR. These programmes often complicate the handover process, for various reasons. SSR and DDR take in general more time than the framework of a peace mission. In practical terms, it is not always possible to reintegrate a large number of ex-combatants at the same time. The National Committee for DDR in Sierra Leone foresaw the reintegration of 7,000 soldiers every six months. In 2002, this would mean that the remaining 24,000 out of 55,000 could be fully reintegrated only at the end of 2004. In the meantime, these groups of demobilized soldiers meant a threat to stability, or they risked being recruited into neighbouring Liberia. (Secretary-General, 5 September 2002) A further time challenge is the short assignments of international police officers and the military. These do not allow sustainable trust-relations to be built up with the local counterparts, and make it difficult for the personnel to become familiar with the local culture, customs and laws.

The lack of funding is an additional problem. DDR programmes need large amounts of cash to pay out former combatants. These funds must come from international donors and are not necessarily available over the UN budget. In addition, SSR requires considerable finances to purchase equipment and provide accommodation, the absence of which can become a major obstacle to the handover process. Lack of equipment seriously slowed down the capacity-building of the security sector in all case studies. In Sierra Leone, the problem had been identified already in 2002 (S/2002/987), but a full solution had still not been found when the mission left.

Further, having underdeveloped infrastructure makes it difficult to train significant numbers of police personnel in a short time. While there were sufficient police candidates in Sierra Leone, the academy

in Hastings simply did not have the means to train a large number quickly. (S/2003/321) The expansion of the police school remained the responsibility of Sierra Leone, although bilateral donors partially solved the problem. (S/2003/1201)

An additional difficulty is to altering the culture of security agencies. In conflict situations, security agencies often behave no better than the rebels they are fighting. Therefore, it is not enough to train the national security agencies in professional knowledge and skills: ethics and discipline also have to be imparted. Professional, well-disciplined security agencies do not emerge over night. In all three cases studies, the police and army lacked discipline. In Burundi, they were accused of human rights violations. (S/2006/851) – but plans to professionalize the national army and police structures were made only two months before the exit of ONUB. (S/2006/842) Disturbing reports of police misconduct, involvement in crime, bribery, and excessive use of force and physical assault of the population were received in Timor-Leste (S/2003/944), where therefore special attention was directed to transforming the police in a non-political and impartial force. (S/2004/888) A further challenge was to create self-confidence in the new troops of Timor-Leste. Finally, DDR processes may fail easily if the rebels are not ready to disarm, as in the DDR attempts in Sierra Leone in 1999.
Not only the rebels but also the population needs to be ready for peace. The population needs to have confidence in the security structure in a country, regardless of a lack of equipment of funds. When a lack of confidence cannot be compensated for, the exit of a peace mission may lead to a perceived or real security vacuum. In Burundi, this was rather contradictory. While the population favoured the departure of ONUB, there was no widespread civilian confidence in the capacity of the national police. Whereas 40% of the population were very confident, over 40% were only somewhat confident and the others not at all. (Krasno, June 2006) Also in Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste, initiatives were taken to enhance the reputation of the army as a disciplined force. (S/2003/663) (S/2003/243) In addition, the population needs to understand why a peace mission is withdrawing, to counteract fears of being abandoned. Public campaigns can help here.

5.3 Second dilemma: Continuing to guarantee widespread security

A second dilemma is how to continue to secure the entire country with fewer and fewer troops on the ground. The local security forces slowly take over responsibility for the area of operations. However, these forces may lack the necessary expertise or confidence to fully secure the area. In order to ensure a gradual and effective handover, the in-

ternational peace force will need to find a way to prevent a relapse into conflict and violence.

According to the withdrawal concept in peace missions, those troops that are no longer operationally necessary will be the first to be repatriated. This concept was explicitly referred to for UNAMSIL. (S/2002/987) UNAMSIL first handed over three areas where there existed minimal risk of insecurity. In a second phase, the troops were reorganized into three instead of five areas: west, east and centre. In a final phase, these areas were then handed over. (S/2002/1417) During this handover and withdrawal process, it was crucial to maintain a presence throughout the country. Only then could security be guaranteed until all troops had gone. (S/2002/987) This continued presence could become a deterrent to remaining security threats. In Timor-Leste, the military component of UNMISET was to be reconfigured in that direction at the point when the national army took over responsibility for external security. (S/2003/243)

Figure 9: ONUB Forces to check security situation (UN Photo)

Troops in strategic areas were the last to leave. Borders were essential to guarantee territorial security. In Burundi, the peace forces were redeployed to the three border northwestern provinces of Bujumbura Rural, Bubanza and Cibitoke in the first phase of the withdrawal. These areas caused most concern due to the ongoing fighting between the national army and the rebel movement FNL. Also illicit cross-border activities persisted, mainly involving the smuggling of small arms. Finally, it was in these areas that many international civilian agencies operated. Guaranteeing their security also had to be handed over to the national actors, but that is a sensitive issue. ONUB thus focused on monitoring the borders through area mobile operations and visible and proactive patrolling. Through coordination mechanisms at Force Headquarters level, the handover ran slower and was based on more intense cooperation. (S/2005/728) In addition, ONUB, in cooperation with the peace mission in DRC, executed maritime patrolling on Lake Tanganyika for as long as possible. (S/2006/842) In Timor-Leste, the area next to the temporary border, the so-called Tactical Coordination Line, received a larger military presence whilst joint government and UNMISET operations took place. (S/2003/243)

Another strategic location is the capital of a country. In the last phase of operations in Sierra Leone, the peacekeeping troops pulled back to Freetown and Lungi peninsulas, whereas local actors took over responsibility for the hinterlands. (S/2002/987) In Timor-Leste, troops withdrew to the volatile western provinces and to the capital, Dili. (S/2003/243) Dili district was the last under UNMISET police responsibility. (S/2003/944). It was handed over only in December 2003, shortly before UNMISET pulled out. (S/2004/117)

Other strategic areas may be added, depending on the context. For Sierra Leone, the benchmarks identified additional unstable regions. They included areas where former combatants were located whilst awaiting the process of reintegration into society. Leaving those areas would be seen as a risk. (S/2002/987) The mining areas were also considered a priority, since illicit mining and international trade had fuelled the war in the recent past and these areas continued to attract problematic youth groups and illicit traders. (S/2002/1417)

While concentrating on these areas, tactics had to be developed for maintaining security in the areas already handed over. Mobility and flexibility are key concepts here. The use of mobile quick-response teams proved advantageous. UNAMSIL relied on helicopter capacity to deploy quickly. (S/2003/321) The support of this air-deployable quick-reaction force could be requested in vacated areas by military observers or by national actors. (S/2003/663) In Timor-Leste, an international police Rapid Intervention Unit was set up to support the national police in security incidents. (S/2003/944) Attempts were made to translate the same concept to the national level, but encountered logistical constraints. (S/2004/117)

Another tactic is to increase the number of military observers, as was done in the insecure western provinces of Burundi. (S/2006/163) In Sierra Leone, civilian police, civilian affairs and human resource officers stayed longer in the vacated areas to support the local structures and to monitor developments. (S/2003/1201) In Timor-Leste, military observers continued to monitor and exert an advisory presence in areas that had been handed over. (S/2003/243)

5.4 Challenges for the second dilemma

The tactic of concentrating on strategic areas while at the same time backing up the rest of the country seemed to work in all three cases studied. Nevertheless, some difficulties need to be taken into account.

First, internal and external events during the withdrawal phase cannot always be predicted. Many different insecurities need to be taken into

account in the withdrawal schedule. ONUB wanted to maintain suffi-cient forces in case a ceasefire between the government and the FNL should be achieved before the end of December 2006. (S/2006/163) While such a ceasefire did indeed come, implementation of the agreement took too long for the ONUB soldiers to take up their tasks. Further, border monitoring can also complicate matters. Border devel-opments are seldom under the control of the peace mission, and plan-ning to cope with external threats is not always possible. In addition, securing a border requires considerable resources that may impede the possibility of securing areas elsewhere in the country. In Sierra Leone, no less than one third of the army was deployed at the border. That added to the delayed deployment of the national army and over-stretched the army then under development. (S/2003/321)

When demands on the ground require troops to stay longer, the troop-contributing country needs to agree to stay longer and be redeployed. In Timor-Leste, this flexibility was specifically sought when the with-drawal plan had to be adjusted. (S/2003/243) In addition, the UN Se-curity Council will need to agree to bear the additional costs.

5.5 Third dilemma: Synchronizing internal and external secu-rity requirements

A final challenge is to reconcile the needs of reforming both the inter-nal and the external security forces. First, investing in both agencies may overstretch a peace mission. Second, frictions between the police and the army are not excluded.

The case studies indicate that the outcome of SSR can be enhanced when two different actors lead the reform of the police and of the army, respectively. Coordination is an obvious requirement here. The prime advantage of bilateral support is the time-frame. Peace missions mostly pull out after four or five years, whereas bilateral donors may commit to longer-term investment in a country. Since SSR can easily require up to ten years after a country has achieved peace, bilateral donors are thus advantageous. This was the case in Sierra Leone. The reform of the military was carried out by the UK, and the UK was also involved in the reform of the police. The UK was not integrated in the UN chain of command. (Curran & Woodhouse, 2007) As a result of this additional bilateral support, the UK could more efficiently fill up existing gaps and plan for the longer term. The coordination between the military and the police was also easier since both were trained and mentored by external security sources. In Timor-Leste, the UN Secre-tary-General called for bilateral assistance to complement UNMISET efforts. Such bilateral training is more focused, and also brings in more resources. (S/2004/888)

Second, it would be wrong to portray the police and military as one entity. The cases studied indicate numerous frictions between both. In Timor-Leste, there was an incident that resulted in some police officers being detained by army officers (S/2004/117) .Similar events occurred in Sierra Leone, as with the arrest of an army officer who attacked a police officer on duty during the Easter Monday parade. (S/2004/536) Both peace missions encouraged a mutual understanding through joint exercises or the establishment of coordination mechanisms. One significant explanation of this friction is lack of understanding of the other's role. As of February 2005, the government of Timor-Leste had still not defined the respective roles of the army and the police for maintaining internal security. (S/2005/99) The establishment of special police units for rapid response purposes also blurred the lines between police and military, as these special units had been trained in paramilitary tactics and used heavy weaponry. The consequences of their confusing roles could be observed in the later 2006 crisis. (International Crisis Group, 3 December 2009)

In conclusion, then, handling these three operational dilemmas seems crucial to implementing a successful handover. We would like to emphasize that planning needs to remain flexible. However, if national security forces are not fully capable, that should be acknowledged and not be disguised behind false optimism. Only if international forces are still present in the country can incompetence be counterbalanced by providing additional training to the national forces. Miscalculating the capacity of the national security agencies can have serious consequences for the morale of the national troops and the confidence of the population. Therefore, the best time for handover should be assessed very carefully.

6. Evaluation of the handover in the case studies

By examining the outcome of the peace missions used as case studies we can offer an evaluation of the factors in the handover process.

▶ UNAMSIL seems to score well on almost all factors considered in this report. An exit strategy may not have been present in the mission's mandate, but withdrawal planning occurred well in advance and was based on realistic expectations. The handover process was driven by consent of national and international actors, and extending the mission was a mutual decision. In addition, benchmarks were guided by security concerns, but also took into account security threats arising from social and economic sectors. As to the operational dilemmas, several compromises were found. Strategic areas, including the mining areas, were secured concurrently with the presence of a mobile quick-reaction team. The settlement of the conflict in Liberia ensured territorial security along the borders. Finally, investments made by the UK in particular achieved satisfactory results in the structuring of the army and police.

When UNAMSIL pulled out, other parallel peace-support elements were maintained. The support of the UK and IMATT continued after the end of the peace mission, ensuring qualitative development of the army in the longer run. In addition, UNAMSIL pulled out once the national police were capable of dealing with the occasional internal security incidents. The competence of the police remained, despite the continuous problem of insufficient equipment. *'It is widely acknowledged in Sierra Leone and abroad that the successful elections* (in 2007) *were a testament to the efficiency of the police, ..., who deployed well-trained forces, anticipated potential outbreaks and used non-lethal crowd control methods...'* (International Crisis Group, 31 July 2008)

Today, Sierra Leone remains amongst the poorest countries in the world, but the main challenges facing the country are no longer conflict-related. Government institutions, for example, are still not sufficiently strong. However, those are 'normal' development issues, and the current peacebuilding mission still has work to do. State-building takes longer than the time of a peace mission.

▶ UNMISET can best be described as a promising peace mission whose successes could not be maintained after its departure. The mission in Timor-Leste seemed to have it all. It could build upon remarkable achievements of previous UN involvements. Local ownership and legitimacy were taken into consideration. Before the mission was deployed, an exit plan existed, with clear and balanced benchmarks. That plan proved flexible even when the mandate was extended for one year, following several security incidents. Despite all these achievements, the situation after UNAMSIL looked gloomy.

Upon the mission's departure, a follow-on mission, UNOTIL, was established, with a focus on support to state institutions, the further development of the police and democratic governance and human rights. A 144-strong back-up security force was recommended by the UN Secretary-General, but was not subsequently authorized. (S/2005/310) In February 2006, demonstrations by soldiers resulted in serious clashes between the national police and the national army. Youth groups took advantage of the security vacuum to create utter chaos. The government called upon the UN, which consequently authorized an Australian-led multinational force to restore order. In August 2006, another peace operation was authorized: the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste, UNMIT. This new mission included 1,500 UN police officials to maintain order and support the development of the national police. The remaining multinational force was tasked with further training the national army. (Higashi, March 2009) However, the handover process of UNMISET probably occurred too soon and was not guided by the developments on the ground. While the government requested a continuation of the UN presence for an additional year (S/2005/99), the international mission was withdrawn, for financial and overstretch reasons. Timor-Leste was an infant nation whose institutions had been destroyed or damaged in the conflict and had to be built from scratch. Starting from zero could have meant an opportunity. However, lack of self-confidence and experience led to inadequate responses to security incidents.

The current situation seems more stable, although on 11 February 2008 the president barely survived an assassination attempt. The security sector is still reported to suffer from the same dysfunctional problems that existed during UNMISET. (International Crisis Group, 9 February 2009) Also for this second handover, the same challenges remain in building up a police force that can be sustainable in the long term. According to a report of the International Crisis Group, the handover process is hampered by a 'bureaucratic and protracted' approach. There is a lack of a joint UN–government plan for institutional development of the police forces. As a result, the handover of executive responsibilities is too slow; and the training, mentoring and advi-

sory tasks remained unsatisfactory as of late 2009. (International Crisis Group, 3 December 2009) It is thus not the security incidents that should create concern, but rather the continuing inability of institutions to deal with them.

▶ ONUB was a peace mission that became overruled by political events in the country. The pressure exerted by the national government for the withdrawal of peace troops made for a hasty handover process. Planning occurred barely a year before the last peace troops left Burundi and there was no time to identify clear benchmarks. Despite – or thanks to – this time pressure, the transition phase was straightforward enough. The remaining time was used to scale up the training programmes for the national security forces. Intensive border patrolling and cooperation with MONUC managed to contain security threats. Flexibility in planning was clearly lacking, even when a ceasefire agreement with the remaining rebel force was eventually reached. Bilateral assistance had to compensate for ONUB in this regard. Notwithstanding the obvious positive achievements of ONUB in merely two years, substantial political, security, economic and social challenges remained when the mission departed. The follow-on peacebuilding mission BINUB eventually included the continuation of ONUB programmes: developing a comprehensive plan for SSR and completing the programme for demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, and there was extensive transition planning between ONUB and BINUB.

The outstanding issues at the time ONUB withdrew still hung like a dark cloud over the country. The volatile regional dimension with the ongoing conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo has not altered. The consequences of the incomplete SSR still persist today. In 2009, the last rebel force, Palipehutu-FNL, finally laid down weapons and was integrated into the security forces. They participate in the political scene, although they have not been completely demobilized. Concerns still exist that the former rebel parties will again take up their arms to win the 2010 elections. (International Crisis Group, 30 July 2009) Remarkably, the initial concern of a unilateral process driver did benefit the handover process. In the end, the transition phase can fall back on local ownership. Legitimacy and stability in the longer term *may* thus have been achieved.

The cases studied show that there is no single recipe for a successful handover. Factors vary in significance from case to case, with no one factor that automatically guarantees success. A good handover results from the combination of all factors placed in a context-sensitive framework and supported by the determination of all stakeholders.

7. Conclusion: Lessons for future handovers

The empirical data extracted from the three case studies can be summarized in the diagram on the next page. The figure shows the handover process in the context of the post-war reconstruction process. The horizontal axis depicts the different phases: conflict, intervention phase, stabilization phase and normalization phase. The vertical axis shows the degree of responsibility for security issues in a society. The diagram translates the actions of both international and national actors into two simplified comparisons. Once the end of the conflict has been reached, major responsibility for security lies with the international actors. As the peace process develops, this responsibility lessens, as does the number of international troops and police. National actors undergo the opposite process. During the intervention phase, national actors have only limited involvement in guaranteeing the stability of the country. Their responsibilities then grow with time, until local actors have become the sole providers of security. The intersection between both trends is the moment of handover.

The handover process should be guided by a several factors, none of which alone can determine the success of the process. We conclude that all aspects should receive appropriate consideration, to increase the chances for a successful handover.

Before the Intervention phase
- Exit planning should ideally take place even before an international mission intervenes. This enables the identification of context-specific priorities of the mission. An exit strategy should further make a link with the expected post-mission situation. The mission can then react proactively to the challenges involved in achieving a stable situation. Plans can be adjusted later as new information becomes available.

The Intervention phase
- DDR will normally start shortly after the end of the conflict, but its completion will most likely take place only further into the peace process. DDR is important for a handover, for two reasons. First, unless the former combatants can be integrated, they will remain as a security threat, and a relapse into conflict is possible. Second, depending on the results of DDR programmes, progress can be made in security sector reform.

- A certain degree of political progress should ideally take place before the handover, for two reasons. First, transition requires a level of institutional development to guarantee sustainable peace. Second, elections consolidate the legitimacy of the government. This legitimacy is important if the population is to accept and have confidence in the new security agencies. This feature is relevant also if the ruling party is changed after the elections.
- SSR is a key undertaking for handover. Without proper development of the police and the army, the handover is likely to fail. Training must start well in advance of the anticipated handover date, to allow time to build up a capable and substantial force. That time can also be used to foresee logistical and financial gaps. Practical and easily-remedied problems can cause serious delays in the handover process.
- The peace mission should be guided in the implementation of its mission by clear and measurable benchmarks. Security requirements should receive priority, but it is important to recognize that security threats also originate as a result of economic and social issues. Refugee populations and unemployed youth can provide fertile recruiting grounds for spoilers.

The handover phase
Benchmarks identify the right moment for handover. At that point, several operational dilemmas need to be recognized in order to provide for a gradual and sustainable transition.

- A first dilemma concerns the crossing point of task division between the international and national actors. The first will alter their functions from executive to advisory functions, while the latter make the opposite movement. This transition needs to be accompanied by a wide range of training and mentoring work.
- Second, there is the geographical Catch-22 situation of how to deal with the unbalanced 'troops versus area-of-operations' rate. Good practices include focusing on strategic areas while maintaining a back-up force for the remaining areas.
- A third problem is the ambiguous relation between internal and external security requirements. The involvement of bilateral donors can prove efficient and effective for SSR. In addition, international actors need to establish means to tackle the friction between both types of security agencies during the handover.

Stabilization phase
- National security agencies need to demonstrate their capacity to maintain law and order after the handover – a capacity

based not only upon numbers of graduated cadets. Lack of self-confidence or experience has to be overcome at this stage.

- A next step is to professionalize the security agencies. This requires a change in organizational culture to ensure that human rights violations and corruption are no longer acceptable. The local population should be able to trust in the security providers. Good practices include campaigns explaining the mission's exit.

- International troops should ideally remain present after the handover moment, to provide back-up capabilities if required by the local actors. Mobility is a prerequisite to enable an immediate reaction and to isolate and resolve any security incidents.

- Above all, the handover process should remain flexible. If a planned course of action seems likely to fail, international forces must be able to adapt their withdrawal to meet the needs of the situation.
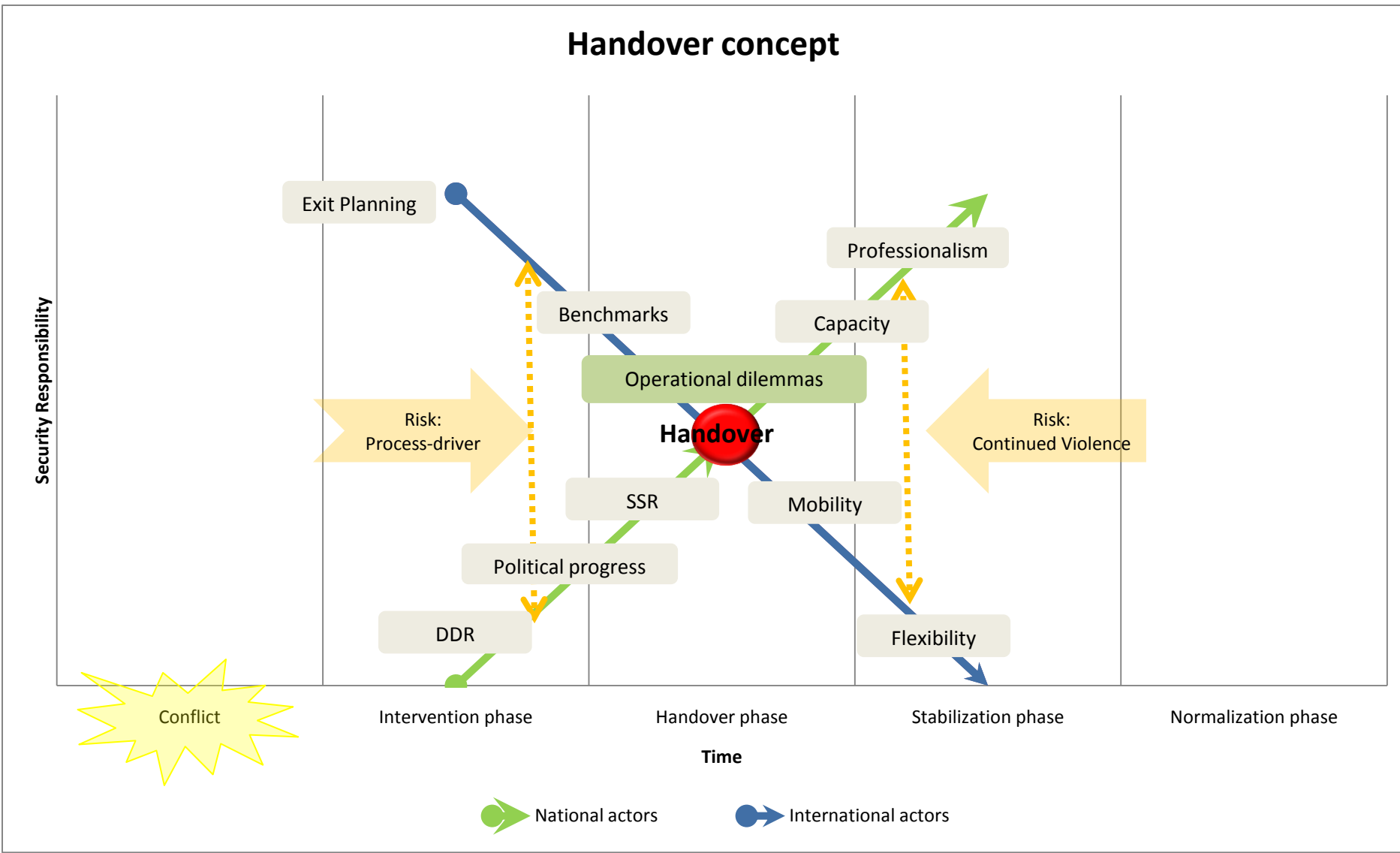
Risks

Two main risks for the handover processes can be identified:

- The process may be unequally driven by the local or the international actors, adding to the risk of a premature handover. This happens when the international actors have not fully achieved the planned benchmarks or when national actors have not built up sufficient capacity. Therefore, the process should be driven by consensus involving national and international stakeholders. Local ownership is indispensable to the long-term sustainability of the results of the handover.

- On the other side of the handover process lingers the danger of continued violence. The risk is especially high when the two conditions of the national actors after the handover – capacity and professionalism – are not met. Poor national capacity leads to badly managed security incidents. Lack of professionalism results in grievances amongst the population. International actors can moderate the risk of such a security vacuum by applying mobility and flexibility. In a worst-case scenario, such violence may lead to a situation requiring new international intervention.

At their arrival, peace missions are expected to build up security in a chaotic environment. Successful peace missions only leave a country when this vacuum has been transformed in a functioning institutional environment to whom they can effectively handover the task of guaranteeing long-term safety and security for the country and its population.

Handover concept

Security Responsibility

Exit Planning

Professionalism

Benchmarks

Capacity

Operational dilemmas

Handover

Risk:
Process-driver

Risk:
Continued Violence

SSR

Mobility

Political progress

DDR

Flexibility

Conflict

Intervention phase

Handover phase

Stabilization phase

Normalization phase

Time

National actors

International actors

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