**United Nations Peacekeeping and Terrorism: Short-Term Risks and Long-Term Benefits**

Does the introduction of UN forces impact terrorism? We argue that at least initially, UN peacekeeping missions may significantly shift the local conflict bargaining process, creating incentives for terrorist and insurgent groups to increase their attacks against civilians. UN missions create a symbolic endpoint to initial negotiations, alter the balance of power between combatants, and may change the relationship between local combatants and the civilian population they rely on for support. We test this argument using monthly data from 12 African countries, analyzing the risk of terrorism at the local level. We find that the introduction of UN forces in an area significantly increases the risk of terrorism, but longer missions in the country reduces this risk.

Keywords: terrorism, United Nations, peacekeeping/peacebuilding, civilian protection

Traditional UN peacekeeping has been organized around three core principles – “consent of the parties, impartiality, [and] non-use of force except in self-defense or defense of the mandate” (UN Peacekeeping 2008, 31); however, two major policy shifts are fundamentally changing the nature of UN missions. The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) Doctrine, adopted by the General Assembly in 2005 and later re-affirmed with Security Council Resolution 1674, tasks the international community with taking a stronger role in protecting civilian populations.[[1]](#footnote-1) A second shift has been the UN’s Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, adopted in 2006 and revisited biannually since. It raised a discussion over how to integrate UN peacekeepers with new or ongoing counterterrorism efforts (UN General Assembly 2006).

While the debate on specifics of this strategy is still ongoing, UN forces are shifting towards a more active counterterrorism role, with peacekeepers taking sides against existing terrorism networks. The UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission to Mali (MINUSMA), first deployed in 2013, was given an active mandate to support Mali’s government in its efforts to regain control of regions contested by terrorist groups. In particular, they were ordered “to anticipate and deter threats and to take robust and active steps to counter asymmetric attacks against civilians or United Nations personnel” (UN Security Council 2016, 19b). This more active role has come at a cost, as the frequent targeting of MINUSMA forces makes this mission the deadliest in UN history.[[2]](#footnote-2)

While the danger of counterterrorism to UN peacekeepers is made obvious by MINUSMA, it is less clear whether UN peacekeepers can mitigate terrorism risks. Few studies examine the link between UN peacekeeping and terrorism, and most that do focus on peacekeepers as potential targets. Scholars have noted that UN peacekeepers are attractive targets for terrorists due to their security vulnerabilities and potential for press coverage.[[3]](#footnote-3) A successful attack against these forces create climates of uncertainty, and this greater instability often benefits terrorist goals (Bell 2017).[[4]](#footnote-4)

Relatively understudied in the terrorism literature, however, is how the presence of UN peacekeepers may influence terrorist group decisions to target other actors, including civilians. This is a considerable oversight, given that the UN has not only increasingly involved themselves in counterterrorism operations, but because the nature of peacekeeping operations alters a country’s security environment. As Hultman et al. (2013, 880) points out, UN peacekeeping forces police conflict zones, helping to “enforce the protection of vulnerable populations and increase the cost of violence to combatants.” At the same time, the process of altering the conflict environment may also create incentives for groups to carry out violence, especially in the short-term (Kathman and Wood 2011).

To better understand these potentially diverging effects, we examine how UN peacekeeping forces impact terrorism, analyzing time dynamics and local versus national relationships. We use data on peacekeeping events and deployment to determine the location of UN peace operations in twelve African countries; which is combined with georeferenced terrorist attack data and local-level control variables. We find that expanding UN missions into new locales increases that area’s risk of terrorism, while a longer nationwide presence helps to mitigate this risk. Furthermore, our results tentatively suggest that type of personnel may play a role in lessening terrorist violence.

# Terrorism and Civilian Targeting in Civil War

A considerable literature has emphasized a strong link between terrorism and insurgency. For nonstate actors seeking to challenge the state, terrorism may be an effective proto-insurgency tactic, helping these groups build capacity, radicalize moderates, and provoke state responses (Lake 2002; Kydd and Walter 2006). Once fighting begins, some rebel groups continue to employ terrorism as part of a broader insurgency strategy (Kalyvas 2006; Stanton 2013) or to better position themselves when negotiating with the government (Thomas 2014). In essence, terrorism may be used before, during, and after civil war by any groups weaker the government (Findley and Young 2012).

Terrorist and insurgent groups also overlap in their tactical use of civilian targeting. Terrorism is so strongly affiliated with civilian attacks that many scholars consider this an essential part of its definition (Enders and Sandler 2012; Richardson 2007), but any non-state actor too weak to challenge government militaries using other means may resort to civilian violence (Crenshaw 1981; Fortna 2015). Civilians are logistically easy targets because they are plentiful, accessible, and vulnerable (Polo and Gleditsch 2016; Sandler, Tschirhart, and Cauley 1983). Their diffusion complicates state counterterrorism but simplifies terrorist operations; effective attacks often comprise little more than detonating a weapon in a public space.

Early in fighting, terrorist attacks against civilians may help build group capacity. Non-state actors who employ terrorism often hope for the state to launch a broad, indiscriminate overresponse against the population, as this overresponse can harden the preferences of moderates and make them less willing to trust governments in future negotiations (Lake 2002; Kydd and Walter 2006). Terrorism can be an effective means to elicit this over-response, as even those civilians unaffected by the initial attack may fear their own vulnerability and pressure their governments to act. Since democracies are more responsive to public demands and sensitive to civilian loss, it is no surprise that rebel groups operating in democratic countries are more likely to employ terrorism as a tactic (Fortna 2015; Stanton 2013).[[5]](#footnote-5)

Terrorist attacks against civilians can also shift the resource asymmetry problem experienced by non-state actors. All parties in a dispute rely on civilians for recruitment, financing, and other logistical support, so disrupting the population which supports an opposing side weakens the capacity of the enemy (Azam and Hoeffler 2002; Kalyvas 2006). Terrorism can also secure the material resources necessary to continue insurgency or engage in profit-seeking. A considerable literature links lootable resources to conflict,[[6]](#footnote-6) and civilian violence may be one means by which groups engage in plunder or theft (Kathman and Wood 2016). Attacks may also help groups gain territory, which in turn may increase the organization’s capability and act as a future baseline for negotiations (Steele 2011; Wood and Kathman 2014).

Groups who have undergone recent losses may be even more willing to engage in civilian violence (Hultman 2007; Wood 2014), though this tactic may be less attractive to groups who are dependent on local civilian populations for resources and protection. Wood (2014) finds that groups which experienced a recent loss are more likely to carry out civilian attacks, but these attacks are *less* deadly if a rebel group controls territory and *more* deadly if the group has a foreign sponsor. In effect, insurgents and civilians are locked in an asymmetric bargaining game, with resource-deprived insurgent groups weighing the short-term benefit of predation (carrying out civilian attacks as a means of resource looting) versus the long-term benefit of collaboration with the local population.

Terrorism against civilians may also be used to gain concessions during bargaining. Attacks signal an actor’s resolve to inflict future costs against their opponents, generating leverage and forcing governments to the bargaining table (Pape 2003; Thomas 2014; Wood 2014). For example, throughout peace talks during the Tajik civil war, “each round of negotiations was accompanied by armed attacks meant to influence diplomatic outcomes” (Mitchell 2015, 367). Alternatively, civilian attacks have been a means by which marginalized elements express displeasure over the direction of peace talks or derail the process entirely, with examples ranging from Northern Ireland, the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the various Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, and Chechnya (Findley and Young 2015; Kydd and Walter 2006).[[7]](#footnote-7) However, this tactic can be a double-edged sword, potentially hardening government resolve. While groups that use terrorism may be more likely to participate in negotiations and gain concessions from governments (Thomas 2014), they are less likely to achieve their political goals (Fortna 2015), especially if they employ high levels of civilian violence (Wood and Kathman 2014).[[8]](#footnote-8)

Even after a settlement, the incentive to attack civilians remains high. Insurgent groups who seek to rekindle past conflict may attack civilians as a means of extrajudicial revenge (Balcells 2010), or as a means to fuel group distrust and destabilize the peace process (Kydd and Walter 2006). Post-conflict environments may also trigger activity from new groups. Countries emerging from civil wars have “deeper societal divisions, more fragile institutions, and greater temptations towards exploitation than almost any other kind of state trying to democratize” (Walter 1999, 139), and these factors often benefit the emergence and operation of terrorist groups (Coggins 2015).

In many cases, civilian targeting is a continuation of the conflict bargaining process; groups use these attacks to consolidate territory, loot resources, and strengthen their power (Kalyvas 2006; Kathman and Wood 2016). This is an extension of the zero-sum conflict logic that weakening your opponent’s civilian supporters undermines their power base and strengthens your own. Events which create uncertainty or potentially shift the balance of power between groups incentivizes civilian targeting.[[9]](#footnote-9)

**UN Peacekeeping and Short-term Incentives for Local Violence**

While UN peacekeeping reduces the risk of civil war violence at the national level,[[10]](#footnote-10) the introduction of peacekeeping troops may create short-term incentives for disputants to escalate civilian attacks (Hultman 2010; Kathman and Wood 2016). We argue that these short-term incentives are more likely to be felt at the local rather than national level for several reasons. The risk of civil conflict and terrorism varies across a state’s territory (Buhaug and Rød 2006; Hansen, Nemeth, and Mauslein n.d.; Nemeth, Mauslein, and Stapley 2014). Terrorist and insurgent groups also tend to form in response to local events (Horne 2006; Palmer 1986), and local concerns motivate continued fighting. Autesserre (2009, 260) notes that violence in the DRC was driven “not only by the regional and national causes usually emphasized in the civil war literature but also by long-standing bottom-up agendas, whose main instigators were villagers, traditional chiefs, community chiefs, or ethnic leaders.”

Furthermore, insurgent and terrorist groups are dependent on local populations for support (Lichbach 1995), with this support shaped by local dynamics. In Zimbabwe, peasant support of the guerilla movement was built more of a desire to “transform oppressive village structures,” with unseating the white minority national government was a distant secondary concern (Kriger 1991, 8). It stands to reason, then, that insurgent groups and other nonstate actors will be more focused on - and willing to use terrorism to guard against - factors which alter local rather than national dynamics.

By their very nature, UN peacekeeping missions have great potential to disrupt local dynamics. Mission forces are not uniformly distributed across a country; “national” missions might instead be thought of as a series of interventions in multiple, related localities. UN peacekeepers are deployed to the hardest conflicts (Fortna 2008; Gilligan and Stedman 2003) and to the most violent regions within these countries (Costalli 2013; Ruggeri, Dorussen, and Gizelis 2018). Peacekeeping activities also vary, as UN missions often have local responsibilities that differ from the broader national mission. While the goal of the entire mission may be to support and enforce a national settlement, peacekeepers help fill local power vacuums, gather information, and mediate in local conflicts (Dorussen and Ruggeri 2017). They also participate in state-building efforts, which can trigger cooperation or resistance among local elite (Dorussen and Gizelis 2013).

With this in mind, we can then consider how introducing UN peacekeepers change the local conflict bargaining game. First, UN peacekeeping missions effectively set an endpoint to the game, signaling that groups have a finite set of time to establish control over territory, loot resources, gain concessions, or carry out revenge attacks before violent strategies become too costly to pursue. As Hultman (2010, 32) argues, disputants are more likely to use “cheap military means to improve their relative power” - including civilian attacks - when they expect the conflict to end or freeze shortly.

Second, UN peacekeepers alter the balance of power between warring groups. Peacekeeping forces represent a new actor in the conflict bargaining game, one with new resources and capabilities. Groups may escalate terrorist attacks to prevent an intervener from becoming established and using its resources to support their opponents. While biased interventions most clearly favor one disputant (Regan 2002; Wood, Kathman, and Gent 2012), Salverda (2013) points out that even “impartial” interventions are not completely neutral and instead tend to support the weaker side in a conflict. Weaker rebel groups may ally themselves with UN missions in an attempt to strengthen their position (Ruggeri, Gizelis, and Dorussen 2012), but stronger groups may carry out more attacks to prevent shifts in power.

Even if a UN intervention is favorable in the long-term to a rebel group and their supporters, in the short-term, non-state actors may fear losing civilian support during the vulnerable post-conflict period. Modern peacekeeping missions - with their focus on multidimensional peacekeeping and state-building - often reinforce state capacity and reestablish order (Dorussen and Gizelis 2013). Terrorists thrive in locations where government authority is weak, so any strengthening of legitimate authority goes against terrorist narratives that the government is incapable of protecting its citizens.

However, the way peacekeeping can disrupt local bonds may pose the biggest threat to militants. If poor and oppressive local institutions motivate civilian support for an insurgency (Kriger 1991), then the improvements peacekeepers make to local governance and conflict resolution (Dorussen and Ruggeri 2017) eliminate the need for civilians to turn to militants. Peacekeeping forces also provide goods and services to local populations that may have been traditionally monopolized by terrorist and insurgent groups, further weakening militant appeal.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Seeing this threat, these groups may escalate attacks during the early stages of a UN deployment to prevent the local population from allying with the mission. Attacks may include intimidation tactics such as assassinating local leaders, executing collaborators, or kidnapping and murdering foreigners, ensuring that the local population remains dependent on the group for protection and is deterred from cooperating with outsiders (Lake 2002; Kilcullen 2009; Kydd and Walter 2006). Given that peacekeeping mission success often relies on the engagement of the “peacekept” (James 1990; UN 2015), civilian attacks can be an effective way to unravel this fragile relationship. Without local buy-in, “ownership” of the mission is compromised, with the population viewing the peace as illegitimate and the peacekeepers as intruders, thereby undermining the success of the mission (Richmond 2012).

This grim logic has been on display on several occasions. In Haiti, criminal gangs traveled around neighborhoods with car-mounted speakers threatening death to those who worked with peacekeepers (Dorn 2009). In Mali, terrorist groups publicly “threatened the local population with death if they collaborate with French forces, the government or the U.N. peacekeeping mission” (Gray 2015). During the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), civilians were repeatedly threatened, raped, and abducted near and within the UN’s Protection of Civilians (PoC) camps (Arensen 2016; UN 2015).[[12]](#footnote-12) This deliberate civilian targeting threatened to undermine the legitimacy of these missions with the local population (Arensen 2016; Holt, Taylor, and Kelly 2009). We therefore expect:

**Hypothesis 1**: *The expansion of UN forces to an area increases that area’s risk of terrorism.*

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# UN Peacekeeping and Long-term Incentives for Peace

Once established, however, a properly designed UN mission may mitigate the risk of terrorism at the national and local level.[[13]](#footnote-13) An active UN troop presence makes fighting more costly and helps overcome commitment problems by providing security guarantees, de-escalating the conflict bargaining game.[[14]](#footnote-14) Once local networks are in place, UN peacekeepers can act as credible information brokers, alerting disputants if either side undermines an agreement. Credible information on your opponent’s activities reduces uncertainty around the security dilemma, lessening the belief that disputants need to maximize their power and resources to protect their interests.

Established UN missions may also alter the cost-benefit analysis which leads groups to carry out civilian attacks as a “quick fix” to boost their resource control (Hultman 2007; Kathman and Wood 2016; Wood and Kathman 2014). UN peacekeeping missions bring in economic resources, including humanitarian aid, which incentivizes cooperation (Fortna 2008). By making aid acquisition dependent on cooperation with the peace process, UN missions gain leverage which allows them to co-opt fighters and local populations. UN operations also help secure borders, contributing to de-escalation of violence and preventing conflict diffusion (Beardsley 2011; Beardsley and Gleditsch 2015). More secure borders are more difficult for insurgents to cross, undermining the ability of neighboring states or populations to support these groups. Resource looting also becomes more difficult since non-state actors have a harder time accessing international black markets. If foreign support and resource looting leads groups to carry out more deadly civilian attacks (Weinstein 2007; Wood 2014), then UN missions indirectly make insurgents more dependent on their local populations for survival, and thus less willing to attack them.

A major task of UN missions is to monitor and promote disarmament, which reduces the capacity of non-state actors to carry out attacks. An established UN mission can also make civilian violence more costly by boosting state capacity and serving as a physical barrier between disputants and potential civilian victims (Kathman and Wood 2016). More than just a passive barrier, UN military and police forces boost security by gathering information, patrolling population centers and refugee camps, and protecting humanitarian aid from looting (Holt et al. 2009; Hultman et al. 2013). With the security dilemma addressed, governments are able to redirect resources previously used for fighting towards economic development or governance, benefiting broader counterterrorism efforts. Of course, these changes take time to implement, thus we predict:

**Hypothesis 2a**: *Longer UN missions in an area decreases that area’s risk of terrorism.*

**Hypothesis 2b**: *Longer UN missions in a country decreases the risk of terrorism in all areas in that country.*

# Research Design

To test how subnational variations in peacekeeping missions shape terrorism, we examine fine-tuned data from twelve African countries from 1992-2008. While there may be some concerns about generalizability to regions outside of Africa, especially regarding the link between missions and state capacity, Hultman et al. (2016) highlight several advantages to focusing on African conflicts which we think are relevant. African conflicts are diverse in number and type,[[15]](#footnote-15) and their PKO missions are also diverse in their means and resources dedicated to intervention. Thus, our sample, which represents the majority of UN missions in this region over this time period, may be fairly generalizable across conflict and mission type in other regions.

To generate our data, we utilize the PRIO-GRID spatial data structure (Tollefsen, Strand, and Buhaug 2012).[[16]](#footnote-16) This provides a framework by which geocoded events - such as domestic terrorism and peacekeeping - can be mapped and includes time-series variables relating to socio-economic, demographic, and geographic attributes of each cell, allowing us to better control for additional factors that influence the risk of terrorism. Given the availability of local deployment data, our model changes from 3,245 grid cells that comprise those twelve states to 2,418 grid cells in eight states when switching from national to local troop size controls. We aggregate by month for the seventeen years in our dataset, resulting in 658,735 cell-months as our unit of analysis (435,240 cell-months in our alternative models). We believe this monthly aggregation better tests the short- versus long-term incentives for violence.

***Dependent Variable***

To measure the incidence of terrorist attacks, we use the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). To be included in the dataset, incidents must be intentional, involve the use or threatened use of violence, and be perpetrated by subnational actors (START 2017, 9-10). They also must satisfy two of three additional criteria: they must be directed towards a political, economic, religious, or social goal; there must be evidence of an intent to coerce; and the action must be outside the realm of legitimate military activities (START 2017, 10). Since transnational and domestic actors are equally likely to view UN peacekeeping as a threat to their local interests and are thus equally likely to carry out attacks with the goal of undermining mission success, we make no distinction between transnational or domestic terrorism in our analyses. We only include terrorist events which we can clearly identify as occurring in a cell.[[17]](#footnote-17) These events were layered onto the PRIO-GRID structure, matching each attack to a specific cell-month.
 We run several analyses with different configurations of our dependent variable, beginning with *all attacks* regardless of target type. Our theory, however, emphasizes that peacekeeping interventions alter the incentive to target civilians, so we narrow our coding to more accurately capture these types of targets. We begin with *soft targets*, which are defined by Polo and Gleditsch (2016, 822) as “all organizations and individuals with no official role in the state apparatus.” Translated into the GTD, this would include attacks against businesses, educational institutions, journalists, NGOs, private citizens and property, religious figures and institutions, tourists, and other targets such as ambulances and refugee camps.[[18]](#footnote-18) We also run analyses using the category of “private citizens and property,” creating our *civilians* variable, which is the purest definition of civilian target possible with the GTD.

Even with the most expansive definition, terrorism is a rare event, especially at the subnational level.[[19]](#footnote-19) While the number of attacks per cell-month range from zero to twenty two, 99.85% of our cell-months experience no attack, 0.12% have one attack, and 0.03% have more than one attack.[[20]](#footnote-20) We therefore follow the trend of other terrorist scholars examining subnational data and code our dependent variablesas dichotomous (Hansen et al. n.d., Heger 2015; Nemeth et al. 2014), with one denoting that the cell-month experienced at least one attack. As a robustness check, in the online appendix we run a count version of these variables using a zero-inflated negative binomial regression.

***Independent Variables***

Our independent variables are based on the Peacekeeping Operations Locations and Events Dataset (PKOLED) (Dorussen and Raleigh 2009; Dorussen and Ruggeri 2011). This project codes all events gleaned from peace operation reports from the UN Secretary General to the Security Council. Each event has a start date, end date, and geographic coordinates. The current data codes a total of 104 different events in twenty-seven UN missions across twelve African countries, classified into seven different categories. To test our hypothesis that introducing UN forces disrupts localities and incentivizes terrorism, we create a dichotomous *UN expansion* variable, coded as 1 if PKOLED identified at least one “expansion” event in that cell-month.[[21]](#footnote-21)

To test the long-term impact of peacekeeping missions, we construct two duration variables, *UN duration (cell)* and *UN duration (state)*. Duration is a count of the number of months in which there was at least one identifiable UN activity within that geographic unit. We only include incidents that represent direct UN action, which means that activities like an outbreak of fighting, criminal activity, coups, riots, and non-PKO operations are dropped from our coding.[[22]](#footnote-22)

For these variables, we only include peacekeeping events that occurred in each specific cell. This means we exclude PKOLED events taken at UN Headquarters in New York, the UN Office at Geneva, or other foreign UN locations. Like the GTD, we remove events that lack geographic precision; in the case of the PKOLED, we keep events if they are able to be placed within a province, city, village, or town.[[23]](#footnote-23) While PKOLED originally assigned “unspecified” events and those lacking specificity below the country-level to the capital, we believe this may bias our results. In particular, this risks reinforcing the urban bias in the conflict literature (see Kalyvas [2004]).[[24]](#footnote-24) We drop these events from the coding of our independentvariables here, but run alternative specifications with these unknown locations assigned to state capitals in our online appendix.

***Control Variables***

Recent work has linked greater numbers of local UN peacekeepers to a reduced risk of conflict onset, shortened conflict duration, and fewer attacks against civilians by rebel groups (Fjelde et al. 2019; Ruggeri et al. 2017).[[25]](#footnote-25) Therefore, we include *UN troops (cell)*, derived from Ruggeri et al. (2017), recalculated to represent the number of UN troops per 1000 people in the cell.[[26]](#footnote-26) Since past work examining national deployments find that the type of UN personnel matter as much as the numbers (Hultman et al. 2013; Kathman and Wood 2016), and current subnational deployment data lack the nuance to account for personnel type, we run alternative analyses using data from Kathman (2013) on the size of the operation’s military, police, and observer contingents. In cases where multiple missions exist in the same month, we combine personnel numbers to generate one state-level monthly score. We also format this variable to represent the number of personnel per 1000 citizens, giving us *UN troops*, *UN police*, and *UN observers (state)*. To adjust for outliers and account for the decreasing impact of additional troops, we log these variables.

A region’s physical and human geography impacts the risk of rebel and insurgent activities (Buhaug and Rød 2006; Medina, Siebeneck, and Hepner 2011; Nemeth et al. 2014), with mountainous regions, more populated regions, and those closer to international borders, major cities, and capitals more likely to experience terrorism. To account for this, we use the cell’s average proportion of *mountainous* terrain from the PRIO-GRID (UNEP 2002). We also use several PRIO-GRID distance variables: *distance to city* is the travel time from the cell to the nearest city with over 50,000 inhabitants, *distance to border* is the straight-line distance in kilometers from the cell centroid to the border of the nearest contiguous state, and *distance to capital* is the straight-line distance in kilometers from the cell centroid to the national capital. For *population*, we include total cell population from the PRIO-GRID (CIESIN 2005). Since this variable is only available at five year intervals, we interpolated it across the missing years. All the above variables are log transformed.

As peacekeeping may impact local economics and resources, we include the PRIO-GRID’s “night lights” variable as a proxy for local economic development. This measures the average annual nighttime light emission based on satellite images (Elvidge, Hsu, Baugh and Ghosh 2013). Scores range from zero to one, with one representing the brightest areas. We log this variable.

Since rebel groups may employ terrorism as part of a broader conflict strategy, and because active conflicts increase the situational difficulties of peacekeeping missions (Howard 2008), we also control for *civil war*. We use PRIO-GRID’s civconf variable, a dichotomous indicator denoting whether a cell is located within an area experiencing an intrastate conflict (Themner and Wallensteen 2011).

To account for spatial autocorrelation, we include *spatial lag attacks*, which is the proportion of contiguous neighbors who have suffered a terrorist attack, and *spatial lag of UN presence*, which is the proportion of neighboring cells in which the UN is present. For temporal autocorrelation, we include cubic polynomials of time (Carter and Signorino 2010), but omit the reporting of these variables in our tables to conserve space. We also lag our independent and control variables by one month. Summary statistics for all variables can be found in the online appendix.

**Results**

 Table 1 presents the initial results, analyzed using logistic regression with standard errors clustered at the cell-level to account for non-independence across observations. Models 1 and 2 analyze the risk of all terrorist attacks, Models 3 and 4 focus on soft targets only, and Models 5 and 6 examine civilian attacks only. In support of Hypothesis 1, we find that in nearly all our models, grid-cells that saw a UN expansion were significantly more likely to experience a terrorist attack than those without such activity. We find no significant relationship between terrorist activity and UN duration in a cell (Hypothesis 2a), but do find longer missions in the country reduce the risk of terrorism (Hypothesis 2b). These findings remain consistent even if running alternative specifications using fixed effects at the cell- or country-level.[[27]](#footnote-27)

 [Insert Table 1 Here]

To better investigate the substantive effects of these variables, we calculate the change in probability a cell experiences at least one terrorist attack when compared to the baseline risk of terrorism (see Table 2). UN expansion increases the probability of terrorist attack anywhere from sixty-eight percent (Model 3) to 124% (Model 1). In contrast, UN duration in country reduces this risk by roughly twenty-two percent for every one standard deviation increase in mission length (roughly 33 months), depending on the model. This translates into a 0.67% reduction for each month. Considering this reduction applies to all cells within a country, and that the average state in our analysis has at least 270 grid-cells, this is a sizeable reduction in risk across that state’s territory every month.

 [Insert Table 2 Here]

As for our controls, we find no significant relationship between greater local troop deployment and terrorism, but do find an interesting pattern when analyzing national deployments. Larger troop and observer deployments fail to reach significance in any of our models; however, a larger UN police presence significantly reduces terrorism. Depending on the model, a standard deviation increase in UN police numbers reduces a country’s risk of terrorism by twelve to twenty percent. For physical and human geography, our findings are consistent with earlier work by Nemeth et al. (2014): cells that are more populated, more developed, closer to the capital, those involved in a current civil war, and those with neighboring cells that have recently experienced an attack are at a higher risk of terrorism. In most models, more mountainous cells are also more likely to experience a terrorist attack. Distance to city is only significant in two of our models and we find no evidence that a UN presence in neighboring cells affects terrorism risk.

***Accounting for the Nonrandom Deployment of Peacekeepers***

Before drawing conclusions from the findings above, we must consider potential endogeneity problems. As mentioned earlier, UN peacekeepers tend to be sent to the most violent regions within countries (Costalli 2013; Ruggeri et al. 2018). Furthermore, deployment decisions seem to be based on a history of violence, even if response times are delayed (Fjelde et al. 2019; Ruggeri et al. 2018). It is plausible, then, that UN peacekeepers may be deployed to high-risk areas for terrorism. If this is true, failing to account for this would bias our model towards overestimating how UN expansion increases terrorism, but underestimating the long-term pacifying impact of peacekeepers.

In Table 3, we use a logistic regression to examine whether an attack in the past three months increases the likelihood UN deployment to a cell in a given month. Regardless of target type, grid-cells that have experienced recent terrorism are significantly more likely to have peacekeepers deployed than those without such violence.[[28]](#footnote-28)

 [Insert Table 3 Here]

To account for these potential biases, we draw from Fjelde et al. (2019) and employ Propensity Score Matching to pair cells based on country, past history of terrorist activity, cell population, mountainous terrain, and distance to a city.[[29]](#footnote-29) While this reduces the number of cases, this technique essentially employs a “most similar systems design” (Gilligan and Sergenti 2008), increasing our confidence that any changes in terrorist risk can be attributed to the peacekeeping “treatment.”

In Table 4, we rerun our above analyses using the matched samples. In Table 5, we recalculate probability changes to demonstrate substantive effects.[[30]](#footnote-30) We continue to find a strong and significant relationship between local UN expansion and terrorism in three of our six models; an additional model (Model 6) is in the direction predicted but outside of standard significance test levels. As seen in Table 5, cells-months that experience a UN expansion see the risk of terrorism increase anywhere from 105% (Model 4) to 158% (Model 1).

 [Insert Tables 4 & 5 Here]

We see no significant relationship between cell duration and terrorism in four models of our matched sample, though we do find that for civilian targets only (Models 5 and 6), longer duration in cell does have a positive and significant relationship, suggesting a heightened risk of terrorism over time. At the same time, we continue to find that longer missions in country result in a decline in terrorism risk in four of our models.[[31]](#footnote-31) Furthermore, the impact of these changes (see Table 5) is even more sizeable than our original unmatched sample: a standard deviation increase in mission length reduces the risk of terrorism in that country’s cells anywhere from twenty-two (Model 4) to fifty-seven percent (Model 5).

As for our UN deployment controls, Model 2 shows a positive and significant relationship between terrorism and larger national troop deployments while Model 3 finds a similar pattern with cell-level deployments. This finding – that increased troop presence increases the risk of terrorism – runs counter to research on civilian violence (Fjelde et al. 2019); however, considering we only find this in one model for each variable and only when examining different target types, it is possible this is merely an artifact of the data. Similarly, police deployment decreases the risk of terrorism, but only in Model 2. Finally, when we examine civilian attacks, a larger observer presence is associated with a higher risk of terrorism. Again, further research is needed before drawing any conclusions, but this may be worthwhile as this mirrors work on how UN observers may increase civilian violence (Hultman et al. 2013; Kathman and Wood 2016).

**Policy Implications and Directions for Future Research**

In the media and in popular perception, UN peacekeeping is better known for its failure to protect civilians than its successes. UN inaction during the Rwandan genocide and mass killings in “safe zones” during the Bosnian conflict continue to haunt the organization,[[32]](#footnote-32) while more recent reports highlight ongoing problems of civilian attacks near or in UN protected sites in South Sudan (Arensen 2016; UN 2015). Our work suggests that UN missions may present a further danger to civilians, as local mission expansion increases the risk of terrorism. These findings support past research arguing that UN interventions can shift the local conflict bargaining game, creating - at least temporarily - an incentive for disputants to use violence to control populations, delegitimize the peace process, and improve their group’s relative power before violent strategies become too costly to pursue (Hultman 2010; Kydd and Walter 2006; Richmond 2012).

Though preliminary, our study raises many possible considerations for policy makers and future researchers. First, while we find a strong link between local mission expansion and heightened terrorism risk, we are less clear whether it is the deployment itself or the nature of the local mission which poses the greater threat. Is it because local deployments are governed more by logistical convenience rather than logistical need, as Ruggeri et al. (2018) suggests, or is it because missions are being deployed without consideration for local conflict dynamics, as Autesserre (2010) finds for the Congo? Regardless of the cause, our findings denote that local deployments of UN staff may not be carried out in a way which best promotes local peace and security. More consideration should be given to the local context of the operation, noting the unique relationships between civilians, government, and insurgents.

At the same time, while UN activities are associated with a heightened terrorist risk in the short-term, our findings also suggest that media and policy-makers should not discount the potential long-term benefits of these missions. Though deployments are local, their impacts are predominantly felt nationally. This may be because UN missions have differing local and national impacts on counterterrorism activities. Drawing from our theory, the physical presence of peacekeepers in a locality may represent a dangerous change in the status quo to violent actors and, as a result, extremists may ramp up their activities to counteract a newly installed UN presence. At the same time, UN peacekeepers may holistically alter the national conflict environment, thereby indirectly improving counterterrorism efforts. By helping to secure borders (Beardsley 2011; Beardsley and Gleditsch 2015), fill power vacuums (Ruggeri et al. 2017), incentivize cooperation (Fortna 2008), and gather information and patrol population centers and refugee camps (Holt et al. 2009; Hultman et al. 2013), UN peacekeepers make terrorism more difficult and/or less attractive as a means of political action. Again, exploring these dynamics offers a potential direction for future researchers.

Finally, while the size of UN missions was not our primary focus, some of our findings regarding national personnel type warrants further investigation. In particular, while our results are modest at best, several models show that a larger UN police presence reduces the risk of terrorism, while more troops and observers have no effect or may actually increase this risk. UN police forces may not physically separate combatants, but they do perform such activities as “detaining instigators, dispersing and controlling crowds, and protecting civilians and physical sites that may be targeted” and improve the “tactical training, outfitting, and promoting professionalism among indigenous police forces” (Kathman and Wood 2016, 157). If the long-term success of UN peacekeeping depends on altering the security environment in which terrorists operate, then UN police may be the key actors changing this environment.

Again, while these results need further exploration, this does suggest that as the UN increasingly takes on counterterrorism activities, they need to rethink the traditional focus on peacekeeping troops rather than police.[[33]](#footnote-33) To take MINUSMA as an example, as of July 2018, troops effectively outnumbered police forces at a rate of seven to one (UN Peacekeeping 2018). Furthermore, while UN troops often take the lead role in providing security and protecting civilians in conflict zones, police are often relegated to monitoring and training local police forces, or to observing and reporting on the security climate. This current division of labor may not be the most efficient use of personnel for carrying out counterterrorism activities.

Drawing from the police forces of contributing states, these “Blue Berets” may lack the military training which would prepare them to participate in an active conflict zone, but as a counterterrorism and stabilizing force, they may actually have an advantage over the Blue Helmets in their ability to connect with local actors. Lyall and Wilson (2009, 73) point out that the increased mechanization of modern militaries has isolated these forces from local populations, leading to an “information starvation” which inhibits counterinsurgency efforts. Without local connections, conventional militaries are less effective at identifying potential threats or acting to reward local supporters. Some of their most interesting insight comes from their comparison of two United States military units deployed to Iraq from 2003-2004. One of the units, which had fewer armored vehicles but more soldiers, employed a frequent, on-foot, police-style “walking beat” patrols alongside Iraqi forces; the other unit conducted armored vehicle patrols, and did so less frequently.[[34]](#footnote-34) The on-foot patrols were more effective at connecting with the local population, gained more reliable intelligence, and did a better job of establishing a secure environment than did armored patrols. While not a true comparison of police versus military effectiveness, and it focused on military intervention rather than a UN mission, their study does suggest that police tactics may be the most successful tool for improving UN counterterrorism efforts.

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**Table 1**: Incidence of terrorism

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | All Attacks | Soft Targets | Civilians |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| UN Expansion | 0.81\*\*\* | 0.49\* | 0.78\*\*\* | 0.48 | 1.23\*\*\* | 0.81\*\* |
|  | (0.24) | (0.25) | (0.26) | (0.31) | (0.28) | (0.36) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| UN Duration (cell) | -0.00 | 0.00 | -0.00 | 0.00 | -0.00 | 0.00 |
|  | (0.00) | (0.00) | (0.00) | (0.00) | (0.00) | (0.00) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| UN Duration (state)  | -0.01\*\*\* | -0.01\*\*\* | -0.01\*\*\* | -0.01\*\*\* | -0.01\*\*\* | -0.01\*\*\* |
|  | (0.00) | (0.00) | (0.00) | (0.00) | (0.00) | (0.00) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| UN Troops (cell)  | 0.03 |  | 0.01 |  | 0.02 |  |
|  | (0.03) |  | (0.03) |  | (0.04) |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| UN Troops (state) |  | -0.00 |  | -0.01 |  | -0.00 |
|  |  | (0.02) |  | (0.03) |  | (0.03) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| UN Police (state)  |  | -0.08\*\*\* |  | -0.12\*\*\* |  | -0.14\*\*\* |
|  |  | (0.03) |  | (0.03) |  | (0.04) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| UN Observers  |  | 0.05 |  | 0.08\* |  | 0.04 |
| (state) |  | (0.04) |  | (0.04) |  | (0.05) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| % Mountainous | 0.09\*\*\* | 0.01 | 0.11\*\*\* | 0.02 | 0.16\*\*\* | 0.06\*\* |
|  | (0.02) | (0.02) | (0.02) | (0.02) | (0.03) | (0.03) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Distance to Border | -0.14\*\*\* | -0.09\* | -0.18\*\*\* | -0.13\*\* | -0.08 | -0.12\*\* |
|  | (0.05) | (0.05) | (0.05) | (0.06) | (0.07) | (0.06) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Distance to City | -0.46\*\*\* | -0.19 | -0.53\*\*\* | -0.28 | -0.33 | -0.16 |
|  | (0.17) | (0.15) | (0.21) | (0.17) | (0.23) | (0.17) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Distance to Capital | -0.17\*\*\* | -0.14\*\* | -0.23\*\*\* | -0.19\*\*\* | -0.33\*\*\* | -0.28\*\*\* |
|  | (0.06) | (0.06) | (0.08) | (0.07) | (0.09) | (0.07) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Population | 0.33\*\*\* | 0.44\*\*\* | 0.33\*\*\* | 0.49\*\*\* | 0.31\*\*\* | 0.48\*\*\* |
|  | (0.06) | (0.06) | (0.08) | (0.07) | (0.08) | (0.08) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Night Lights | 0.17\*\*\* | 0.17\*\*\* | 0.17\*\*\* | 0.16\*\*\* | 0.18\*\* | 0.20\*\*\* |
|  | (0.05) | (0.03) | (0.07) | (0.04) | (0.07) | (0.05) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Civil War | 1.35\*\*\* | 1.20\*\*\* | 1.52\*\*\* | 1.33\*\*\* | 1.80\*\*\* | 1.50\*\*\* |
|  | (0.17) | (0.12) | (0.20) | (0.14) | (0.22) | (0.15) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Spatial Lag Attacks | 3.10\*\*\* | 2.67\*\*\* | 3.54\*\*\* | 3.55\*\*\* | 5.16\*\*\* | 5.79\*\*\* |
|  | (0.63) | (0.48) | (0.83) | (0.65) | (1.49) | (1.07) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Spatial Lag UN  | 0.66 | -0.12 | 0.54 | -0.41 | 0.84 | -0.21 |
| Presence | (0.58) | (0.50) | (0.72) | (0.63) | (0.82) | (0.70) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Constant | -3.08\*\* | -6.31\*\*\* | -2.86 | -6.74\*\*\* | -4.23\*\* | -8.20\*\*\* |
|  | (1.45) | (1.19) | (1.93) | (1.41) | (1.89) | (1.53) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| N | 435,240(2,418) | 658,735(3,245) | 435,240(2,418) | 658,735(3,245) | 435,240(2,418) | 658,735(3,245) |
| Log Likelihood | -2917.35 | -4791.04 | -2099.36 | -3366.10 | -1558.54 | -2340.09 |
| Wald Chi2 | 5806.30\*\*\* | 7293.08\*\*\* | 5212.79\*\*\* | 6385.44\*\*\* | 4738.47\*\*\* | 6085.89\*\*\* |

Note: Standard errors clustered on cell in parentheses. All explanatory variables are lagged one month. Percent mountainous, distance to border, distance to city, distance to capital, population, night lights, and troop strength variables are log transformed. \*p < 0.10; \*\*p < 0.05; \*\*\*p < 0.01 (two-tailed).

**Table 2**: Probability Changes for Table 1 (Percentages)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | All Attacks | Soft Targets | Civilians |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| UN Expansion | 124.02 |  | 68.06 |  | 123.27 | 81.10 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| UN Duration (state) | -21.29 | -22.10 | -26.77 | -23.17 | -23.20 | -21.36 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| UN Police (state) |  | -11.99 |  | -18.85 |  | -20.29 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| % Mountainous | 38.73 |  | 39.87 |  | 72.20 | 25.71 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Distance to Border | -14.87 |  | -25.15 | -16.52 |  | -13.23 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Distance to City | -25.34 |  | -35.12 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Distance to Capital | -11.95 | -10.13 | -19.17 | -14.29 | -21.41 | -18.97 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Population | 54.75 | 95.20 | 57.62 | 128.57 | 51.34 | 104.98 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Night Lights | 38.44 | 35.83 | 34.69 | 37.88 | 40.29 | 42.79 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Civil War | 172.16 | 119.47 | 152.82 | 148.21 | 180.30 | 150.16 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Spatial Lag Attacks | 4.95 | 4.57 | 5.16 | 5.35 | 5.35 | 5.99 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Baseline Probability* | *0.03* | *0.04* | *0.02* | *0.02* | *0.01* | *0.02* |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Note: Probability changes for significant variables only (p < 0.05). Percentages based on marginal effects, calculated as moving from 0 to 1 for dichotomous variables, or a standard deviation increase for continuous variables.

**Table 3**: Determinants of subnational peacekeeping deployment

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) |
| All Attacks  | 0.72\*\*\* |  |  |
|  | (0.24) |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Soft Targets |  | 2.01\*\*\* |  |
|  |  | (0.50) |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Civilians |  |  | 3.22\*\*\* |
|  |  |  | (0.62) |
|  |  |  |  |
| % Mountainous | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 |
|  | (0.02) | (0.02) | (0.02) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Distance to Border | -0.07 | -0.07 | -0.06 |
|  | (0.06) | (0.06) | (0.06) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Distance to City | -0.53\*\*\* | -0.53\*\*\* | -0.53\*\*\* |
|  | (0.17) | (0.17) | (0.17) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Distance to Capital | 0.12\*\* | 0.13\*\* | 0.13\*\* |
|  | (0.06) | (0.06) | (0.06) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Population | 0.41\*\*\* | 0.41\*\*\* | 0.41\*\*\* |
|  | (0.08) | (0.08) | (0.08) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Night Lights | 0.34\*\*\* | 0.34\*\*\* | 0.34\*\*\* |
|  | (0.07) | (0.07) | (0.07) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Civil War | 0.49\*\*\* | 0.47\*\*\* | 0.48\*\*\* |
|  | (0.14) | (0.14) | (0.14) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Spatial Lag  | 0.07 | 0.20 | 0.25 |
| Attacks | (0.87) | (0.98) | (1.36) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Spatial Lag UN  | 0.87 | 0.95 | 0.98 |
| Presence | (0.74) | (0.70) | (0.68) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Constant | -2.49 | -2.52 | -2.60 |
|  | (1.64) | (1.63) | (1.59) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Observations (Cells) | 658,735(3,245) | 658,735(3,245) | 658,735(3,245) |
| Log Likelihood | -2509.19 | -2504.49 | -2498.24 |
| Wald Chi2 | 3500.52\*\*\* | 3187.45\*\*\* | 3149.91\*\*\* |

Note: Standard errors clustered on cell in parentheses. All explanatory variables except previous attacks are lagged one month. The percent mountainous, distance to border, distance to city, distance to capital, population, and night lights are log transformed. \* p < 0.10; \*\* p < 0.05; \*\*\* p < 0.01 (two-tailed).

**Table 4:** Incidence of terrorism, matching sample

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | All Attacks | Soft Targets | Civilians |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| UN Expansion | 1.59\*\*\* | 0.26 | 1.10\*\*\* | 1.03\*\*\* | 0.92 | 0.55\* |
|  | (0.29) | (0.39) | (0.34) | (0.28) | (0.60) | (0.33) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| UN Duration (cell) | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.01\*\*\* | 0.01\*\* |
|  | (0.00) | (0.01) | (0.00) | (0.00) | (0.00) | (0.00) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| UN Duration (state)  | -0.01\* | -0.01\* | -0.01\*\*\* | -0.01\*\* | -0.03\*\*\* | -0.02\*\*\* |
|  | (0.00) | (0.01) | (0.00) | (0.00) | (0.01) | (0.00) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| UN Troops (cell)  | 0.01 |  | 0.09\*\*\* |  | -0.03 |  |
|  | (0.05) |  | (0.03) |  | (0.05) |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| UN Troops (state)  |  | 0.15\*\* |  | -0.03 |  | -0.09 |
|  |  | (0.06) |  | (0.12) |  | (0.07) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| UN Police (state)  |  | -0.24\*\*\* |  | -0.08 |  | 0.02 |
|  |  | (0.07) |  | (0.07) |  | (0.13) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| UN Observers  |  | -0.09 |  | 0.10 |  | 0.49\*\*\* |
| (state) |  | (0.11) |  | (0.26) |  | (0.15) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| % Mountainous | 0.13\*\*\* | 0.05 | 0.20\*\*\* | 0.07\*\* | 0.22\*\* | -0.02 |
|  | (0.03) | (0.07) | (0.05) | (0.03) | (0.11) | (0.06) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Distance to Border | -0.22\*\*\* | -0.01 | -0.46\*\*\* | -0.27\*\*\* | 0.01 | -0.17 |
|  | (0.05) | (0.14) | (0.07) | (0.05) | (0.16) | (0.12) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Distance to City | -0.60\*\* | 0.08 | -0.44 | -0.41\* | 0.69 | -0.56 |
|  | (0.28) | (0.47) | (0.53) | (0.32) | (0.53) | (0.67) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Distance to Capital | -0.14 | -0.31\*\* | -0.22 | -0.24\* | -0.06 | 0.00 |
|  | (0.11) | (0.14) | (0.16) | (0.13) | (0.14) | (0.22) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Population | -0.16 | 0.39 | 0.03 | 0.16 | 0.59\* | 0.74\*\*\* |
|  | (0.11) | (0.27) | (0.17) | (0.12) | (0.31) | (0.25) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Night Lights | -0.31\*\*\* | -0.10\* | 0.02 | -0.16\* | 0.69 | -0.24\* |
|  | (0.10) | (0.06) | (0.22) | (0.09) | (0.50) | (0.14) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Civil War | 1.39\*\*\* | 1.30\*\*\* | 1.58\*\*\* | 1.12\*\*\* | 0.74 | 0.83 |
|  | (0.33) | (0.38) | (0.47) | (0.22) | (0.56) | (0.52) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Spatial Lag Attacks | 0.86 | -1.78 | 0.78 | 2.27 | -4.15 | -6.89 |
|  | (1.33) | (1.49) | (2.79) | (2.55) | (2.69) | (4.76) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Spatial Lag UN  | 0.65 | -1.58 | -0.53 | -0.38 | 0.13 | -2.64 |
| Presence | (1.02) | (1.22) | (2.26) | (1.05) | (1.88) | (1.69) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Constant | 1.55 | -8.38 | 1.07 | -1.88 | -10.39\*\* | -5.15 |
|  | (2.08) | (5.78) | (3.02) | (3.01) | (4.84) | (4.06) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| N(Cells) | 6,427(308) | 7,777(379) | 6,415(301) | 7,725(371) | 6,463(295) | 7,697(360) |
| Log Likelihood | -371.13 | -665.14 | -275.87 | -422.08 | -224.97 | -351.54 |
| Wald Chi2 | 789.10\*\*\* | 581.46\*\*\* | 1042.12\*\*\* | 869.22\*\*\* | 524.03\*\*\* | 327.80\*\*\* |

Note: Standard errors clustered on cell in parentheses. All explanatory variables are lagged one month. Percent mountainous, distance to border, distance to city, distance to capital, population, night lights, and troop strength variables are log transformed. \* p < 0.10; \*\* p < 0.05; \*\*\* p < 0.01 (two-tailed).

**Table 5**: Probability Changes for Table 4 (Percentages)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | All Attacks | Soft Targets | Civilians |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| UN Expansion | 157.93 |  | 109.98 | 105.31 |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| UN Duration (cell) |  |  |  |  | 29.58 | 19.56 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| UN Duration (state) |  |  | -39.34 | -21.87 | -56.77 | -42.67 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| UN Troops (cell) |  |  | 53.37 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| UN Troops (state) |  | 44.88 |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| UN Police (state) |  | -37.48 |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| UN Observers (state) |  |  |  |  |  | 84.25 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| % Mountainous | 65.11 |  | 98.37 | 30.22 | 141.97 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Distance to Border | -29.60 |  | -52.48 | -35.22 |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Distance to City | -34.71 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Distance to Capital |  | -34.79 |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Population |  |  |  |  |  | 202.92 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Night Lights | -22.60 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Civil War | 138.33 | 129.42 | 160.64 | 125.81 |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Baseline Probability* | *0.39* | *0.44* | *0.18* | *0.33* | *0.12* | *0.12* |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Note: Probability changes for significant variables only (p < 0.05). Percentages based on marginal effects, calculated as moving from 0 to 1 for dichotomous variables, or a standard deviation increase for continuous variables.

1. In many ways, these resolutions codified the strong civilian protection mandate first seen with the UNAMSIL mission. Authorized in 1999 and completing its mandate in 2005, UNAMSIL replaced an earlier observer mission in Sierra Leone with a significantly larger peacekeeping force. While the early mission was fairly weak and unsuccessful, the addition of well-trained British paratroopers would help stabilize the conflict and reduce violence against civilians (Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon 2013; Kreps 2010), making it a model for UN peacekeeping deployments since (Olonisakin 2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. From 2013 until 2016, the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) recorded 279 improvised explosive device (IEDs) attacks with 119 fatalities; over half have been MINUSMA personnel (Karlsrud 2017, 1219). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Cilliers (2003) argues that in Africa, peacekeepers and other humanitarian workers are “numerous, prominent, and vulnerable” (99). While peacekeepers are mostly military personnel, typically seen as “hard” targets and thus more difficult targets for terrorists, UN missions are comprised of multiple militaries, each with different equipment, training, and communications gear (Spearin 2011). Add potential language barriers and command structure differences, and this inherent coordination challenge offers security openings which may be exploited by terrorists.

A *Washington Post* article on the MINUSMA mission highlights how unprepared traditional peacekeeping missions are for terrorism: “Most of its troops from Africa and South Asia brought tanks and vehicles that were easy targets for explosives, unlike U.S. mine-resistant vehicles” and “The UN compounds...had flimsy perimeter security and were vulnerable to the massive car bombs used by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb” (Sieff 2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. While assassinations of business and religious leaders are most likely to result in regime change in all countries, in authoritarian states, regime change was only likely after the targeting of UN officials (Bell 2017, 167). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This logic runs counter to Li (2005), who argues that democracy has differing effects, with participation decreasing terrorism and executive constraints increasing its presence. However, Li’s study focused on *transnational* terrorism; when Young and Findley (2011) replicated Li’s study for *domestic* terrorism, the only democracy variable they found to be significant was executive constraints, which resulted in greater levels of terrorism. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See, for instance, Collier and Hoeffler (2004), Lujala (2009), and Ross (2004). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. These correspond to the concepts of inside, outside, and latent spoilers (see Stedman 1997; Greenhill and Major 2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. However, Wood and Kathman find that groups who use a *moderate* level of civilian targeting are more likely to reach a negotiated settlement with the government. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Elections are one such event, as groups may carry out civilian attacks to gain a political advantage (Autesserre 2009; Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski 2013; Klopp and Zuern 2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. UN peacekeeping missions extend the duration of ceasefires (Doyle and Sambanis 2000; Fortna 2004, 2008), prevent conflict re-emergence (Gilligan and Sergenti 2008; Hultman et al. 2016), reduce battlefield deaths (Hultman et al. 2014), and increase the success of democratization following conflict (Doyle and Sambanis 2000, 2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. While focused on military interventions rather than UN peacekeeping, Kilcullen (2009) highlights how development projects which engage local populations, such as road construction in Afghanistan, can disrupt terrorist operations. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Between January and October of 2015, at least thirty nine civilians were killed by SPLA soldiers and other armed groups around the Bentiu PoC camp (Arensen 2016, 32). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Past works finds that larger UN missions comprised primarily of armed military or police forces are effective at protecting civilians from government and rebel attacks (Fjelde et al. 2019; Hultman et al. 2013; Kathman and Wood 2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. For a more extensive discussion of how credible commitment problems prevent the resolution of conflict, see Walter (2002). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The prevalence and diversity of conflict essentially controls “for several common correlates of victimization” and avoids “a sample of wars that would meaningfully bias our results” (Hultman et al. 2016, 238). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. This dataset divides the globe into a series of cells of roughly fifty five km per side. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. This corresponds to a 1, 2, or 3 on the GTD variable *specificity*. We also present models in our online appendix relaxing this level of specificity. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. We exclude attacks against entities like the United Nations. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. As Hansen et al. (n.d., 8) point out, “while country-level studies essentially have the benefit of “aggregating up” events across a territory, leading to a higher variation in count, a more local analysis is dominated by essentially a dichotomous process.” [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. To compare, the *all attacks* has 957 out of 657,778 cell-months with at least one terrorist attack, *soft targets* has 617 cell-months, and *civilians* has 384 cell-months. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. We disaggregate our expansion variable to test the impact of specific expansion activities; these results can be found in the online appendix. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. See Appendix Table A2 for a full list of activities we use to code the *expansion* and *duration* variables.. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. This corresponds to location codes of 2 or 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Similar to Kalyvas’s warning for civil war research, terrorism has an urban reporting bias (see Nemeth and Mauslein 2019). Even, terrorism may be an urban form of violence. Urban environments offer high impact targets: cities are regional centers of population, economics, media, and infrastructure (Savitch 2004), while capitals contain a range of symbolic and valuable targets (Berrebi and Lakdawalla 2007; Nemeth et al. 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. As an important caveat, these studies examined African conflicts only. In his analysis of Bosnia, Costalli (2013) fails to find evidence that UN peacekeepers reduce violence during fighting, but did note they aid post-conflict stabilization. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. We also ran additional analyses in our online appendix substituting Fjelde et al.’s (2019) local UN deployment size data. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. See online appendix. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Models with a six-month time frame yield similar results (see online appendix). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. We used one-to-one nearest-neighbor matching with replacement. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. To test the predictive power of our model, we follow Ward, Greenhill, and Bakke (2010) and produce an ROC comparing models with and without our independent variables using the matched sample. The area under the curve of our model is larger than the baseline model (Ꭓ2 = 8.74, p<.01). See Appendix Figure A1. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. The exceptions were Models 1 and 2 (all attacks), where country duration was just outside of standard levels of significance. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. A decade after the Rwanda mission, *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof gave a scathing critique of the organization, stating that we should “...drop any fantasy the U.N. is going to save the day as a genocide unfolds. In that mission, the U.N. is failing about as badly as the League of Nations did” (2006, 25). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. This link between larger observer missions and increased violence mirrors work by Hultman et al. (2013) and Kathman and Wood (2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. As Lyall and Wilson (2009, 96-97) state, this unit “sought to intimidate the local population and flush out insurgents by projecting ‘presence’ through armored shows of force.” [↑](#footnote-ref-34)