NIGERIAN PEACEKEEPING MISSION UNDER THE
AUSPICES OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL FROM
1960 TO 2010: A STUDY OF SIERRA LEAONE

BY

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AUGUST, 2011

Published Online By:
EgoBooster Books
www.omotere.tk

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the historical development of Nigerian peacekeeping mission under the auspices of the United Nations Security Council from 1960 to 2009 using Sierra Leone as a case study. Furthermore, it discusses the concept, nature and general principles of peacekeeping; examined the foreign policy objectives of Nigeria in relation to her peacekeeping mission; examine the contributions of Nigerian peacekeeping mission to the installment of peace and stability in Sierra Leone between 1991 and 2000; and review the major challenges facing Nigeria peacekeeping mission. Historical research method was employed in this study. Both primary and secondary source materials were used by the researcher. The study established that Nigeria’s peacekeeping mission has been beneficial to the country especially in the projection of her public diplomacy and foreign power abroad.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Historical Background

The history of Nigerian peacekeeping mission began in 1960 when she joined the United Nations.\(^1\) Since then, Nigeria has been unequivocally committed to the goals, principles and objectives of the United Nations. This is evident in her contributions towards the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security. Beginning with the Mission in the Republic of Congo in 1960,\(^2\) Nigerian armed battalions have meritoriously served in many UN regional peacekeeping missions around the world.

Thus, between 1960 and 2010, Nigeria has been actively involved in various ways in the struggle against disintegration of the African continent. This made her to champion the establishment of the Economic Community of West African States [ECOWAS (1975)], the OrganizatioPEACEKEEPINGn of African
Unity [OAU (1963), now AU (2001)], the Non-Aligned Movement, and other organizations concerned with bringing peace to regions and peoples across the world.³

Moreover, Nigeria contributed significant financial backing, troops and resources that made ECOMOG’s creation possible. Nigeria also spearheaded the military and diplomatic engagements to restore and maintain peace in Congo, Liberia, Sudan, Sierra Leone and a host of others countries. In particular, Nigeria’s reputation as a regional stabilizer, conciliator, and peace builder in the West African sub-region – using the Sierra Leone peacekeeping experience, remains unmatched.⁴

Nigeria’s positive and successful intervention in the Sierra Leonean civil war and the restoration of democracy under the auspices of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and also the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNMSIL) makes Nigeria to be a major player towards global peace, security and stability.
Nigeria’s long-term chairmanship of the UN Special Committee against Apartheid; and its leadership of peacekeeping missions in Chad (1979-82), Liberia (1990-98), Sierra Leone (1991-2000), Guinea Bissau (1998-00) and Coté d’Ivoire (2000-Date) are all reflections of its commitment and role to peace building, peace keeping, and conflict resolution.

Focusing on Nigeria peacekeeping mission in Sierra Leone under the auspices of the United Nations, this research looks at the Sierra Leonean crisis and Nigeria’s intervention in installing peace, first, through ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and later through United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNMSIL). The research interest is basically on the contributions of Nigeria to peacekeeping mission around the regions of the world using Sierra Leone as a case study.
Nigeria: Land and the People

Nigeria is an amalgam of ancient Kingdoms, Caliphates, Empires and City-states with a long history of organised societies. Its boundaries were drawn as a result of trade (from slavery to pepper or ivory) and overseas territorial ambitions of Western European powers in the 19th century. The name Nigeria was adopted in 1898 to designate the British Protectorates on the River Niger.\(^5\)

Some scholars contend that Nigeria contains more historic cultures and empires than any other nation in Africa.\(^6\) The history of the Nigerian people extends backward in time for some three millennia. Archaeological evidence, oral traditions, and written documentation establish the existence of dynamic societies and well-developed political systems whose history had an important influence on colonial rule and has continued to shape independent Nigeria. Nigerian history is fragmented in the sense that it evolved from a variety of traditions, but many of the most outstanding
features of modern society reflect the strong influence of the three regionally dominant ethnic groups—the Hausa in the north, the Yoruba in the west, and the Igbo in the east.\(^7\)

Geographically, Nigeria is located in western Africa on the Gulf of Guinea and has a total area of 923,768 km\(^2\) (356,669 sq mi),\(^8\) Nigeria borders the Gulf of Guinea (bights of Benin and Biafra) in the south; Cameroon in the east, Chad in the northeast, Niger in the north, and Benin to the west.\(^9\) The topography have five major geographic divisions: low coastal zone along Gulf of Guinea; succeeded northward by hills and low plateaus; Niger-Benue river valley; broad stepped plateau stretching to northern border with highest elevations over 1,200 meters; mountainous zone along eastern border, which includes country’s highest point (2,042 meters).\(^10\)

Historically speaking, all evidence suggests the early settlement of Nigeria as early as 10,000 years old due to a fossil skeleton with negroid features found at Ileru in western Nigeria.\(^11\)
The earliest culture in Nigeria to be identified by its distinctive artifacts is that of the Nok people (400 B.C-200 A.D.). Other historical developments in pre-colonial Nigeria include the Yoruba kingdoms of Ife and Oyo in southwestern Nigeria which became prominent in the 12th and 14th century respectively. In the northern part of the country, Kano and Katsina has recorded history dating back to around 999. Hausa kingdoms and the Kanem-Bornu Empire prospered as trade posts between North and West Africa. The Kingdom of Nri of the Igbo people started in the 10th century until it lost its sovereignty to the British in 1911. It is the oldest kingdom in Nigeria.

In the 1800s, the British started to reside in parts of these kingdoms and empires. In 1914, Nigeria was formed by combining the Northern and Southern Protectorates and the Colony of Lagos. Between 1914 and 1922, Nigeria was presided over by a Governor-General. In 1922, as part of the constitution of the time, the British
introduced the principle of direct election into the Legislative council.\footnote{16}

In 1951, a new constitution elevated the provinces to regional status. The National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) had control of the Eastern Region government, the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) had control of the Northern Region, and the Action Group (AG) had control of the Western Region. By 1957, the Eastern and Western Regions attained self-governing status. In 1959, the Northern Region attained self-governing status.

On October 1 1960, Nigeria obtained its independence. At this time, Northern and Southern Cameroon were given the option of staying as part of Nigeria or leaving Nigeria. Southern Cameroon decided to leave Nigeria, but Northern Cameroon stayed.\footnote{17}

Also, on October 7, 1960, Nigeria was admitted to the United Nations as the 99th member.\footnote{18} One of the earliest and most
signification contributions to the UN was to furnish troops for the peacekeeping operating in Zaire in the early 1960s. Later on, the main thrust of Nigeria's activism on the world stage was to promote peace, maintain stability and peacekeeping as witnessed in Sierra Leone in 1999.

Timeline of Nigerian history shows that the country too has undergone series of internal crisis such as Census Crisis, coups and counter coups, civil war, religious crisis, ethnic conflicts, etc. However, despite these crises, Nigeria still grows stronger and remains the backbone for peace operations in the African sub-region.

**Sierra Leone: Land and the People**

The Republic of Sierra Leone is a country in west Africa. It is bordered by Guinea to the north and east, Liberia to the southeast, and the Atlantic Ocean to the west and southwest. Sierra Leone covers a total area of 71,740 km$^2$ (27,699 sq mi$^{19}$) and has a population estimated at 6.5 million. It began as an independent
colony under the auspices of the Sierra Leone Company on March 11th 1792 and became a British colony in 1808.20 Sierra Leone is now a constitutional republic comprising three provinces and the Western Area; which are further divided into fourteen districts. The country has a tropical climate, with a diverse environment ranging from savannah to rainforests. Freetown is the capital, largest city and economic center. The other major cities are Bo, Kenema, Koidu Town and Makeni.20

Sierra Leone is rich in mineral resources, possessing some of the rarest and most valuable mineral types in the world, many of which are found in significant quantities. The country has relied on mining, especially diamonds, for its economic base; it is among the Top 10 diamond producing nations in the world, and mineral exports remain the main foreign currency earner. Sierra Leone is also among the largest producers of titanium and bauxite, and a major producer of gold. The country has one of the world's largest deposits of rutile. 21
Historically, early inhabitants of Sierra Leone included the Sherbro, Temne and Limba, and Tyra peoples, and later the Mende who knew the country as Romarong, and the Kono who settled in the east of the country. In 1462, it was visited by the Portuguese explorer Pedro da Cintra, who dubbed it Serra de Leão, meaning "Lion Mountains".

Sierra Leone later became an important centre of the transatlantic trade in slaves until March 11th 1792 when Freetown was founded by the Sierra Leone Company as a home for formerly enslaved African Americans. In 1808, Freetown became a British Crown Colony, and in 1896, the interior of the country became a British Protectorate in 1961, the two combined and gained independence.

The Sierra Leone Civil War began in 1991 and resolved in 2000 after the Nigerian-led United Nations troops were heavily reinforced by a British force and other peacekeeping forces.
The Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

i. Discuss the concept, nature and general principles of peacekeeping

ii. Examine the foreign policy objectives of Nigeria in relation to her peacekeeping mission

iii. Discuss the history of Nigeria’s participation in peacekeeping mission under the auspices of the United Nations Security Council up to year 2010 with focus on the Sierra Leonean Civil War

iv. Examine the contributions of Nigerian peacekeeping mission to the installment of peace and stability in Sierra Leone between 1991 and 2000

v. Review the major challenges facing Nigeria peacekeeping mission
Statement of the Problem

While efforts have been made by some scholars to document Nigerian peacekeeping missions, much is yet to be covered on the challenges facing Nigerian peacekeeping under the auspices of the UN Security Council. That is why this research is set to examine Nigeria peacekeeping mission under the auspices of the UN Security Council using Sierra Leone as case study.

Literature Review

There is plethora of works on peacekeeping missions especially those relating to the United Nations. However, much is yet to be documented on Nigeria peacekeeping mission in the African region. To make this research meaningful and organized, the review of literature is in two parts: first is the review of works on the UN peacekeeping mission and secondly, review of literature of Nigerian peacekeeping mission between 1960 and 2010.
Reviewing works on UN peacekeeping shows that peacekeeping has proven to be one of the most effective tools available to the UN to assist host countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace. For instance, M. R. Berdal and S. Economides, *United Nations interventionism, 1991-2004*, makes a good review as it analyses the nature of peacekeeping and the guiding principles of UN peacekeeping. M. R. Berdal and S. Economides noted that UN peacekeeping has unique strengths, including legitimacy, burden sharing, and an ability to deploy and sustain troops and police from around the globe, integrating them with civilian peacekeepers to advance multidimensional mandates. Moreover, UN Peacekeepers provide security and the political and peace building support to help countries make the difficult, early transition from conflict to peace. While UN Peacekeeping is guided by three basic principles, Consent of the parties; Impartiality; and Non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate.
While M. R. Berdal and S. Economides gives one a general background to UN peacekeeping mission, it does not attempt to chronicle UN peacekeeping mission since its foundation. Nevertheless, it did not touch basic areas of peacekeeping that this research benefits from.

D. S. Sorenson and P. C. Wood *The politics of peacekeeping in the post-cold war era*, looked at peacekeeping not only as a means to maintain peace and security, but also to facilitate the political process, protect civilians, assist in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants; support the organization of elections, protect and promote human rights and assist in restoring the rule of law. The work highlights the majors peacekeeping mission of the UN which are currently 15 UN peace operations deployed on four continents. Attention is not given to specific peacekeeping missions such as the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone which faults the work as overgeneralizing peacekeeping research.
Another important work is G. Marrack *The Evolution of United Nations Peacekeeping* which provides a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of UN peacekeeping. United Nations peacekeeping, according to Marrack was initially developed during the Cold War as a means of resolving conflicts between states by deploying unarmed or lightly armed military personnel from a number of countries, under UN command, to areas where warring parties were in need of a neutral party to observe the peace process. Peacekeepers could be called in when the major international powers (the five permanent members of the Security Council) tasked the UN with bringing closure to conflicts threatening regional stability and international peace and security. These included a number of so-called "proxy wars" waged by client states of the superpowers. As of February 2009, there have been 63 UN peacekeeping operations since 1948. While Marrack has tried to chronicle the UN peacekeeping missions since 1948, *The Evolution of United Nations Peacekeeping* did not critically
examine the causes of the wars leading to the need for peacekeeping.

The second part of the review deals with review of literature on Nigerian peacekeeping mission between 1960 and 2010. J.K. Muhammad *The Role of Nigeria in Peace Building, Conflict Resolution, and Peacekeeping since 1960* chronicles Nigeria’s effort at peacekeeping since 1960. To Muhammad, Nigeria’s effort at peace building has been predicated principally on the pursuit of domestic security through the promotion of peaceful relations between herself and neighbours, and between neighbours themselves. It is against this background that Nigeria’s role in peace building across Africa should be examined. Nigeria strives to put its neighbours at ease and attempts to stave off problems that could arise especially over inherited colonial boundaries by establishing bilateral agreements as the case of relations with Equatorial Guinea since 1988 demonstrate. The dominant role in the mediation of the crises between Liberia and Sierra Leone,
Burkina Faso and Mali, and Togo and Ghana are some of the clearest indications of this peace building role. However, Muhammad did not focus his attention on one particular peacekeeping effort that Nigeria carried out such as that of Sierra Leone.

J. D. Chinade, *Nigeria and the United Nations: The Past, the Present and The Future* presents a lucid explanation of Nigeria’s involvement in the UN peacekeeping and argues for the inclusion of Nigeria in the permanent member of the security council. It traces the active roles played by Nigeria in installing peace in war torn zones and in building peace among African states. This work, though logical in its presentation is not adequate to analyzing Nigeria’s involvement in peacekeeping mission under the auspices of the UN Security Council.

A. Adebajo, *Building peace in West Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau*, is generally regarded as authority in Nigeria peacekeeping. Much of Nigeria’s involvements in peacekeeping
operations have been carried out under the UN umbrella. But it has done the same under ECOWAS (ECOMOG), and lately under the African Union. According to Adebajo, though involvement in peacekeeping operations is about as old as Nigeria, it is shocking that fifty years after, the nation is just making efforts to develop a full-fledged policy on peacekeeping. While Adebajo’s work makes a good background for this study.

Generally, some of the peace initiatives that Nigeria have been involved in includes: Congo (ONUC) 1960-1964, Battalion operations; New Guinea (UNSF) 1962-1963, Military Observers; Tanzania (Bilateral agreement) 1964, Battalion operations; India-Pakistan (UNIPOM) 1965-1966, Military Observers; Lebanon (UNIFIL) 1978-1983, Battalion operations and Staff Officers; Chad (HARMONY I, bilateral agreement) 1981-1982, Battalion operations and Staff Officers; Chad (HARMONY II, OAU) 1982-1983, Brigade operations; Iran-Iraq (UNIIMOG) 1988-1991, Military Observers; Liberia (ECOMOG) 1990- Division (-)

Scope of the Study

This study intends to cover Nigerian peacekeeping missions up to year 2010. It looks at the concept of peacekeeping, nature of
peacekeeping and evolution of the UN peacekeeping mission vis-à-vis Nigerian peacekeeping efforts in the various peacekeeping initiatives of the UN. However, due to the complex nature of the study area (1960 to 2010), special attention is given to Nigerian peacekeeping mission in Sierra Leone and will not cover all the major peacekeeping efforts of Nigeria. The study therefore looks at the various capacities where Nigeria have served to transformed war torn regions into peaceful areas under the auspices of the UN Security Council using Sierra Leon as a case study.

**Significance of the Study**

This study is very important for certain reasons.

First, it historicizes Nigeria peacekeeping mission since 1960 thereby shedding more right on the dynamics that characterized Nigeria foreign policy objectives on her African neighbours.

Secondly, it is useful to scholars especially diplomatic historians, political scientists, economists, international relations students and peace experts in their research.
Thirdly, this research work will help in providing information on the domestic factors that has been influencing Nigeria peacekeeping mission since Independence.

Finally, the political and military class will learn, through this study, the need for them to be patriotic in keeping Nigeria’s arrow head in the international arena. Apart from the personal satisfaction which this study will give the researcher, I hope that it will be a source of reference to other researchers in similar area.

**Research Methodology**

This study will make use of findings from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include written documents such as official government publications, letters, correspondence, documentaries and newspapers. Added to these are descriptive accounts of some Nigerians who participated in the peacekeeping operation during the Sierra Leone Civil War. Interviews will also be conducted with those considered
authorities in the field of History, Political Science and International Relations to complement the other sources.

Furthermore, this research work depends largely on archival materials both online and offline - visiting office of the United Nations here in Nigeria to gather relevant materials on the study. Official publications published on the websites will also be used in interpreting the events and actions of actors that were involved in the peacekeeping process in Sierra Leone.

Books, journal articles, conference proceedings, seminar papers and other related publications will be used in gathering secondary information for this research.
End Notes


6. Ibid, p. 7

8. Ibid, P. 47

9. Ibid, P. 48


12. Ibid, p. 32

13. Ibid. P. 43

14. Ibid. P. 44


17. Ibid., p. 40
18. H. C. Metz, *op. Cit*, P. 62


20. A. Arthur *Topics in Sierra Leone History: A Counter-Colonial Interpretation*. Sierra Leone: Leone Publishers, 1976, p. 21


30. A. Adebajo, *Building peace in West Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau*
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