

Effect of peace support/keeping operations on physical security

Studies report differing effects of peacekeeping on perceived physical security. One study suggests that peacekeeping operations increase fear of crime, negatively impacting perceptions of safety, while another study shows that peacekeeping improves perceived security.

Geographical region: Sub-Saharan Africa

Effect: Small effect ($g = 0.034$)

Confidence in study findings: Low confidence as based on just two studies

Short summary

Peacekeeping operations are expected to have an effect on the perception of physical security. The two studies in this cell have different findings. One finds that PKOs negatively impact the perception of physical security by increasing fear of crime while the other finds that peacekeeping operations have a positive effect on perceived safety.

Long summary

The Intervention

Peace Support Operations (PSOs) and Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs), where

1) PSOs encompass all multi-functional operations, conducted impartially, normally by States or by international or regional organizations, such as the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU), or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), involving military forces and diplomatic and humanitarian agencies, and are designed to achieve a long-term political settlement or other specified objective, and

2), the deployment of UN peacekeepers into countries in a post-conflict setting. This involves the deployment of international troops and police, who work with local civilian peacekeepers to provide security to an area (UN Peacekeeping n.d.). Operations with primary or secondary objectives to prevent, halt or reduce the risk of atrocities are also considered within this category.

There are no DDR studies in this cell.

How is the intervention expected to work?

Peacekeeping operations may have an effect on physical security by reducing violence, fostering stability, and strengthening local security institutions. The deployment of peacekeepers may also have an effect on perceptions of safety by enhancing security conditions and facilitating economic exchanges. However, the impact on fear of crime can vary, as peacekeeping may increase awareness of security threats.

Evidence base

The cell contains two quantitative studies: Mvukiyehe (2021), using coarsened exact matching, compares communities hosting UNMIL deployments (treatment) with those at least 15 kilometres away (control). Bove (2022) combines high-frequency household survey data and information on sub-national deployment of UN peacekeepers in South Sudan.

The cell has one qualitative study, Touray (2019), Sub Saharan Africa.

Evidence findings

Mvukiyehe (2021) finds that PKOs increase fear of crime (by 53%), while Bove (2022) finds that households in UNMISS deployment areas reported a 12.5 percentage point improvement in perceived safety.

Included studies

Mvukiyehe (2021) evaluates the micro-level effectiveness of peacekeeping operations (PKOs), focusing on Liberia's civil war and the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). The study examines the impact of UNMIL deployments on local security and socio-economic revitalization.

Using coarsened exact matching, the analysis compares communities hosting UNMIL deployments (treatment) with those at least 15 kilometers away (control), controlling for infrastructure, population, geography, ethnicity, and conflict exposure. Security outcomes include fear of victimization, victimization by crime, and in-migration of conflict victims. Socio-economic revitalization measures include infrastructure, income, food and higher-order consumption, and participation in community activities. The study is rated medium confidence as it is non-experimental.

The study finds that peacekeeping operations increase fear of crime, negatively affecting the perception of physical safety.

Bove (2022) examines the role of UN peacekeeping in mitigating the adverse economic effects of civil wars on households in South Sudan. By reducing violence and enhancing security, UNMISS fosters economic exchanges, labor participation, and psychological well-being. The study evaluates these effects through household consumption patterns and improvements in local security and market dynamics.

The study utilizes high-frequency household survey data and subnational information on the deployment of UN peacekeepers under UNMISS. The analysis explores the impact of peacekeepers on household well-being by examining food consumption, security, market access, and psychological factors. Statistical models are used to measure direct and mediated effects through various channels, including violence reduction, economic opportunities, and perceptions of safety. The study is rated low confidence.

The study finds that peacekeeping operations have a positive effect on the perceptions of physical security.

Confidence assessment

Overall, the study/cell is rated low confidence as there are only two studies.

Other outcomes in this cell/study

- Human security/Economic security
- Human security/Food security and nutrition & Health security
- Community and state governance/Civic participation
- Community and state governance/Access to justice, rights and public services