Stopping the Killing During the "Peace": Peacekeeping and the Severity of Postconflict Civilian Victimization

Jacob D. Kathman
University at Buffalo, SUNY

AND

Reed M. Wood
Arizona State University

Recent research has investigated the relative effectiveness of peacekeeping in stabilizing postconflict states, preventing the return to armed hostilities between belligerents, and reducing civilian abuse during civil conflict. This research has shed light on important theoretical and policy-relevant issues. However, scholars have largely neglected to evaluate the role of peacekeeping in protecting civilians during the notoriously unstable postconflict period. Even after active conflict has ended, the factions often persist in abusing civilians to reinforce conflict gains, shape the postconflict environment, exact revenge for wartime grievances, or spoil peace processes. This analysis investigates the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions in protecting civilians during the post-conflict "peace." Using newly collected data on the number and type of United Nations peacekeeping personnel commitments along with civilian victimization data for all African conflicts between 1992 and 2010, we find that greater numbers of peacekeeping troops reduce anticivilian violence. By contrast, larger deployments of UN observers are positively correlated with violence.

In late 1994, the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) was attempting to salvage the scraps of its operation. The civil war in Rwanda, which was defined by the brutality of its genocidal violence, had ended. Yet, even with the war's cessation, UNAMIR struggled to keep boots on the ground. Starting with the deaths of ten Belgian peacekeepers in April, troop contributing states began withdrawing their soldiers. Post-hoc analyses suggested that as few as 5,000 UN troops may have substantially reduced the severity of violence during the war (Feil 1998). With the end of active combat and the triumph of the Rwandan Patriotic Front, there was new hope that UNAMIR might be a stabilizing force in postwar Rwanda, particularly as the Hutu government and the Interhamwe militia, both responsible for the genocide, had largely fled to neighboring Zaire. Still, fears of retribution against the Hutu population and ongoing militia violence remained. Yet, UNAMIR, weakened by the withdrawal of soldiers

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during the war, continued its de-escalation following the conflict. Only a few thousand troops remained when the "peace" began, and these troop commitments steadily declined until UNAMIR was fully disengaged by April 1996. During this postwar period, thousands of innocent civilians were targeted and killed in reprisals committed by the newly installed government's forces and other remaining armed factions.

The UN's mission to Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) performed quite differently following its civil war. The Sierra Leonean Civil War witnessed extraordinary brutality toward the civilian population. In particular, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) was notorious for its abuses (Gberie 2005). During active fighting, the UN's original observer mission to Sierra Leone could do little to inhibit the conflict and protect civilians. The organization thus redoubled its efforts by dramatically escalating its troop deployments as the conflict approached its negotiated resolution (Findlay 2002). Still armed and organized, the RUF and other factions remained a threat to the newly achieved peace; yet Sierra Leone's post-conflict experience differed significantly from Rwanda's. Buoyed by a massive redeployment of troops that peaked at over 17,000, UNAMSIL was capable of separating the former combatants and undertaking an effective disarmament and demobilization campaign that reduced opportunities for groups to attack civilians or spoil the peace process. The stability afforded by UNAMSIL then opened the door for reintegration programs that would allow former combatants to be assimilated into society and ultimately for political reforms that would yield lasting peace.

The difference in the severity of postwar violence between these cases is at least partly explained by the role that peacekeeping operations (PKOs) play in affecting postwar environments. Interestingly, little research addresses the plight of civilians following civil conflict, focusing instead on explanations of civilian victimization during active fighting. Certainly, noncombatants pay particularly high costs during ongoing conflict. However, war termination is not synonymous with peace. By definition, significant battlefield violence between rebel and government forces ceases when wars end.[1] Yet, civil wars continue to kill and maim people after the fighting between the combatants has ceased (Ghobarah, Huth, and Russett 2003). The fragile nature of postwar peace creates an environment in which battlefield violence may be absent but hostility and brutality endure. Indeed, in some cases, civilians face a greater risk of violent death *after* the conflict than they do during it (Call and Stanley 2001: 151).

While researchers have increasingly devoted attention to the causes of anti-civilian violence *during* war and the policies that might ameliorate it, they have given scant attention to violence *following* war termination. We contribute to the existing literature by focusing explicitly on the persistence of civilian targeting during the tenuous "peace." Specifically, we examine the efficacy of various tools available to the international community to mitigate such violence and promote postconflict human security. We demonstrate that while incentives exist for a variety of actors to engage in postconflict violence against civilians, PKOs can successfully reduce the magnitude of such violence. We also show that peace missions are not homogenous in their structure, intent, or capabilities and demonstrate that mission composition has implications for the severity of postconflict violence.[2]

The manuscript proceeds as follows. We first discuss the incentives for civilian targeting in the aftermath of civil wars. We then turn to the manner in which PKOs may reduce civilian targeting in the postconflict period. We explicitly examine how the different components of peace operations are more or less effective

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[1]Though definitions vary, the conflict processes literature and data sets utilized by this scholarship commonly define conflict termination as a period of 12 months in which battle deaths do not exceed 25 (see Kreutz 2010).

[2]While we focus explicitly on civilian victimization, other research examines how mission composition and mandate influence postconflict stability and the success of missions. See Howard (2008) for an example.

in restraining violence against civilians by former combatants and violent new-comers. As we discuss below, each mission is composed of distinct personnel types equipped with various peacekeeping tools. Robust peace missions, like UNAMSIL, often include large deployments of armed personnel while others are modestly composed. As the cases above indicate, these various mission compositions have implications for civilian protection. We then discuss our research design and present our results. We find robust evidence that larger numbers of armed peacekeeping troops are associated with a reduction in post-conflict civilian targeting. However, we find mixed evidence for the influence of the policing units. Increasing police forces tends to reduce rebel violence against civilians, increase violence by militia groups, but have no significant effect on regime violence. Finally, our results indicate consistent evidence that larger observer deployments correlate with increased civilian targeting. We conclude with potential academic and policy implications of these findings.

Incentives for Victimization

The "peace" that emerges in the wake of civil war is often tenuous. Long-term stability is often difficult to achieve, as a security dilemma discourages belligerents from completely disarming and demobilizing (Walter 1997, 2002, 2004). Thus, even after the cessation of battlefield hostilities, both sides frequently maintain the capacity to engage in violence against one another.[3] Previous studies have used the security dilemma as a theoretical framework for determining the factors responsible for the collapse of peace and resumption of war (Fortna 2003; Quinn, David Mason, and Gurses 2007; Mason, Gurses, Brandt, and Quinn 2011). Yet, postwar violence is not limited to battlefield interactions between belligerents. Armed factions also engage in politically oriented attacks on one another's supporters as they jockey for power in the emerging political order, and many existing or newly emerging groups engage in the predatory abuse of civilians in pursuit of individualistic goals.

Existing studies have devoted little attention to such violence and have largely ignored the variation in human security across postwar states.[4] We therefore turn our attention to violence against civilians that occurs in the months following war cessation. We identify three primary motives for violence against civilians following civil conflict termination: (i) political competition and control consolidation under the security dilemma, (ii) factional infighting and spoiling strategies, and (iii) profit-seeking behaviors by former factions and other armed groups.

Competition under the Security Dilemma

As with studies of conflict resumption, we suggest that the security dilemma provides incentives for factions to maintain military capabilities after the cessation of hostilities. These capabilities offer actors the ability to resort to violence if they choose. The opportunity for anticivilian violence is thus high following civil war cessation. In addition, the nature of political competition in postwar states is often overwrought. Following the termination of formal hostilities, former combatants jockey for position in the emerging political order. Even when both sides agree to a peaceful war-ending settlement, the future distribution of power is uncertain and malleable, as civil wars often destroy the normal political and institutional processes through which power is wielded during periods of normalcy. In

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[3]Civil wars end in multiple ways, including formal ceasefires and settlements, victory for one side, or prolonged battlefield inactivity. It is important to note that even where one side has effectively been defeated, armed factions on each side commonly maintain sufficient military capacity to engage in violence, especially against civilians.

[4]For an exception, see Murdie and Davis (2010).

this weak (or nonexistent) institutional environment, the process of establishing political influence creates tensions between groups that may result in violence.[5] As previous research demonstrates, peace is more likely to fail when actors anticipate future shifts in the distribution of power (Powell 1999, 2006). Consequently, the probability of renewed armed conflict increases where actors engage in tense political competition and where there is uncertainty over the future distribution of political power.

These conditions also help explain the persistence of anticivilian violence during the postwar "peace." Factions' desire to maximize power in an uncertain environment together with a persistent security dilemma encourages violence and terrorism. As previous research shows, actors apply political repression and terrorism instrumentally and with the intention of shaping the behaviors of civilians (for example, Mason 1989; Kalyvas 2006; Kydd and Walter 2006). For instance, during civil wars, political actors may target civilians who pose a threat (real or perceived) to an actor's control over territory or the population. These strategies are particularly prevalent in ethnic conflicts where rival groups rely on terror and fear to ethnically cleanse geographic areas and make them more defensible, shore up their control during conflict, and increase the likelihood that they maintain control over those areas after a settlement is reached (Kaufmann 1996; Lake and Rothchild 1996). Similar strategies are employed during ideological conflicts, as factions liquidate one another's supporters or attempt to intimidate them into acquiescence (Balcells 2010; Kalyvas 2006). While the magnitude of such violence should decline following war, both sides retain incentives to use violence to shape civilian behavior. Armed factions may target an adversary's political activists, eliminate potential threats in contested areas, or form paramilitary groups to deter an opponent's supporters from participating in the political process. In fact, election-related violence sponsored by former belligerents is a feature of postconflict politics in many states (Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski 2013). If left unchecked, such targeted killings may lead to reprisals that escalate to larger scale violence.

Factional Infighting and Spoiling Strategies

Spoiling strategies and factionalism represent a second mechanism that can motivate postwar victimization. While the dominant factions typically have a desire to maintain the fragile peace following a negotiated settlement to which they are signatories (even if hindered by the security dilemma), factionalism and divergent preferences within groups can give rise to spoilers (Stedman 1997). Extremists and hardliners often view the concessions necessary to achieve a settlement as too costly and prefer ongoing conflict to peace. These groups may also feel marginalized if moderate elements strategically work to suppress their role in negotiations in an effort to achieve a more durable settlement. Additionally, ad hoc militias or paramilitaries formed during the conflict may not be officially recognized in peace agreements. This may create uncertainty about the future political role of informal militant groups, calling into question their access to the political or material rewards that come with the cessation of conflict.

When these conditions obtain, so-called spoilers or splinter organizations may attempt to upend peace negotiations or destabilize a nascent settlement by resorting to acts of violence (Kydd and Walter 2002, 2006; Bueno de Mesquita 2005). Such violence is intended to paint more mainstream groups as noncredible bargaining

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[5]While this situation is most common following negotiated settlement, it is often the case for wars that appear to fizzle into low activity. Even in conflicts for which there was a victorious side, the core political and military structure of the defeated faction often persists for some time following the end of fighting, as seemingly vanquished combatants can find cover in the hinterlands to avoid full destruction. The reemergence of groups after extended periods of absence of fighting is indicative of this (see Cunningham et al. 2009).

partners or to signal a fringe faction's willingness to continue the fight despite the acquiescence of the more moderate majority. For instance, the splinter group, the Real IRA, employed this strategy when it bombed Banbridge, Omagh, and other sites in Northern Ireland within weeks of the Good Friday Agreement signing.

Furthermore, internal disagreement may result in violent infighting where former allies target one another's political elites as well as rank and file supporters as they struggle for superiority. For instance, Hamas and Fatah have frequently engaged in this type of violence during lulls in their conflicts with Israel. In both cases, spoiling strategies often impose costs on the civilian population. Civilians are "soft" targets for spoilers' intent on disrupting the peace. Unarmed and easily targetable, civilians are often helpless against such attacks, and the societal and political instability that is wrought by anticivilian violence often has the effect of achieving spoilers' goals of derailing ongoing peace processes.

Profit-Seeking

Lastly, the instability of the postconflict environment creates opportunities for armed factions to pursue individualistic, material goals. Postwar states are awash in small arms and former combatants; moreover, any new government is likely to be weak and incapable of imposing order or maintaining security. These conditions give rise to profit-seeking individuals or groups that pose a threat to the durability of peace. Without a strong state security apparatus in place, armed and often unemployed former combatant soldiers have opportunities to prey on civilians for their own personal enrichment. Additionally, the presence of lootable resources offers occasions for plunder that have been linked to civilian mistreatment. Indeed, previous research suggests that the presence of easily lootable resources such as conflict diamonds provide an incentive for illicit extractive activity that increases the likelihood of civil war onset and recurrence (Lujala 2009, 2010; Rustad and Binningsbo 2012).

These conditions also threaten human security. Once the former combatants reach a suitable settlement, opportunistic factions—either remnants of rebel movements or independent groups that originate within the unstable postconflict environment—may engage in looting, smuggling, and illicit trade in conflict resources for material gain. Previous studies suggest that groups organized around illicit trade and resource extraction are particularly brutal (Kaldor 1999; Weinstein 2007). Consequently, violence against civilians in the aftermath of civil war may have little to do with the political disputes that drove the conflict. Rather, opportunistic parties may exploit the postconflict conditions to form new organizations or apolitical militia groups devoted to the exploitation of easily available and profitable resources. The emergence of these groups may jeopardize the stability of the country and lead to recurring conflict. And as conflicts in Sierra Leone, Angola, Liberia, and the Sudan demonstrate, the presence of resources such as oil, diamonds, or other minerals is likely have violent consequences for civilians residing in the areas in which the commodities are located.

While we outline three distinct motives for anticivilian violence during the postconflict peace, this list is not exhaustive. Nor are these motives mutually exclusive. All are often present in postwar states and incentivize groups to perpetuate attacks on civilians. We next examine how the tools at the disposal of the international community—namely PKOs—can reduce the opportunities or incentives for civilian targeting, thereby ameliorating postwar violence.

Improving the Postwar Peace?

As we note above, the postconflict environment produces diverse incentives for civilian victimization. The extent of this violence is a product of the presence of

these incentives as well as the opportunities to act upon them. Promoting human security therefore depends on the ability of a given strategy to diminish these incentives or reduce the opportunities for the group to act upon them. In this section, we focus on one set of strategies: United Nations peacekeeping. We view peacekeeping as a set of strategies because, as we show below, the composition of PKOs varies across and within mission deployments, and these mission compositions have direct implications for their probability of reducing postconflict violence.

Peacekeeping Effectiveness

The literature on UN peacekeeping has produced a rather mixed set of findings with regard to the overall effectiveness of PKOs (Fortna and Howard 2008). This is a partial product of the fact that there is no one definition of mission success. For instance, recent research has attempted to link UN intervention to civil war recidivism, violence levels during conflict, postconflict human right violations, and democratic transition and consolidation (for example, Diehl, Reifschneider, and Hensel 1996; Fortna 2008b; Gurses and Mason 2008; Howard 2008; Sambanis 2008; Murdie and Davis 2010). Moreover, analyses of the UN's ability to reduce violence against civilians have yielded contradictory results. While a growing number of studies suggest the UN PKOs and other neutral forms of intervention reduce conflict-related violence (Carment and James 1998; Melander 2009; Kathman and Wood 2011; Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon 2013), other research indicates that PKOs may perversely spur greater violence (Kuperman 2001; Hultman 2010).

Various factors explain these inconsistencies. First, the UN's method of selecting the targets of peacekeeping complicates evaluations of PKO effectiveness because the allocation of missions is nonrandom. In fact, there is growing consensus that the UN chooses difficult cases (Gilligan and Stedman 2003; Fortna 2004, 2008a; Melander 2009). Thus, peacekeepers face a loaded deck, suggesting that even marginal reductions in violence reflect significant achievements. Regardless of the specific criteria for "success," identifying civilian protection as a central goal of UN PKOs should be uncontroversial (Diehl and Druckman 2010). Indeed, according to Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, "[t]he plight of civilians . . . is fundamental to the central mandate of the Organization. The responsibility for the protection of civilians cannot be transferred to others" (United Nations 1999:22). Yet, even in civilian protection, recent scholarship questions the effectiveness of the various tools at the disposal of UN PKOs (Howard 2008; Kreps and Wallace 2009 (unpub. manuscript); Murdie and Davis 2010; Hultman et al. 2013). However, previous work has often relied on dichotomized indicators of PKOs that simply measure the presence or absence of a mission recorded at the country–year level to assess the effect of UN PKOs on conflict dynamics. These measures are overly blunt given the heterogeneity of PKOs, as mission mandates, composition, structure, and leadership vary greatly across operations and within them over time.

Consider Figure 1, which plots the level of armed troop commitments made to the consecutive UN operations in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL and UNAMSIL) and the number of civilian deaths committed by the government and Kamajor militia forces across each month in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Clearly, the number of troops deployed to the UN's missions in Sierra Leone differed across time. Whereas the UN's deployment never exceeded fifteen armed soldiers through October 1999, its commitment escalated dramatically thereafter, peaking at more than 12,000 troops in this period. Interestingly, this increase coincides with a noticeable decline in the occurrence and magnitude of civilian killing. During UNOMSIL's modest deployment in 1998 and 1999, civilians were targeted more
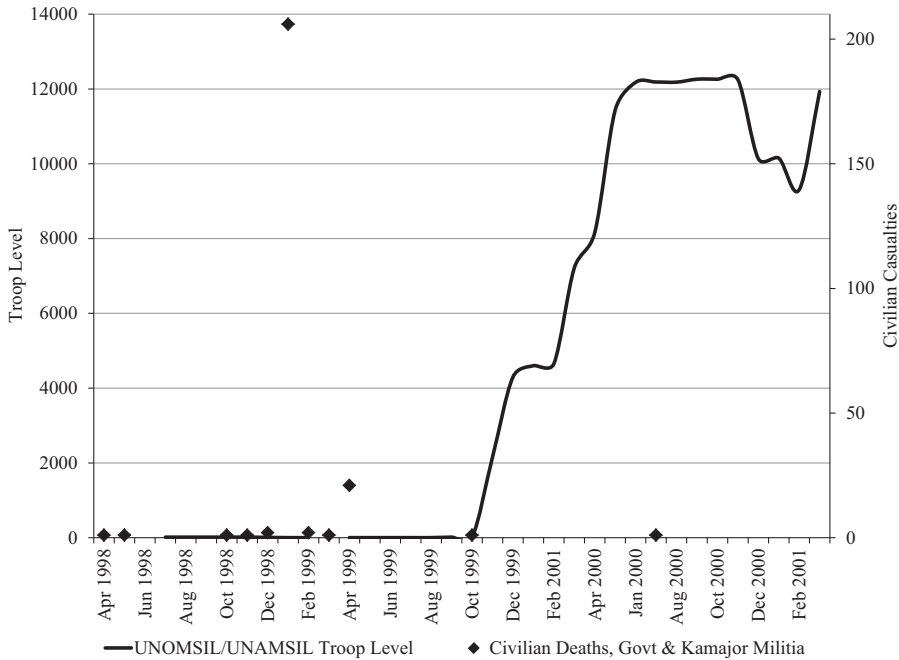
Fig 1. Variation in Troop Commitments and One-Sided Violence in Sierra Leone

often and in higher numbers. Yet, as UNAMSIL replaced UNOMSIL, escalating troop levels correlated with drastic reductions in anticivilian violence.

In previous research, standard dichotomizations of PKOs would simply code the presence of troops from July 1998 through March 2001, making it difficult to link variation in violence to such rudimentary renderings of PKOs. Standard dichotomizations of operations ignore the tools available to PKOs and their capacities for confronting postconflict instability. Even if past studies have attempted to account for mission capacity, yearly units of analysis are crude approximations. In 2000 alone, UNAMSIL escalated its troop commitment to Sierra Leone by more than 7,600. If the capacity of a mission varies across time, so too might its effectiveness. Previous studies have been unable to account for these aspects of peacekeeping.

Furthermore, the various tools at each mission's disposal differ significantly. Armed military forces, police units, and unarmed military observers serve various functions, and missions are most commonly outfitted with some combination of each. Accounting for these variations in mission capacity should improve our ability to judge their effect on postwar peace processes.

Protecting Civilians during Unstable Peace

Previous quantitative analyses of PKO effectiveness have largely ignored two important components of deployments: (i) PKO composition in terms personnel type and (ii) mission capacity in the form of the number of personnel units deployed. Accounting for these various components of PKOs holds promise for improving our assessment of peacekeeping effectiveness in protecting civilians in postconflict states.

As Figure 1 suggests, armed troops play a central role in civilian protection. The presence of troops to separate the combatants is critical to ameliorating the security dilemma. Posed with the uncertainty of shifting power in demobilization,

the presence of armed troops adds a level of stability. Interposing troops between the former combatants reduces the security dilemma by providing a less biased source of security, overseeing and, in some cases, enforcing disarmament, and potentially imposing sanctions for noncompliance. This is especially true for rebels who must begin to disarm and accept a role in the postwar political process. Upon demobilizing, rebels are highly exposed, opening a door of opportunity for the government to renege on the peace. The physical barrier erected by peace-keeping troops is thus an essential element of resolving the security dilemma.

Furthermore, the ability of PKO troops to effectively intercede increases as the number of troops committed to the host state increases. Large force deployments increase the barrier that former belligerents must overcome to reengage one another, thus reducing the likelihood of conflict re-escalation. Larger troop deployments also more strongly signal the UN's commitment to resolve the conflict. Large numbers of troops are more difficult to withdraw quickly, which should increase the factions' confidence that the UN will remain deployed until the peace is won. This increases the cost to the factions for choosing to restart the fight. These elements of increasingly large troop commitments should thus improve the factions' faith in the peace process, ameliorating the security dilemma that plagues postconflict settings, and reducing incentives to victimize civilians in preparation for a resumption of formal hostilities.

Increases in troop deployments also permit peacekeepers to distribute resources to other tasks that promote human security. For instance, PKO troops are often tasked with disarming what remains of the conflict's informal forces, including rebels and militia groups associated with both factions. In Sierra Leone, upon granting amnesty to former soldiers of the RUF and committing increasingly high numbers of troops to the war torn state, PKO programs for destroying weapons and reintroducing combatants to society through reorientation and job training programs began to produce security dividends (Gberie 2005; Kreps 2010). Erecting the physical barrier between the combatants is the critical first step in such processes. As troop capacity increases, so too should the ability to engage in peace consolidation practices.

Finally, provided their mandate permits, armed troops maintain the physical capacity to protect vulnerable populations. While early PKOs were often severely restrained in their ability to use force to protect civilians and deter assaults on population centers, mission mandates have increasingly expanded to allow such actions (Hultman 2013). Indeed, recent missions have even been granted authority to pursue and engage violent factions that attack civilians and threaten stability. While PKOs often deploy fewer soldiers than are available to the state and rebel forces, their presence in increasing numbers, nonetheless, raises the costs of targeting civilians and can act as an effective deterrent to victimization.[6] This discussion leads to our first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: *As the number of armed UN troops committed to the postconflict state increases, the rate of civilian killings by the former combatants decreases.*

While military units may be effective at suppressing violent actors and protecting civilians from attacks, troops alone may not be sufficient for ensuring civilian security as their training is oriented toward developments on the battlefield. Police units are thus also deployed to play an important role in civilian protection during the postconflict period by taking on tasks for which military forces are less appropriate. Civilian police (CIVPOL) units conduct a variety of tasks during the

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[6]For instance, the presence of armed peacekeepers at election sites promotes security by countering intimidation, threats, and violence employed by rival factions against one another's supporters. This effect should increase as the number of troops increases.

postconflict period, including overseeing basic security and promoting human security, reducing intimidation and violence during the post-conflict electoral process, monitoring and facilitating demobilization and reintegration, and training indigenous forces (Call and Barnett 1999; Call and Stanley 2001; Howard 2008). Securing population centers and assisting in the re-establishment of order and central authority represent a fundamental role for CIVPOL units. Moreover, their ability to do so influences the magnitude of postwar violence.

While police forces are not typically tasked with separating combatants or directly affecting violence that may reignite on the battlefield, they play additional roles in promoting human security. As factions jockey for political power, they may resort to violence against the civilian allies of their opponents. In the extreme, this may result in the emergence or death squads or larger campaigns of violence to suppress rival political activists. What is more likely, however, is lower level intimidation and abuse by small groups of militants or occasional outbursts of spontaneous violence. The weakness of indigenous forces—and, in some cases, their collusion in these activities—presents opportunities for civilian abuse. For instance, once battlefield conflict ends, soldiers that were once committed to the front increasingly return to cities and villages. Problematically, ex-combatants often return armed with the tools of war and few opportunities for legitimate, stable employment. Predatory ex-soldiers may thus view the postconflict landscape as an opportunity for enrichment, abusing civilians in pursuit of these goals. Such abuse is facilitated in the absence of local police forces. Civil wars often destroy local security apparatuses, leaving population centers devoid of an indigenous capacity to control crime and lawlessness. There is thus little to stand in the way of predatory soldiers.

UN police forces act as a barrier to these activities. First, UN police forces help protect noncombatants when and where indigenous police units are absent, ineffectual, or adversarial. Armed police forces can intercede between soldiers and vulnerable civilians where necessary. One important role for police in reducing anticivilian violence comes in their ability to provide security during the electoral process. In the run up to elections, CIVPOL forces help maintain a neutral environment, monitor the behavior of political factions and their supporters, and attempt to provide general security by thwart intimidation and violence among factions. Moreover, where intimidation and violence do occur, the presence of police units—particularly in large numbers—should help prevent smaller incidents from escalating into retaliatory violence or large-scale clashes between rival factions. Police can deter or minimize violence by detaining instigators, dispersing and controlling crowds, and protecting civilians and physical sites that may be targeted. CIVPOL forces should also exert an indirect influence on postconflict human security by helping to reestablish local police forces. UN police units are frequently tasked with tactical training, outfitting, and promoting professionalism among indigenous police forces (Call and Barnett 1999; Howard 2008; Holt, Taylor, and Kelly 2009). That is, UN police forces are likely to promote human security by improving the quality of local police forces and reducing the time until they are able to undertake basic security duties.

Importantly, as the number of UN police units deployed increases, the ability of police personnel to service these responsibilities in protecting civilians should also increase. Anecdotal evidence of this effect is indicated in Figure 2 which plots the number of UN police deployed to its mission in the Ivory Coast (UNOCI) to stabilize the postconflict environment between the government and the Patriotic Movement of Ivory Coast rebel group. While fighting was intense prior to the negotiated ceasefire, civilian abuse continued into the postconflict period. However, with escalations of UN police units in mid-2004 and again in mid-2005, direct civilian targeting by the combatants declined. Aided by the *de facto* territorial division between north and south, UN police serviced responsibilities to civilian
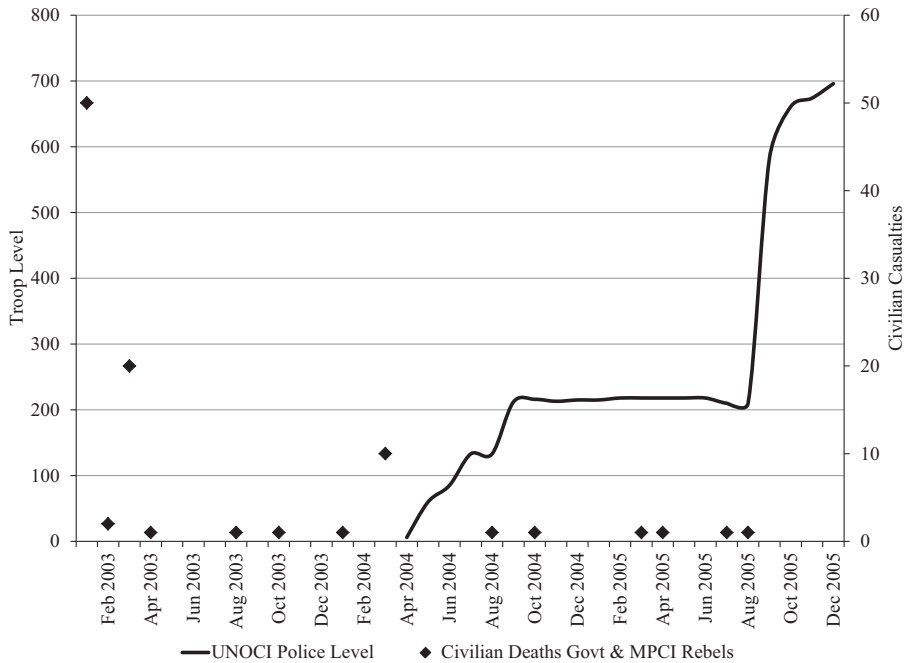
Fig 2. Variation in Police Commitments and One-Sided Violence in Ivory Coast

protection behind the frontline by helping to secure a more peaceful environment. The discussion above leads to our second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: *As the number of UN police forces committed to the postconflict state increases, the rate of civilian killings by the former combatants decreases.*

Military observers represent the third personnel type commonly committed to PKOs. Unlike troops and police, observers are typically unarmed and are not mandated to directly interject in violent events to stop or deter victimization. Rather, observers are tasked with monitoring the postwar environment and reporting their observations to the UNSC. While observers have no capacity to directly impede abuses, their presence may reduce the combatants' interest in using anticivilian violence to manipulate the postconflict environment. Under the watchful eye of observers, former belligerents who wish to carve out a role in postconflict governance are likely to sacrifice international legitimacy by abusing civilians. This legitimacy is important to the postwar government's access to aid, markets, and other support from the international community for rebuilding a war-torn society and consolidating peace. Moreover, as the number of observers deployed increases, the ability of the UN to serve in this capacity should also increase. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: *As the number of UN military observers committed to the postconflict state increases, the rate of civilian killings by the former combatants decreases.*

Research Design

We rely on a sample of post-Cold War African conflict dyads to assess these hypotheses. We merge information from two data projects to generate a sample that

encompasses the two-year period following conflict termination for African wars concluded between 1992 and 2010, reflecting some 122 groups in 32 conflicts occurring in 26 states. We first identify the end dates for the sample of wars using data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's (UCDP) Conflict Termination Data set (Kreutz 2010). We then aggregate events data found in the UCDP's Georeferenced Events Data set (GED) (Sundberg, Lindgren, and Padskocimaite 2010) to the dyad-month for a two-year window following the termination of each conflict dyad.[7]

We chose two years as the window within which to examine postconflict violence for several reasons. First, this is a critical period in which peace is tenuous and the incentives for civilian abuse are the most problematic. Second, if civil wars resume, most do in the first two years following their initial cessation, as the former combatants commonly retain the ability to resume fighting in this postwar period.[8] Third, most recent quantitative studies of civil war deal with conflict recurrence by using a two-year rule in which wars that restart in this window are considered continuations of the same conflict (for example, Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2009). This distinguishes between conflicts that experience enduring peace and those that have temporary breaks in combat. For our purposes, we exclude dyad months in which war resumes from our analyses, as our interest is in assessing the effect of peacekeeping on civilian protection in postwar periods.[9]

We aggregate events data from the GED to create our measures of civilian victimization. Specifically, we create variables that capture the monthly levels of one-sided killings by government forces, rebel factions, and other militia groups. One-sided violence includes direct, intentional civilian deaths perpetrated by armed factions. This violence occurs off the battlefield where the target is unarmed, the violence is intentional rather than accidental, and death results from the direct action of the aggressor rather than from an indirect effect (Eck and Hultman 2007).[10] In our analyses, we rely on four distinct dependent variables: *Combined OSV*, *Govt OSV*, *Rebel OSV*, and *Militia OSV*. The first combines the total number of deaths from one-sided violence by government, rebel, and militia factions. The second counts only government one-sided violence.[11] The third codes only the number of civilians killed by rebels. The fourth captures violence committed by armed factions included in the GED and active within the postconflict period. These actors include ethnic militias, paramilitary organizations, and former rebel factions that are still active in a postconflict state but do not challenge the central government.[12]

Our primary independent variables are the number of UN peacekeeping troops, police, and military observers deployed to each host state (Kathman 2013). These data report information on UN personnel commitments to every

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[7]An attractive feature of these data relative to other data sources is the use of a low death threshold (25) for battlefield combat to be considered ongoing civil war. We are thus confident that the two-year window analyzed only includes postwar periods that are truly distinct from periods of open conflict between the belligerents.

[8]This is particularly true following ceasefires or peace agreements before either side has demobilized. It is also relevant following conflicts that end via low battle activity where rebels may simply choose to "go underground" in hopes of renewing the fight at a later date.

[9]Extending the window to three years produces similar results.

[10]For example, deaths that occur when insurgents detain and execute tribal leaders would be included whereas civilian deaths that result from a firefight between rebel and government forces would not.

[11]In conflicts with multiple government-rebel group dyads, values recorded for *Govt OSV* are not specific to individual dyads. Rather, values for *Govt OSV* reflect the monthly number of civilians killed by regime forces at the conflict level. For those conflicts in which the government faces more than one rebel group, the values for *Govt OSV* are divided equally among the individual conflict dyads. Doing this allows for consistency in design across our empirical models and permits the inclusion of rebel characteristics as covariates in the *Govt OSV* model. Still, upon collapsing to the conflict-month level, the results were consistent with those reported below.

[12]Groups such as the Mai Mai in the DRC, the Janjaweed in Sudan, and the National Patriotic Front of Liberia post-1990 are included in this category.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
All OSV	8.63	97.49	0	4,016
Government OSV	4.11	90.80	0	4,016
Rebel OSV	0.70	10.73	0	370
Militia OSV	3.81	31.58	0	583
UN Troops	1,457.79	3,972.29	0	29,209
UN Police	79.42	339.51	0	4,636
UN Observers	46.29	121.67	0	1,039
UN Troops*	158.92	442.13	0	3,206.66
UN Police*	8.15	33.64	0	440.52
UN Observers*	4.81	12.25	0	122.41

(*Note.* *Values scaled by natural log of country population. For example, Troops/ln(population).)

conflict from 1992 through 2010, and were made available in reports from the UN either from the UN's website or in hardcopy format from the UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations. These data record the monthly total number of armed troops, armed police, and unarmed military observers committed by the UN to each PKO in the 24-month postconflict period. Taken together, this information captures the capacity of missions. However, PKOs are deployed to states that vary in the size of the population to be protected. We thus normalize each monthly personnel value by the population of the host state.[13] This yields three independent variables: *UN Troops, UN Police,* and *UN Observers.* To ensure temporal order, we lag each variable by one postconflict month. Table 1 reports descriptive statistics for our dependent variables and our independent variables of interest.

In addition, we include several controls to account for alternative explanations of postwar victimization. *Conflict Duration* codes the length of time (in months) that the conflict endured. Past research suggests that longer wars are more insulated from resumption once they end (Fortna 2003; Walter 2004; Quinn et al. 2007; Mason et al. 2011). To the extent that long wars promote lasting postwar stability, they should correlate with less of anticivilian violence. We also include a measure of *Peace Duration.* This variable counts the number of months since the conflict ended. *Battle Deaths* reflects the total monthly number of battle fatalities in each month. While war has formally ended, low-level combat may persist, threatening civilians. This variable is taken from the GED. Additionally we code 1 month lags of one-sided deaths committed by the factions in order to account for temporal dependence.

We also control for the balance of power at the termination of the conflict. Balanced capabilities contribute to battlefield stalemate and *de facto* divisions of territory. This may produce less violence toward civilians postconflict because it should reduce both incentives and opportunities to victimize civilians to enforce loyalty or extend territorial control. We thus include a binary variable for *Parity* in actor strength taken from the Nonstate Actor (NSA) database (Cunningham et al. 2009). Past research has found that conflicts fueled by natural resources tend to be longer, more brutal, and more likely to recur (Lujala 2009, 2010; Rustad and Binningsbo 2012). Similarly, rebels that finance operations through resource extraction tend to be more brutal toward the local population (Weinstein 2007). Natural resources can create instability and exacerbate the security dilemma by

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[13]Specifically, we divide each monthly personnel value by the natural log of the host state's total population. We take the natural log because of the extreme variance of population size across states. We also tested the models using the raw count of UN personnel. The results using these models are very similar to those reported in Tables 2 and 3.

creating incentives to continue fighting. Moreover, the ability to fund organizations through illicit resource extraction also encourages armed groups to brutalize civilians for material gain. To capture this, we include two variables. *Distribution* is a binary variable indicating whether the previous war revolved around the distribution of natural resources. We also include a binary measure for whether rebels used natural resources to *Finance* insurgency (Rustad and Binningsbo 2012).

Additionally, we control for *Regime Type* using the 21-point Polity IV democracy-autocracy scale (Marshall, Jaggers, and Gurr 2011). As regimes become increasingly democratic, governments and sub-state groups should rely less on victimization because democracies offer means of redressing political grievances through peaceful processes. To capture the potential for election-related violence, we code *Elections* as a dichotomous variable that indicates whether an election for the state's executive or legislature was held in a given month using data from the National Elections Across Democracy and Autocracy data set (Hyde and Marinov 2011). We also include *Population* to control for opportunities for violence. Larger populations offer more potential targets. This variable is taken from the Composite Index of National Material Capabilities (Singer, Bremer, and Stuckey 1972) and is log-transformed. Finally, we control for the manner in which in the war ended. Conflicts that end in the defeat of one actor should be less likely to reemerge compared to negotiated outcomes (Mason et al. 2011). As such, we expect that wars ended through negotiated agreements should increase the level of violence because the factions retain the ability to resume fighting. *Negotiated Settlement* is a binary variable noting cases in which conflict ended with a formalized agreement and is taken from the UCDP Conflict Termination Data (Kreutz 2010).

Results and Discussion

As noted above, each our dependent variables are counts of one-sided killings. Due to overdispersion in these data, we rely on negative binomial regression models to quantitatively assess the relationships between the various components of UN peacekeeping missions and the monthly rate of postconflict civilian killing.[14] The results are displayed in Tables 2 and 3. Because our argument encompasses killings by government, rebel, and other militia forces, we first present results for the total level of violence committed by armed political factions in each postconflict month. We then disaggregate violence levels by actor in the subsequent analyses.

In Table 1, the results presented in Models 1 and 2 suggest that the level of personnel commitment and the types of forces deployed to PKOs influence observed levels of violence following the formal end of hostilities between belligerents. However, the effect is not uniform across the three personnel types. Model 1 presents a base model using only the variables reflecting peacekeeping capacity and the lagged dependent variable. Model 2 includes the additional controls. In both models, the coefficient for *UN Troops* is negative and significant, suggesting that as the relative number of armed troops increases, the number of civilians killed declines. These results support Hypothesis 1. With respect to *UN Police*, the coefficient is negative and insignificant in both models, implying that the number of

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[14]Overdispersion occurs when the conditional variance is significantly greater than conditional mean for the sample. Overdispersion is often observed in count data where the number of events exhibits skewness or a large number of outliers. In our data, some months exhibit killings in the hundreds or even thousands while the majority of months exhibit no killings or killings in the single digits. The use of negative binomial regression rather than Poisson regression accounts for the influence of this distribution by including a parameter modeling the overdispersion.

Table 2. Effect of UN PKO Personnel Type on One-sided Violence

Variables	Model 1 All OSV	Model 2 All OSV	Model 3 All OSV (settlement and low activity)
UN Troops[a]	−0.003**	−0.003**	−0.003**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
UN Police[a]	−0.0002	−0.003	0.0004
	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.005)
UN Observers[a]	0.123**	0.113**	0.087**
	(0.027)	(0.024)	(0.015)
Distribution		−0.283	−1.455**
		(0.452)	(0.550)
Finance		1.542*	1.661*
		(0.789)	(0.774)
Parity		−0.940	−2.331**
		(0.940)	(0.759)
Regime Type		−0.192**	−0.078
		(0.051)	(0.065)
Battle Deaths		−0.004	0.003
		(0.004)	(0.004)
Conflict Duration		−0.005*	−0.003
		(0.002)	(0.002)
Population$_{ln}$		0.374[+]	0.460[+]
		(0.210)	(0.243)
Peace Duration		−0.034*	−0.041*
		(0.017)	(0.019)
Negotiated Settlement		−0.483	−0.137
		(0.400)	(0.410)
Election		−3.699*	−3.174*
		(1.561)	(1.472)
Combined OSV $_{(t-1)}$	0.015[+]	0.008	0.023
	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.014)
Constant	0.965***	−2.219	−2.980
	(0.286)	(2.013)	(2.438)
Observations	2,430	2,430	1,881
Wald X^2	65.64**	132.61**	103.00**
Log pseudo-likelihood	−2,988.02	−2946.42	−2299.22

(*Notes.* Coefficients and standard errors clustered on conflict dyad.
**$p \leq .01$; *$p \leq .05$, [+]$p \leq .10$.
[a]Value scaled by population.)

police sent to postconflict states does not exert a systematic influence on overall levels of violence toward civilians. By contrast, *UN Observers* is positive and significant in both models. This result runs counter to Hypothesis 3, which suggested that observers can help diminish violence. Because our argument may pertain most specifically to cases in which the factions have reached a negotiated settlement or where factions are temporarily inactive, we analyze a sample of the data limited specifically to these cases. The results, presented in Model 3, are quite similar to those using the larger sample.

While our argument does not explicitly differentiate between actor types, previous research suggests that interventions may exert a differential effect on rebel and government violence (Hultman 2010; Wood, Katham, and Gent 2012). We therefore distinguish among government, rebel, and militia violence and test the relationships separately. The results of these models are reported in Table 3. These results allow us to determine the extent to which different elements of PKOs differentially influence the frequency of killings committed by each side of a conflict. The results provide additional support for our argument regarding the

Table 3. Effect of UN PKO Personnel Type on One-sided Violence by Combatant Type

Variables	Model 1 Govt OSV	Model 2 Rebel OSV	Model 3 Militia OSV
UN Troops[a]	−0.003*	−0.003**	−0.014**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.003)
UN Police[a]	−0.003	−0.015*	0.039**
	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.009)
UN Observers[a]	0.141**	0.046[+]	0.222**
	(0.037)	(0.025)	(0.038)
Distribution	0.122	2.086	−0.048
	(0.497)	(1.281)	(0.985)
Finance	−1.010*	5.114**	0.757
	(0.507)	(1.221)	(1.458)
Parity	2.045*	−2.865**	−0.447
	(0.927)	(1.028)	(1.217)
Regime Type	−0.137*	−0.056	−0.227[+]
	(0.061)	(0.074)	(0.132)
Battle Deaths	−0.014**	0.018	−0.002
	(0.005)	(0.012)	(0.007)
Conflict Duration	−0.004	0.011*	−0.008[+]
	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.004)
Population$_{ln}$	0.499*	0.254	0.712*
	(0.221)	(0.232)	(0.316)
Peace Duration	−0.061**	−0.076*	−0.078*
	(0.019)	(0.032)	(0.038)
Negotiated Settlement	−1.089*	1.823**	−1.064[+]
	(0.404)	(0.533)	(0.651)
Election	−2.669[+]	−18.996**	−22.067*
	(1.476)	(0.808)	(0.575)
Govt. OSV$_{(t-1)}$	0.011	−0.022	−0.0001
	(0.018)	(0.026)	(0.0003)
Rebel OSV$_{(t-1)}$	0.004	0.161*	−0.026[+]
	(0.009)	(0.082)	(0.014)
Militia OSV$_{(t-1)}$	0.006	−0.006**	0.051
	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.054)
Constant	−4.042*	−6.378	−5.641*
	(1.978)	(2.307)	(2.089)
Observations	2,430	2,430	2,430
Wald X^2	640.53**	2526.74**	3763.38**
Log pseudo-likelihood	−1997.74	−472.63	−1297.20

(*Notes.* Coefficients and standard errors clustered on conflict dyad.
**$p \leq .01$; *$p \leq .05$, [+]$p \leq .10$.
[a]Value scaled by population.)

efficacy of robust peacekeeping forces in reducing anticivilian violence by specific types of actors.

Model 1 in Table 3 presents the results for anticivilian violence perpetuated by governments while Models 2 and 3 examine the level of rebel and militia violence, respectively. In each model, the coefficient for *UN Troops* is negative and significant. Consequently, these results strongly suggest that as the relative number of UN peacekeeping troops deployed to the postconflict state increases, the number of civilians killed by each type of armed actor declines. These results provide additional support for Hypothesis 1.

While the results provide substantial support for our first hypothesis, we find mixed evidence for the effectiveness of police forces in ameliorating anticivilian violence. The coefficient for *UN Police* is negative in the models for government and rebel violence, but the measure only achieves statistical significance in the

rebel violence equation. By contrast, in the militia violence model, the variable is positive and statistically significant. These results suggest that the effect of UN police forces varies across actor type. These differences may be due to the fact that in postconflict environments, rebels often lack access to policing security forces, relying instead on combat troops or ad hoc local defense units to patrol the population. Rebels may therefore be more prone to violence in postconflict contexts as a tool for obtaining order. In this sense, the presence of UN police units may be especially stabilizing in the provision of security in rebel–civilian relations.

With regard to the positive effect of police forces on militia violence, it is possible that the relationship obtains because militia groups are more likely to see UN police as a threat to their ability to engage in illicit activities and resource extraction. While rebel and government forces may obtain some security benefit from the arrival of police, militia groups that were peripheral to the political disputes that drove the conflict may react with hostility if CIVPOL units represent a challenge to their ability to engage in criminal enterprises. Coupled with the limited military capacity of most police units, such perceived challenges could instigate militia groups to use violence as a way of resisting the implementation of political order and security.

We find consistent evidence of a positive relationship between *UN Observers* and civilian killing. Across each actor type, the coefficients for the measure are positive and significant. Thus, it appears that as the number of observers increases, the level of violence rises. This result is contrary to our expectation but is not completely counterintuitive. The deployment of observers in lieu of more capable forces may signal that the UN is not deeply invested, which some groups may perceive as an opportunity to reignite the conflict. Alternatively, the arrival of increasingly large numbers of observers may signal that a more robustly constituted mission is in the offing, one that is likely to solidify the postconflict political status quo. Observers are often the first personnel type deployed, arriving in the host state approximately five months prior to the arrival of troops and police on average. For groups or splinter factions unsatisfied with this status quo, civilian abuse may offer a cost-effective attempt to thwart the deployment of a robust PKO, as attacking civilians offers the opportunity to destabilize the postwar environment, indicate that there is no genuine peace to keep, and increase the UN's expected costs of intervention. Indeed, this signal of resolve to keep fighting appears to have played a role in the spike in anti-civilian violence that coincided with the arrival of UN observers in Syria's civil war (RTTNews 2012).

We analyzed additional models to check the robustness of these results. To ensure the results are not biased by an endogenous relationship between violence and UN intervention, we limited our sample to only cases that received a PKO. The results were similar: higher numbers of armed troops were associated with a reduction in violence against civilians while higher numbers of observers correlated with increasing violence. We also examined how the proportion of troop commitments might influence violence. While our argument focuses on the numbers of troops committed, it is likely that the distribution of forces across different troop types influences violence. For instance, we would expect violence is more likely to decline when a greater proportion of personnel are police or soldiers relative to unarmed observers, and this is what our results suggest. Again limiting the sample to only cases in which PKOs were deployed, we find that anticivilian violence declines as the share of troops increases relative to other types of personnel. A similar result obtains for the share of police units.[15] Finally, the UN is not

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[15]In this model, we calculated the proportion or share of each type of personnel committed to a mission by dividing the personnel type by the total number of personnel deployed (for example, police/[police+troops+observers]). We exclude the share of observers and treat it as the base category, which is necessary as the "shares" sum to 1.

the only organization that engages in peacekeeping. Regional organization such as the African Union and ECOWAS increasingly take on peacekeeping duties. We therefore examine a model that includes a binary variable accounting for the presence of regional PKOs in each postconflict period using data from the Dynamic Analysis of Dispute Management Project (Mullenbach 2005).[16] We find that both the variables accounting for the numbers of UN troops and police are negatively and significantly correlated with victimization. This result is intriguing, given that *UN Police* was largely insignificant in the models discussed above. Consequently, the police variable appears to be somewhat sensitive to model specification. Still, these models reveal a consistent effect of armed troop deployment levels in reducing victimization. Thus, from a policy-making perspective, if the international community wishes to improve basic human security in postconflict environments, attention should be paid to operational investments in troop levels.

To assess the substantive effect of various deployments, we calculate the predicted effect of *UN Troops* for the level of violence perpetrated by all armed factions. Predictions based on Model 2 from Table 2 are presented in Figure 3.[17] The *y*-axis represents the predicted number of civilians killed per month while the *x*-axis represents the estimated number of armed UN peacekeepers divided by the log of the conflict state's population. Because log scales are difficult to interpret, in the discussion of the predictions, we assume a state of average population size for the sample (approximately 11,000,000; for example, Angola or Mozambique in the early 1990s) and convert the measure into the incidence of peacekeepers per 10,000 persons in the conflict state. For example, with this conversion, the values on the *x*-axis would range from 0 to approximately 10 troops per 10,000 persons (equivalent to roughly two standard deviations above the mean). As Figure 3 demonstrates, as the density of armed troops increases, the expected number of civilians killed rapidly declines. All else equal, in the absence of peacekeepers, armed factions kill approximately four civilians per month. However, the commitment of roughly 1 UN peacekeeping troop per 10,000 persons in the conflict state (∼100 on the logged scale) reduces the expected level of violence to approximately three deaths—a 25% reduction in killing. An additional increase of troops to approximately three armed peacekeepers per 10,000 persons (approximately 500 on the logged scale) reduces monthly violence to just one death per month, an approximate reduction of 75% in violence. Consequently, even relatively low troop commitments can prevent the deaths of a significant number of civilians during the postconflict period.

Turning to the control variables, the *Distribution* measure is negative and significantly related to total violence in the sample limited to postconflict months following settlement or low activity terminations. It is insignificant in the group-specific models. The *Finance* variable is positive and significant in the combined violence models and in the rebel violence model, suggesting that conflicts in which the rebels finance their campaigns through contested resources produce more postconflict civilian deaths. Somewhat surprisingly, this indicator is negatively and significantly related to government violence.

The results suggest that a relative balance of power between actors exerts contradictory influences on rebel and government violence. *Parity* is negative and significant in the rebel model but positive and significant in the government model. Surprisingly, the *Battle Deaths* variable is only significant in the government violence model, and the result counterintuitively suggests that when government forces engage in combat following the cessation of conflict, they actually reduce anticivilian violence. *Conflict Duration* has a somewhat ambiguous effect. While it is positive and significant in the rebel violence model, it is negative and marginally

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[16]We do not report this variable in our main models, given the temporal limitation of these data to 2006.
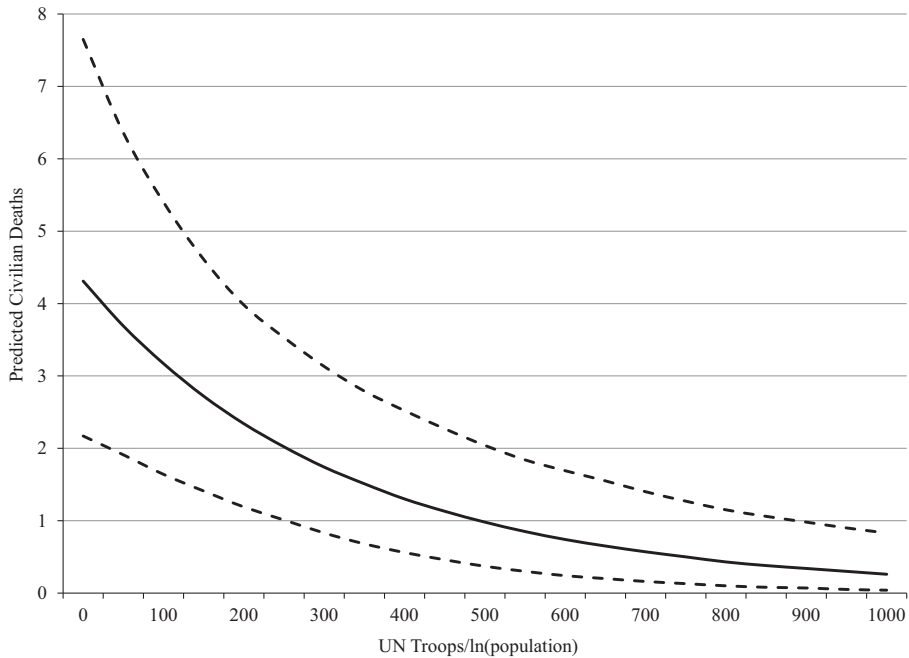[17]Predictions were generated using Clarify (Tomz et al. 2003).

Fig 3. Predicted Effect of UN Peacekeeping Troops on All One-sided Violence

significant in the militia model. This suggests that longer wars encourage more rebel violence in the postconflict period, but may reduce militia violence. *Peace Duration* is significant and negative across the models, indicating that victimization declines as the time since conflict termination increases.

Negotiated Settlement contributes to lower levels of government and militia violence but seems to produce greater amounts of rebel victimization. *Elections* also reduce violence across each group type. Somewhat surprisingly, the lagged dependent variable is only significant in the rebel violence model. Moreover, it is interesting to note that rebel and militia violence mirror one another. According to these results, increasing militia violence is associated with a reduction in rebel violence and vice versa. *Regime Type* is negative across the models, but is not significantly related to rebel violence. By contrast, *Population* is significantly correlated with greater victimization across most models, ostensibly due to the increased opportunities for violence.

Conclusion

In this manuscript, we have begun to address an overlooked but substantively and ethically important issue: civilian killings that occur in the *aftermath* of civil conflict. In addition to highlighting the problem of postwar violence against civilians, we theorized on the motives for civilian targeting beyond active war hostilities and attempted to evaluate at least one potential response to such violence: UN peacekeeping. We argued that violence is rooted in the persistent instability and lingering security dilemma common to postwar environments, incentives for spoiling activities, and individualistic or group profit-seeking motivations.

We then suggested how UN peacekeepers can reduce violence by promoting stability, ameliorating the security dilemma, and interceding between the former combatants and between the belligerents and the civilian population. We find that peacekeeping does exert a significant effect on such violence. However, we

note that the influence of peacekeeping missions varies significantly by the type of personnel and the size of deployments. In general, we find that larger numbers of armed PKO troops reduce violence against civilians. With respect to the number of police forces deployed, our results indicate a largely insignificant effect and one that is inconsistent across actor types. Lastly, we generally find that larger numbers of observers correlate with increased violence against civilians.

These findings offer an important advance in the literature on peacekeeping and human security. To our knowledge, only a handful of analyses have examined the after-effects of civil war violence on civilians (Ghobarah et al. 2003; Murdie and Davis 2010). However, as we have pointed out, violence against civilians often continues after combat on the battlefield has ceased. This observation is important because it serves to illustrate a point that is often overlooked by the extant literature on peacekeeping and conflict resolution. Principally, the cessation of war does not equate to the realization of peace, and we find that UN peacekeeping can play a critical role in improving human security in these difficult environments.

However, our findings point to the importance of the UN making substantial force commitments to its missions, as not all available mission tools are equally capable of civilian protection. We suggest that the UN should not rely on strategies in which it "tests the water" by sending observers alone to postconflict zones. Indeed, timid deployments are likely to exacerbate anticivilian violence. Instead, our results indicate that when the UN takes a more assertive stance and outfits its mission with increasingly large numbers of armed and capable soldiers, civilians are more effectively protected from the gravest human rights abuses: direct and purposeful killing. Furthermore, the provision of improved human security is likely to produce positive externalities for a host of postconflict phenomena. Lower levels of civilian victimization is likely to be associated with more stable relations between the former combatants, improved access to foreign aid and investment and thus speedier reconstruction, more efficient return of displaced persons, greater societal rehabilitation, and many other positive outcomes. In this sense, the UN can play an important role in improving the quality of postconflict peace.

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