



**IPI's Special Representatives of the Secretary-General  
(SRSG) Series Presents:**

**“MINURCAT: The Challenges of an Early Exit”**

**Featuring Mr. Youssef Mahmoud**

***Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Mission in the  
Central African Republic and Chad, (MINURCAT)***

**When:**

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**Where:**

International Peace Institute  
Trygve Lie Center for Peace, Security & Development  
777 United Nations Plaza, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
(Corner of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and 44<sup>th</sup> Street)

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**TRANSCRIPT**

Speaker: **H.E. Mr. Youssef Mahmoud**, *Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad, (MINURCAT)*

Chair: **Mr. Warren Hoge**, *Vice President for External Relations, International Peace Institute*

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**Warren Hoge:** Good afternoon. I'm Warren Hoge, IPI's vice president for external relations, and I'm pleased to welcome you to this latest in our SRSG series, where we hear directly from special representatives of the Secretary General working in some of the most conflicted and challenging places in the world.

Our guest today is Youssef Mahmoud, the SRSG for the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad, or MINURCAT. It's a position he took up only 8 months ago, and his welcome was, to say the least, a discouraging one. In effect, he arrived at the precise moment that the government of Chad had originally set as the time it wanted him to leave. Hence, our title today, MINURCAT: The Challenges of an Early Exit.

In a nutshell, here is a brief account of what led up to this moment. On September 25, 2007, despite the concerns of Chad and the Central African

Republic, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1778 establishing the multidimensional UN Peace Operation, MINURCAT. The resolution also authorized the EU to immediately deploy a European bridging force in support of MINURCAT called EUFOR.

Since 2007, the border region of the two central African neighbors has witnessed increasing instability, due in part to spillover effects from the conflicts in Darfur. Instability soon led to confrontations between government forces and rebel groups and stoked inter-ethnic rivalries. This led to what some have called a proxy war between Chad and Sudan, as each government supported rebel movements on the other country's territory. Such a conflict, of course, endangered humanitarian activities in the area and posed a particular threat to the safety of civilian populations, especially refugees and internally displaced persons. MINURCAT's objective was to improve the security situation along the border to allow for the safety and eventual return of refugees and IDPs.

In January of 2009, MINURCAT's mandate was extended with the added responsibility of filling the military gap left by the withdrawal of EUFOR. This past January, the government of Chad requested the withdrawal of MINURCAT in two months time. According to Chad, this request reflected an improvement in the security situation on the ground, brought about in part by the normalization of relations between Chad and Sudan, including the deployment of a joint Sudanese-Chadian force along the border, which is soon to reach 4,000 troops. Three consecutive secretariat missions were dispatched to Chad in the subsequent weeks, the final one led by our guest today, Mr. Mahmoud.

The result was a compromise agreement to gradually draw down the military component of MINURCAT with the Chadian forces assuming responsibility. Resolution 1923, adopted on May 25 of this year, formalized the agreement and determined that MINURCAT's uniform personnel would be withdrawn by this December 31, or 10 weeks from tomorrow. While the security situation in Chad remains calm for reasons Mr. Mahmoud will detail, there is worry over a possible security void in the Central African Republic. Mr. Mahmoud told the Security Council yesterday that just 10 days ago, 40-50 assailants suspected of being insurgents from the Lord's Resistance Army had attacked and looted the town of Birao, abducting people and raping young women.

Mr. Mahmoud, as I said at the outset, all SRSG postings pose vexing problems, but for the reasons I've just outlined above, yours is a particularly demanding one. I think we are all appreciative that someone of Mr. Mahmoud's broad, varied, and proven experience in nearly 30 years with the UN is in charge. We are keen to hear about this challenging situation from you and delighted that you came to IPI today to tell us about it. Thank you.

**Youssef Mahmoud:** Thank you. Thank you very much. I think all is said, I'm ready for questions [laughter]. It's an honor and a pleasure to be invited. Perhaps I should share with you how I intended to organize my thoughts. First of all, is to say a few words about the ambiguous circumstances of the birth of this mission. Second is elaborate a little bit on what led Chad to ask for its early withdrawal, some people say premature. We've agreed with IPI, we'll call it early. Three is what are the main challenges that we have faced in light of this request, and then what we have done to overcome some of these challenges. And then I will perhaps draw one or two lessons from this experiment called MINURCAT with a T, vice president, the Central African Republic reminds us the reason it is MINURCAT: We are in the middle--CAR, and the Chadians keep telling us why we're always

forgetting the T at the end, because Chad in French is T-C-H. That's where MINURCAT comes from.

Let me preface by saying that, as far as peacekeeping is concerned, Africa has been the most important regional setting for UN peacekeeping operations. I think, more importantly, it has had a critical impact in defining the limits and possibilities of peacekeeping operations, particularly after the euphoria of the post-cold-war era, and particularly after Rwanda and Somalia, Somalia and Rwanda to be more accurate, or Rwanda and Somalia, depends how you look at it. So, whatever I am going to say, you have to put it in that context.

You also have to put it on the context of the United Nations continuing groping for a better and secure and just world, and then, therefore, peacekeeping is part of those humankind groping efforts and endeavors for a better and more peaceful world.

Now, onto the perhaps few points, and here I'm on shaky ground, and I'm looking for the permanent representative of Chad, which I don't see, who, at that time, was the foreign minister of Chad when the consent was negotiated for the establishment of this mission. But I am told, some other colleagues from the Chadian mission are here, so I hope they will correct me.

Fact number one: there was, as my host mentioned, a very serious humanitarian situation, no doubt about it. Equally important, there was pressure to act. Three, Chad felt that what they needed was not a peacekeeping operation. What they needed was an international civilian presence. They were of the view that the disease is offshore, and we are coming with not commensurate medication for the symptoms. It was overdosed, as far as they were concerned. And therefore, a military component, or at least your usual peacekeeping operation, did not fit the symptoms we have been called or pressured to address. Fourth, CAR, on the other hand, wanted everything we could give, and yet, they keep reminding me every time I meet the president, I'm being *le parent pauvre*, the poor overlooked parent.

So, in light of all of this, you can imagine whatever consent later on was negotiated to establish the mission took a, let's say, charitably, some persuasion, and Chad has accepted, and the rest you can read in various iteration of the SG's report from 2007 onwards.

So the circumstances have created a difficult beginning for the deployment of MINURCAT. And this is not unusual. Any peace agreement that is the results of power radiation, it means that the parties have not entered freely into it, and therefore will find every possible imagined way of complicating its implementation.

I think, more importantly, we did not have a political mandate. There were no warring parties. There were, but certainly, it was not part of the mandate. There were very, very serious and grave tension at that time between Chad and Sudan, and the Chadians, in the early stages of the negotiations before they were persuaded to accept, did not want us to have any political involvement, neither of their internal political dialogue, let alone in the implementation of the Dakar accord, which as many of those that have been agreed on between Sudan and Chad. So that's just a few. There are plenty of others, stuff we can say about this first point relating to the circumstances of the deployment of MINURCAT and how consent was negotiated.

Second point I want to come to is why, the reasons why the Chad asked MINURCAT to leave. There are many things, I'm not going to repeat things you already know or you can read by yourselves, let me just highlight two or three aspects. Most of what I'm going to say is public, although there are certain aspects, because I'm still an international civil servant and a representative of the Secretary General, there are a few things that I will just gloss over.

I think the first thing that is important to mention is that from Chad's point of view, but also factually, although the humanitarian situation continued to be worrisome, and because it took us a long time to settle in Darfur--a little fact that the Chadians keep repeating us, you couldn't get to Darfur, you're coming to us. Nonetheless, there were still security concerns, and the Chadians said, we will take care of them. We have our own means, we have developed our capacity; we can take care of this aspect. More importantly, we have taken care of the root causes of the symptoms that have been inflicted upon us, this massive presence of refugees and the displacement. We have made peace with Sudan, and as a result of that peace with Sudan, we have a 3,000-strong force patrolling our common borders, and we will see to it that the physical aspect of protection--as you know, protection is another challenge, I'll come to it--the physical protection of civilians against violence, we are now fully equipped with our Sudanese partners to deal with it, and therefore, we feel that the context has dramatically changed, and we wish you to leave, and then when we have started understanding better why, and then in the course of conversation--and this is preceded me, and I am delighted to see General Cammaert here, who had even a far more difficult initial start in the first negotiation--they said, why don't you leave the civilian component, because that is what we need. That is what we had wanted from Day One. It is the creation of the conducive environment in terms of human rights, the rule of law, intercommunity dialogue, demining, water, and so on and so forth. That's what we need. And for us, a well is very important, because women from the camp will not have to travel so far looking for the most difficult resource, which is dry wood and water. So, let us agree, can you just keep the civilian component, and we can assure you.

So these are, in a nutshell. There are plenty of other reasons, most of them are mentioned in the SG's report, and they said, just help us with this community, policing, called the DIS, help us with the peacebuilding aspect of your mandate, and, of course, there are other kinds of reasons. Let's be very clear here, and this is a context of Africa. There is also some pressure from the region, some elements in the region who have their own near abroad, and who consider themselves as regional powers, and who do not look kindly as how the peacekeeping operations are developing in their continent, and the way... and this is where I feel the way we deployed, how long it took us, how long it took us before we became operational, and all these cars that have been plowing, the cost of living that we have raised as a result of our massive presence, the helicopters that we have to have that took a long time, and before we were ready to move, we wanted to make sure that we have the night goggles for our displacement, that we have our level 2 hospitals, we had, and so on and so forth. General Obiakor, who has been there, knows all the headaches we went through to deploy after EUFOR has left, and as a result of that, we tried to overcompensate for our inadequacy. We promised more than we can deliver, and so on and so forth, so it's created, let's say, not the best circumstances for our continued partnership.

So that is, in very rough terms, some of the reasons. There are plenty of others, but we don't have the time, and I'm not necessarily, at this time, free to talk about them, but it is all that elements.

One result of this, and this I come to the third point, what are some of the challenges once you are faced with such a situation where the host government has withdrawn its consent, and consent, as you recall, is one of the basic tenets of peacekeeping operations. Without consent, troop-contributing countries do not want to send their troops in very ambiguous circumstances. Even though the nature of these peacekeeping operations change, we have become more and more intrusive as the Council expanded the definition of what constitutes peace and security, or threats to peace and security, you know all this expanse over the last 10 years, so that intrusive character, and the most visible element of that intrusive character is our armed forces, is our military component, with our military deployment, and people wonder, what are you doing? And there were some challenges where the nomads were able to read the traces of the kidnappers and find them before we got to scramble and have the opportunity to do something about protecting them.

So there were a few issues and limitations that are inherent in here. The first challenge that I have when I was sent that I have encountered in the negotiations, and my brief was very clear: see how we can negotiate a less precipitous withdrawal. We finally have accepted that that is very clear. Less acrimonious divorce, in a sense, and one of the things, and I will stand to be corrected by General Cammaert--he and I worked beautifully along the border of Cameroon and Bakassi and so on--is, there was a visceral distrust of the United Nations, of peacekeeping. It is not universally accepted, but for those who were... this is... they felt that. So as a negotiator, and many of you have been, that's the first thing I had to address.

So basically, I spent the first week listening, and to understand why there was this broken relationship with the government of Chad. So after, as my host mentioned, I'll skip and... and most of the complaint is about our incapacity, about things we promised we did not deliver, about the negative impact of our presence in the east about along litany of issues.

But the one thing that came constantly as a late motif is that the United Nations had let itself become the instrument of other needs. It was an exogenously-driven solution for a problem where the issues and root cause lied elsewhere. I kept hearing that all the time, and NGOs came constantly, how under pressure, we had to do something, and peacekeeping operation was not necessarily what they had wanted, and certainly not what the reality on the ground demanded, and a few other issues that came out.

So after we finally... after a month, we came to this *aid memoir*, and the Secretary General agreed to it, he was transformed in his report, the Security Council then came with 1923. And that's where we faced huge challenges of how to extract a mission that cost approximately \$690 million a year, and how to do it in such a way where we still had a mandate given to us by the Security Council. Not only was there, but when we presented--and I'm glad the distinguished representative of the UK is here--we had... there was no trust between the Security Council and Chad when Chad said, we will take up and take over and assume our responsibility for protection of civilians under international norms. To be frank with you, even when we started the negotiations, we had doubts as well, and we were able to agree in that memorandum of understanding--which is the outcome of my negotiations with the government--we had put a number of mechanisms, and the Chadians have accepted. They say, you test us. So I'll spare you... they even agreed to the establishment of a forum, so we can

deepen our discussion and develop a shared and practical understanding of what the protection of civilians meant, and they've accepted.

Despite all of that, and we've put it in the Security Council, the Council still was... and the mission was sent in a sense in the 4<sup>th</sup> line between two international norms. One, it says that the primary responsibility for protection rests with the state. That's one norm. And the international community should support it, and if you look at RtoPs, and all the other new norms, that is always the mantra. But the other international norm was that when the Council declares a particular situation as a potential threat to international or regional peace, they also, too, have a responsibility. So when the Chad said, I'm going to take over, it wasn't easy. And I understand, because the Council had also that responsibility, and they wanted to make sure. So we had what we call resolution 1923, trust but verify. So we were asked to report three times in last six months, and that's what we're doing. We just finished our second report. We have one last one. So Chad was right, under the first norm; so is the Security Council, because of the legal...

The other challenge, in terms of trust and how to build it, and how, etc, was how we are going to withdraw the staff according to the timetable set by the Council, because the SG initially had recommended that the operation stays until May of next year. But the Council had decided it will end the end of this year... is how to continue some of the leftover elements and finish them by the end of the year, and keep enough staff to do it. When I first arrive, I had one person in my front office, because of the uncertainty of the mission, the mission was hemorrhaging, and everyone was jumping ship to go to other missions.

So that was another challenge of how to... I think the... perhaps one last challenge--and for us, an important, an important one--is what to do with the staff, and particularly the national staff. Although we had no legal commitment to them, we were employing 600 staff, and from my previous experience, another mission that I helped move on, it ended up being a difficult situation for those who stay behind and liquidate, because we've created such expectations, even though it's not, therefore, our fault, nonetheless, we have 600 of our staff who at the end of this year will not have a job. Again, legally and morally, we have no... they signed the contract, they have, but as we wanted this mission to be withdrawn in secure and orderly manner, and they are part of helping us, that frustration was there.

So that is some of these, some of these challenges that we have faced. All the other challenges are internal. Is logistic nightmare. I learned more than I expected to learn. Hopefully I won't have to learn again and be sent to another mission like this. This is my last. I keep telling my colleagues that once I finish this mission, I will have to look in some ancient dictionary what the word challenge means.

So, now how did we overcome them? There are just basically three main strategies. First of all, we had to work with our Chadian partners and treat them as adults, and listen, and get them to work with us as partners and implement those confidence-building measures, mechanisms that we had negotiated, the high-level working group, the creation of security mechanism called the BSMS, the implementation or the setting up of these fora, so there is no misunderstanding, and one of the biggest challenges that I faced during the negotiation when I led this intermission, multidisciplinary team with me, each agency of the UN system defined protection of civilian from the core mandate that they were entrusted. So HCR--you remember the HCR symbol--they looked

at it from the legal protection. The other, OCHA, had a different one, UNICEF has a different one, and it's only lately, thanks to work of DPKO and the C34, that only in April I received an operational concept, integrated concept what protection of civilian meant. So, I think we were able to put in place these confidence building mechanisms that enabled the Chadians to take over under international norms their responsibility for the protection of civilians.

Second is, we have organized a series of employment fora for our national staff where we brought the local private sector, the embassies and so on and so forth, we spent four months training our staff how to interview, how to prepare a proposal, and so on and so forth, and the first one went very well. We... 550 people were interviewed. The rest are really internal lessons learned that we are now working on, and there will be, we had an evaluation mission, a lessons-learned mission, we have plenty of missions coming just to understand what was going on.

But I think we have one last challenge, and I'll finish there, we were not sure that the UN country team was ready to take over. So the way we have overcome that challenge is by quickly, developed in the last three months, what we call a sustainability strategy. We in DPKO, we are very good in exit strategies, but we are never very well in preparing a sustainability strategy. There is so much we have done with Chad. There's so much that's positive in the east. Chad will never be the same *enclave--comment dirá--*landlocked in every possible way. We've worked together, and the Chadians have become the first champions of human rights, of fight against gender-based violence. We have, today, two high government officials, both of them women; one is the vice president of the national assembly, the other one is the minister, the deal of social solidarity here. And you should see these women and the commitment they have for human rights, and particularly when it comes to gender-based violence.

So I think, as much as they were, the UN country team was not yet there. So we've developed this sustainability strategy for them. We even hired some people to help them put it in a matrix, and I think the administrator has taken that and bored other elements of the UN agencies, and now Chad is a priority for the UN country team, and I am confident that with the sustainability plan that has capacity development programmatic, logistic and so on, will help them, particularly when we leave few of the camps and few of the infrastructure according to the usual rules.

I think there are three basic points I wish to conclude with. I think the first thing that we must address seriously, the impression of Africa, that peacekeeping operations and other interventions that are put in a hurry and not giving the support are used to test old and new norms, that because the way we go about them have hemorrhaged the universality of these norms. This is something that... I've lived in Burundi, this is something that I go and hear in all these various inter-African... so this is felt, that for the protection of civilian, the peacekeeping may not necessarily always be the right instrument for the challenge, certainly in eastern Chad. And this is worrisome, because these are, many of them are norms that have been--particularly when it comes to RtoP, and when it comes to protection of civilians--these are universal norms. All of these African leaders have ascribed to in the Millennium Declaration. And yet we are perceived as using a cookie-cutter approach to differing and different circumstances, and overloading it with so many other issues that they start wondering.

And therefore, we have to find a better way of resolving this tension between the national and local processes, so these norms do not look like unwittingly exogenous norms, but their norms as well, particularly in this particular period where some of the things we've been peddling over the years have not necessarily worked out, neither for those who have been pushing, or for those on the receiving end, wherever the issue. Whether it's market economy, democratization, all those. Africans now have become very sensitive on how the United Nations, and they feel there is more listening that needs to be done. So that's the first perception, I think, we need to address.

The second perception is that whatever reasons--and after the euphoric experiments that went well after, immediately after the end of the Cold War--that there is a, somehow carried too far the principle of African solution for African problems. It's almost like a copout, and there was a misinterpretation that even though there was an assertiveness on the part of Africans to deal with their problems, it doesn't mean that you give up, or you just look, you mandate a mission and then you look for the willing, who's going to contribute.

And this brings me to what you all have heard in the high-level segment of the debate where the constant mantra--both to the new president of the General Assembly and to all the audiences--Africa needs a permanent member in the Security Council, and it's no accident--I hope there is South Africa here-- that South Africa was, again, elected to be the member of the Security Council starting next year. But there is a seriousness... they feel the UN is our UN, the Security Council is our Security Council, and if we don't want, we don't want that our membership in the continent, *banalises les decisions du Conseil de Sécurité, je sais pas comment on dis ça, banaliser*, not take seriously the... because under the charter, they are executory, *executoire*, they are mandatory. So there is, they're not saying, we don't want security. On the contrary! It's *our* United Nations, *our* Security Council, but there is a pressure within some countries, with the leadership. So I think we need to think the next time and study this particular trend where this increasing sovereignty streak is asking us to curtail our mandate in this country or that country, and at times we leave in humiliating circumstances.

I think last, but not least, I think MINURCAT, when it's all said and done, will present enough material, in my view, for the Council and us as a Secretariat to draw the appropriate lesson--not only draw the appropriate lesson, but see how they can be better integrated in policy, and I hope that both the Security Council and the Secretariat organize around some of these lessons learned, very serious debate, particularly when it comes to the perils of negotiating consent and security consent. Thank you very much. I'll stop here.

**Warren Hoge:**

Thank you very much. I was thinking, as you were speaking, I like to think we do lots of interesting things at IPI. None is as interesting as this series on the SRSGs, because we're hearing from people who are coming directly from the ground, from the offices abroad, where they work, and I must say, Mr. Mahmoud, you are particularly self-aware. When I say self-critical, I don't mean to say you're here apologizing for anything, but I mean, that analysis was terrific. You have already drawn many lessons from an experience that is not even over yet, and thank you for sharing them with us.

I've got a couple of questions I wanted to ask, and then I'm eager to go to the floor. We have 45 more minutes. One I wanted to ask you was, just physically, when you leave, MINURCAT clearly has installations, has campsites, has



equipment. Does much of that stay in place, and can it be used by the people you leave behind?

**Youssef Mahmoud:** It cannot be left in place, because I am governed by very strict General Assembly rules and financial rules that are, that have given me instruction what I leave and what I cannot leave. It's not my equipment. It's the UN. It's member states, so we only leave what we call in category 5, which are equipment that have so depreciated that it would cost 3-4 times the cost to dismantle them and ship them. But we have, we are trying to leave behind something meaningful nonetheless so we don't unwittingly hurt the sensitivity of our host, and probably end up being forced to take them at a greater cost, so that's the balance we need to find so they can build on it and sustain whatever gains we have achieved with them.

**Warren Hoge:** You mentioned the DIS, the *Detachment Intégré de Sécurité*. Is that a national force that now exists on its own, can sustain itself, be a force for good?

**Youssef Mahmoud:** It is a national force. It's called *Intégré* because it comes from various security forces, particularly the *Gendarmerie*, and *Gendarmerie* and, what, Ned? National police? It is, in my view, an experiment that must not be left to fail. It is something, however, speaking of exogeneous norms, we have built according to our international norms, and therefore, pretty costly, so it's going to take a little bit of time to pare down what it costs, gradually, and for the Chadians, but it is very clear from the Chadian government's point of view that they want to maintain it, that they want to keep it, that, in their views, it is a better trained force, it's community policing, and I am confident they would want to keep it with or without our help, but I think it behooves us to find a way of supporting them as gradually, you know, we sever, little by little, our attachment. But they intend to keep that force, and when all is said and done, there is a lot to learn for other situations where we feel protection of civilians is necessary, and whether to build indigenous capacity or bring an outside peacekeeping operation.

**Warren Hoge:** If they wanted your help, can you leave something there in place to help them?

**Youssef Mahmoud:** We have special sustainability plan that we have developed for the DIS. It has, from... train the trainers, that we have prepared for them by the end of each month. There are more and more things that we are going to do. For example, by the end of April, they will do all the payrolls. By the end of November, they will do all the recruitment and the firing and the hiring and the disciplinary. So we have developed, since we know how far we are staying, a sustainability plan for the DIS so they can build on it. So we feel, from the point of view of the UN, MINURCAT, we have equipped them for the many, the necessary element to self-sustain that particular police community, community-policing mechanism.

**Warren Hoge:** And then finally, before I ask the audience for questions, you came up with this disturbing phrase, "a visceral distrust of the United Nations and of peacekeeping." My question is, are you talking at all levels here, at the individual level, civilian to individual officer, or civilian official from the UN at the top, official to official, does it run all the way through, this distrust?

**Youssef Mahmoud:** Let me be very clear. This distrust... the United Nations is an intergovernmental organization. Certainly, the people have views, and the people may have different views from their government. It certainly... the views from the grassroots is that, why is the civilian component is leaving? But the official views, and that's what guide us, is the government's view. The government felt we were persuaded to accept something, we did, there were promises made, did

not develop, you took forever to deploy, and what is it for us? Plus there were also different expectations, and to be frank with you, as a mission, we could have done a lot better in terms of explaining why on earth we're here for, and why we're not there for. So that's another thing that we are looking at internally, so there are plenty of other issues we're looking at internally. But this, as you know, when you give your word in this culture, you give your neck. It's an oral society, is what you say is what holds. So, if you have in, under duress, say, we can give you this, and then all of the sudden, it's not for you to give, there are rules and regulations and issues, and there were things that have been signed that you will be given, and then all of the sudden, we couldn't, because we are leaving, so the justification's no longer there. But for them is a breach of contract, and as you know, that's when relations get a little bit broken, and therefore, that's what I have faced when I first arrived... very, very defensive attitude.

**Warren Hoge:** I'd love to see some questions if you'd raise your hand. Please, and just wait, if you would identify yourself, please.

**Tahir Andrabi:** Yeah, thank you, Mr. Mahmoud. Thank you IPI. My name is Tahir Andrabi, I am from Pakistan mission, Pakistan mission to the UN. Thank you for a very good briefing. My question will be restricted to a thought that you gave for the protection of civilians, peacekeeping may not be the key instrument. It's a thought that has echoed in C34 and on the paraphernalia, and the NAM G77, DCCs. Could you elaborate a bit... I mean, the reason that some of the countries in C34 and in NAM have been stating that is basically because of the three underlying features, namely the local sensitivities, sensitivity of the host government, the constraints within the peacekeeping architecture, and the fact that there's a tendency to politicize these issues and not keep it within the professional realms of peacekeeping and military discipline. So in case of MINURCAT, and in case of Chad, which of the three features were more overriding than the others, or there was some additional features? So if you could elaborate a bit on this, particularly focusing on MINURCAT's experience. Thank you.

**Youssef Mahmoud:** I am thinking how to answer it, because I came at the tail end of a process, so maybe other colleagues who are... of course, I have read this part of my briefing, the various deliberation of the C34. We have been guided, and certainly I have been guided by the policy paper that you have developed, which gave us an operational concept of the protection of civilians. I think the Council... we have to remember the circumstances under which there was a great deal of pressure, there was a lot of suffering. There was no doubt about it. There was a lot, and we were stumbling on the consent of Sudan at that time, and the United Nations Security Council couldn't simply sit idly by. There was pressure on the members of the Security Council from their own electorate and so on. So, under pressure, when you act under duress, you're going to act and think after. So it is important that we keep that in mind. And when you add to that the intrinsic difficulties of deploying after Somalia and after Rwanda, deploying peacekeeping operations with bigger and far higher expectation the mandate than we actually can deliver, so you already come with baggage. You already come with baggage. And when there is a varying, variation between the expectation and reality, then the host country's going to start wondering why you're here, and assign to you or ascribe to you agendas you may not have, and in this multipolar change, where the center of gravity has shifted, and where there are new paradigms coming on, and where the means to secure influence are no longer there, people wondering, is the United Nations being used for something else? And so we don't want this instrument to be caught if it is judged to be inadequate, to be caught in this

speculation, because by the time we need it, it is not credible enough to use it. I'm going to stick in these generalities, if you don't mind.

**Warren Hoge:** Please, in the front row?

**Lt. Gen. Chikadibia Obiakor:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Mahmoud. My name is General Obiakor the just-exiting MINURCAT advisor in DPKO. I just wanted to.. two comments. One, on why at all did we deploy, and then of course, why did we deploy so badly or so late? On the first one, I think you've said all you need to say, and I don't think I need to expand on it, because the reasons why we arrived at that deployment is still very hazy. For the second one, I want us to remind people that we got it wrong from the onset. Because the exit of EUFOR was cast in stone -- they were to leave March 15, and it couldn't be changed, but the Security Council resolution for the establishment of MINURCAT the force, was issued in January, so had barely two months to deploy troops, and in the history of troop generation, you can hardly get anybody in less than 6 months. So I want to recognize the effort of European Union troops who saved us from that, because if they had not helped, if some of them had not helped, March 15 would not have been a reality. So, in house, I think we got this wrong, and it's one of those lessons we may just have to learn. If we want to deploy as expeditiously as we wish to do, then we have to look at our standby systems and other things we need to do. And then of course, we need to walk ahead of time, it's not that people don't adequately research things, but we need to politically look at it and do it when we need to do it. Thank you.

**Warren Hoge:** Thank you, General. Would you like to comment on that all? Please, in the back room? Gentleman standing up?

**Marijan Zumbulev:** Thank you. Marijan Zumbulev with Crisis Action. Two questions if I may. So the first question is regarding the lack of a political mandate for the mission. To what extent do you think that was critical in the mission's eventual demise? And the second question is regarding the Security Council, or rather some of the members of the Security Council who are very outgoing in terms of their initial desire to send the mission, did they come through in the end to put some pressure, perhaps, on the Chadian government, or to have strong conversations with them as the issue of pullout was being discussed? Thanks.

**Youssef Mahmoud:** I will let the Security Council respond to that question, if there are members around here who would wish --

**Warren Hoge:** I was looking forward to that answer!

**Youssef Mahmoud:** I'm still the representative of the Secretary General, and not the Security Council. On the first one, I think the Chadian, from day one, and in honor of my compatriot, Hédi Annabi, who perished, as you know, in Haiti, was very clear when he, from the record, when he reported the Security Council, the Chadian government said, thank you very much, we have our own internal processes for dealing with our political issues, and as far as Sudan and Chad, thank you very much, we have our regional processes for dealing with this issue, and therefore, there is no added value for you to bring. Thank you.

**Warren Hoge:** Please, here in the second row, third row?

**Amine Chabi:** Thank you very much, Mr. Mahmoud for this excellent presentation. My name is Amine Chabi, I'm from the mission of Morocco, and I'm the NAM coordinator for peacekeeping issues. I would like, first of all, to commend you for this very vivid

presentation, because it really reflects the depth of the dialogue that we've had inside C34 on cross-cutting issues pertaining to peacekeeping. Among them, the protection of civilians. And really, I recognize myself fully in what you mentioned, because as TCCs, we have people on the ground, and they know really what the problems are, and of course, as you mentioned, OCHA has its understanding of POC, UNHCR has its understanding of POC, and as NAM movement, what we wanted is to unify, first of all, the norm of the protection of civilians.

Second of all, the protection of civilians is not a new norm. It has been there since 1949, so we are not reinventing the wheel. It's just how we should do it, the *modus operandi* that should be done in a sophisticated way. So in view of that, can we think of instruments for protection of civilians that could be outside the realm of peacekeeping. Because we know that peacekeeping is by excellence a civil-military undertaking, but it is done for a specified context.

The second question, and it has to do with your long experience, both in peacekeeping and peacebuilding. We discuss a lot of transition strategies, the necessity of an entry, an exit strategy, and the interconnectedness between peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and I would like to have your views on a key word that you mentioned, the issue of sustainability, because ultimately, it is not because we have a successful peacekeeping operation that will be also successful in peacebuilding. What makes it is the sustainability. I would like to have your insights on that point, and I thank you very much.

**Youssef Mahmoud:**

Thank you, sir. I think there has been a lot that's been written about the limitation of peacekeeping for protection of civilians. The latest study that was prepared on behalf of OCHA and DPKO tells a lot about that, and where they mentioned, under the best circumstances, peacekeeping and protection of civilians are strange bedfellows under the best circumstances, and they outline a huge number of other responses to the protection of civilians. And again, I commend your committee working with DPKO for helping us have that operation concept. Had that been early on at our possession, certainly the possession of my predecessor, I think it would have clarified quite a few things and helped us manage expectations differently.

Now for us, when we knew the Security Council was serious, and 31<sup>st</sup> of December is the exit, we stopped doing things. We started building on what we have done and laying the foundation for their sustainability. That's when we came up with this sustainability strategy, because before then, we had only exit strategy: how many troops, by how, and by clock, how many staff should leave. Because the Security Council is very clear, *all* staff by 31<sup>st</sup> of December, uniformed and civilian, should be, except the few that will remain for liquidation. And for us, the Security Council mandate is the law, so, and as a representative of the Secretary General, I have to implement it. Knowing that, we spent from the minute I was confirmed as special representative, 1 April to this day, that's all we've been doing: consolidating the gains and laying the foundation for their sustainability.

There are various ways, and the sustainability, particularly of the civilian or the peacebuilding component of. And of course, one of the channels I've mentioned to you is the UN country team needed to get its act together, so the thought, can we think of perhaps a successor arrangement that stays behind MINURCAT, to... we've exposed and discussed this, but it was, really to be frank with you, no take on the part of the government and no take on the part of other stakeholders, because it would have required a mandate from the Security Council, there was no stomach, and I believe, if the UN country team organized itself with a

sustainability plan that we have done, I think we will be able to sustain the peacebuilding elements, but also, if we can find a way of helping the sustainability of the DIS that was presented by the government, I think we should be able to, because it's not necessarily, because it worked in Burundi, it should work by having yet another mission. Not after this difficult experiment. Maybe later on, even though we are not out of the woods yet, because we still don't know what are the predictable and predictable consequences of the southern Sudanese exercise, and its impact on Darfur, Darfur on eastern Chad. But nonetheless, the wisdom as it currently is there, is that let us empower the UN country team and the government on the basis of a sustainability plan we have developed to take over, and that's the decision we are heading towards.

**Warren Hoge:** Please, woman here on the left?

**Yvonne Kemper:** Hi, my name is Yvonne Kemper, I'm with the Watchlist on Children in Armed Conflict, and I wanted to ask you specifically about the role of the Central African Republic. You mentioned before the implication that the exit of the mission would have in terms of creating a security void, and how would you suggest this void to be filled? What is your advice? Thank you.

**Youssef Mahmoud:** I have no advice to offer, certainly not to the Central African Republic, but what they feel needs to be done is for them to be helped with minimum needs that they outlined in their request to the member states, both multilaterally and bilaterally, for them to be in a position, for their armed forces to be in a position to deploy when MINURCAT leaves on 15<sup>th</sup> of November. There have been other ways discussed of how best to support them, either directly or through a regional mechanism, but the preference, the strong preference, might I add, of the CAR government, is that they should be supported in training and in material so they can take over as soon as we leave--even before--to avoid that security vacuum.

**Warren Hoge:** Yeah, please, Philip Parham.

**Philip Parham:** Thanks very much. Philip Parham from the UK mission, and many thanks indeed for the presentation. There are, indeed, many valuable lessons, I think, to be learned from this experience, certainly for the Security Council, certainly for DPKO and for others, and we look forward to your final report, drawing out further some of those lessons.

It'd be interesting to know whether you think--I realize you weren't there at the outset, and indeed, I wasn't here in New York at the time that the original mandate was given for MINURCAT--but whether you think, in retrospect, from your own experience in everything you know, whether you think it was right to deploy a peacekeeping mission or not. You know, some... there were clearly differences of opinion in the Council at the time, some were quite dubious about the idea, but those who were very keen on the idea won the argument. The mandate was issued. Some might argue that the way things have turned out illustrates that, in fact, it wasn't necessary, and that a civilian capacity-building-type presence might have achieved the outcome, but of course, there has been a big change since the mandate was first issued, which is the *rapprochement* between Chad and Sudan, which substantially changes the context.

And then fast forwarding to this year, and to Chad's requirement that the mission withdraw. At the time when Chad made its wishes clear, there was a lot of concern in the Security Council, and indeed, the briefing that the Council received, for example, from OCHA, about the role that MINURCAT was playing, protecting humanitarian operations, suggested that the withdrawal would be

potentially disastrous. Again, as things have turned out, that was probably overpessimistic. I mean, does this mean that the Council and DPKO were not looking rigorously enough at whether the mission was still required, whether the mission could be transitioning into something different, or simply withdrawing altogether. Because the fact is that if, very probably, if Chad had not asked for the withdrawal of the mission, it would still be there, and people wouldn't be talking about its withdrawal now. So should we have been looking more rigorously and carefully at that?

On the point about trust, it seems to me that the Council could do a better job of maintaining political contact with the host country of a mission after the mandate has been issued, and after the mission has been deployed. And for example, the lead country, the lead member of the Council could maintain those contacts through its head of government, through its foreign minister, with the government of the host country, and that that might help to anticipate this kind of problem, and to build the kind of trust which is sometimes absent. But of course, it would be important that that didn't undermine the position on the role of the SRSG, and it'd be interesting to know what you think about that idea, whether you think it could be helpful. Thanks.

**Youssef Mahmoud:**

Thank you, Ambassador. I'm grateful for these questions. Again, I wasn't here at the outset of the mission, like yourself, so my knowledge is, *une connaissance livresse*, it's a bookish knowledge. It's always easy for me, in hindsight, to say what we could have done differently, so, suffice it to say that I would, that the Council was under tremendous pressure at that time, particularly after some of its influential members have designated the awful situation, the horrendous situation in Darfur as genocide. Never mind that that particular member of the Security Council was not rushing to send any peacekeepers, but nonetheless, I think it was very clear to everyone that the pressure from the humanitarian was unrelentless, or relentless, whatever the word is. Relentless. And the pressure at home, some of those countries, were relentless. And we couldn't get the consent of Darfur, of Sudan, you will recall. It had to have... we had to secure a passport called the AU in order, finally, for us to be there, and even then, quite few issues.

So the Council at that time was so much under pressure, and I think from the Chad point of view, one of the issues they keep reminding us, is that the Council, under pressure, listened more to the humanitarian side of the reality than to what is really needed, and because the various missions that you have sent initially couldn't go to some places, because you recall at that time, 2007, Chad was in an internal rebellion. But even then, after that, my compatriot at that time, God bless his soul, came and said to the Council, peacekeeping was not the right answer. It's on record. So that's the lessons where, as a Council.

Similarly, when the humanitarian came, and to say, it would be disaster, the DIS will fall if MINURCAT leaves. Humanitarian worker security will be absolutely terrible if MINURCAT leaves! It is true that with MINURCAT, finally when it became operational, they increased the number and went deeper than would have been the case. And without recognizing--they always want to be independent of the military component of peacekeeping operations, you know the legendary schizophrenia of our colleagues--nonetheless, Chad felt that the reports we sent to the Council broad brush, with the same black broad brush, every little incident that happened without balance, that these various OCHA--sorry about OCHA--these humanitarian actors, who really did not have the means to go deeper and verify were in close community because of security issues, and they just... and they put unacceptable pressure on the Council,

which may have tainted their views, and therefore, perhaps the decision that they have taken along this were not properly informed.

As to the last point, I think you're absolutely right, and I really feel you hit it on the nail: trust, consent, love is one of these human... you can't have it, it has to be given. And once you've given, you have to nurture it. Consent is one of those things, and consent changes. And when you are a broken country, or post-conflict country, that's the remaining instrument you have left. You're going to use it. You're going to use Article 2.7 in the charter to the hilt, if necessary. So once you get it, first of all, find out how it is negotiated. Second, once you get it, particularly when it is under duress, how to... the pulse. And I agree with you, some mechanism that does not necessarily emulate the SRSG, on the part of the Council to continue to check, so you will have your independent high-level dialogue so that temperature is from the Council rather than via the Secretariat or other humanitarian actors. Thank you.

**Warren Hoge:** Thanks to the thorough-going nature of Ambassador Parham's question. We got a wonderful thorough-going answer, which I think caps what has been a very interesting session, mainly because of the candor of our guest, so thank you Mr. Mahmoud for coming and speaking to us.

**Youssef Mahmoud:** Thank you.