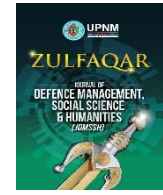




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MALAYSIAN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS IN CONGO AND SOMALIA: AN OVERVIEW AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

Malaysia is one of the countries deployed as peacekeepers in Congo and Somalia. The credibility of Malaysian peacekeepers is undeniable as Malaysia keeps gaining recognition at the international level. However, the successes of Malaysian peacekeepers still need to be explored, particularly the previous deployments as well as the current ones. Thus, this paper focuses on the capability of Malaysian peacekeepers assigned in Congo and Somalia. The researchers explore the challenges and efforts of Malaysian peacekeepers towards accomplishing their tasks. This is a multiple case study comprising a series of interviews and library research for data triangulation and thematic analysis. The findings show that the Malaysian peacekeepers deployed in Congo and Somalia apply diverse ways in order to carry out their tasks effectively with some early exposure from their training in Malaysia. There are numerous differences on how they adapt with their tasks from different countries of deployments. The guidelines pertaining to this study are presented as a dimension of prior deployment that is still relevant to the present deployments.

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Introduction

Malaysia's role in peacekeeping operations has been very important since the early 1960's. Malaysia's contribution to the success of the security operations has received international attention and praise. Despite the various tasks accounted for our peacekeepers in peacekeeping operations, there were numerous circumstances behind Malaysia's achievements. The study of the success or failure during the implementation of security operations could enhance the progress of peacekeeping operation management. Sigri and Basar (2015) highlighted that the success of any operation depends largely on the decision-making that starts with the superior officer and goes down to the individual operating officer itself regardless of what rank. Therefore, peacekeeping operation management studies need to be evaluated in line with the changing needs of the peacekeeping operations as well as to overcome the challenges. For example, diversity within peacekeeping operations cause a challenge for military leaders and their personnel especially if the peacekeepers did not get proper exposure before being assigned. They are in fact not well-prepared in a multidimensional peacekeeping environment (Sigri & Basar, 2015). These challenges and obstacles are among the real situations that have been experienced by Malaysian peacekeepers. Thus, this study focuses on Malaysian Peacekeeping Operations in Congo and Somalia. The aspects that are studied are the challenges and efforts of Malaysian peacekeepers in completing their tasks.

Peacekeeping Operations and Challenges

Peacekeeping operations are difficult tasks with challenges especially from the context of execution. According to Thakur (2006), terms such as 'peacekeeping', 'peace support operations' and 'peace operations' refers to missions and operations that fall short of military combat between clearly recognisable enemies. Traditional peacekeeping falls under the United Nations' (UN) auspices, command and control. UN peacekeeping seems to be going down the path of not only enforcing military solutions through offensive action, but also of presuming and precluding particular political solutions by siding with (often contested) governments (Peter, 2015). Sandler (2017) categorises UN peacekeeping operations into four types of increasing complexity, which are monitoring and observer missions, traditional peacekeeping, peace building, and peace enforcement. The first type requires peacekeepers to observe and report any cease-fire violation. Traditional peacekeeping may include demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration of rebel forces, while peace building is more complex. This category provides humanitarian aid and or rebuilds institutions. The forth one is peace enforcement operations that involve enforcement by the military forces to end hostilities between conflicting parties in war, such as UN and non-UN missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Iraq.

Peacekeepers need to understand the given mandate as it is the first step in carrying out the assigned task effectively. The mandate refers to the objective of a specific operation. The mission falls under a specific operation, which includes several categories of assignments for the purpose of achieving the goals and objectives. For example, the mission in the security operations was the supervision of the election and the promotion of democracy involving tasks such as the supervision of voter registration and polling stations (Diehl & Druckman, 2017).

There are challenges in peacekeeping operations as discussed by scholars. For instance, Sigri and Basar (2015) outlined that the major challenges faced by peacekeepers are associated with the lack of coordination skills, cultural awareness, language capabilities, communication skills, and knowledge about history and religions of the assigned country, in addition to military equipment being shared with other militaries. Thus, officers must change their conventional way of command through adaptation to emerging conditions rapidly. For example, commanders need to request for a native speaking advisor to build friendly relationships and give directions precisely. Doss (2014:706) highlighted that there were critical challenges in the United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC) that constantly threatened the viability and credibility of the mission. The first was the danger that ONUC would be paralysed by Cold War politics, and lose support from a polarised Security Council. The second was inherent in ONUC's mandate, which called on it to secure the authority of the central government, even though the Congolese security forces had been disintegrated in the violent anarchy. The third challenge stemmed from the divergent views of the Council members on how far ONUC would be permitted to use force to implement the Council's mandate. The President and Prime Minister of Congo discussed with the UN and agreed to provide military assistance to help Congo to restore law and order. Thus, peacekeepers must be aware of the previous challenges and how to deal with critical situations.

Thakur (2006) ascertained that traditional peacekeeping operations do not enforce the peace, but they do buy time. Given the intensity of conflicts and depths of distrust between local belligerents, peace would be even more tenuous in the absence of international forces. Moreover, they can help to contain sporadic incidents that are not meant to initiate a large-scale war. The deficiencies in the machinery of peacekeeping merely highlight the fact that such forces cannot be self-sustaining. Therefore, it is perhaps more accurate to speak of war-dampening rather than peacekeeping forces. Howard (2008) highlighted civil war as the most important and troubling problem in international affairs today. Aside from the tragic killing and injury of innocent civilians, violent civil conflicts inspire lingering, seemingly intractable, ills such as state collapse, corruption, dire poverty, rampant injustice, dislocation, environmental degradation, and disease, all of which may in turn instigate renewed and outspread conflicts, international crimes, and terrorist activities.

There are also numerous challenges during military deployment as peacekeepers are dealing with different situations almost every day. Graaff et al. (2015) stressed that during military deployment, peacekeepers have to overcome their moral principles as they work in different cultural settings. It is clear that in critical situations that involve the moral and culture of servicemen, they must articulate the appropriate and best decisions to complete their given task despite the unfamiliar situation they face.

ONUC and UNOSOM Incidents

In Congo, the decision for ONUC not to use violence nor to implement security enforcement operations raised challenging issues to establish security zones. The stability of the Rikhye Zone was finally destroyed in February 1961 by Katangese forces, led by foreign mercenaries, who attacked and killed the local leaders. This helped to promote the African National Congress' (ANC) return to power, undermined UN control, and renewed violence in the region. The UN did not have the power to for enforcement within the zone. It can only act in its own defence, but only local leaders and not UN security forces were usually attacked. The attacks harmed the zone and the UN peacekeepers; capability to create a safe area for peace (Lee, 1997).

In Somalia, there were United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II) troops who did not ask to exchange locations even though they were placed in dangerous areas. Among the weapons supplied to the Malaysian team included anti-aircraft guns, mortar, and M16 rifles. The troops were also supplied with 700 bulletproof vests and communications equipment, while also having light armour. An advance group of 50 officers and members, including the head of the contingent, Col. Abdul Latif bin Ahmad left for Mogadishu on 18 June 1993, while the rest were deployed gradually between June 29 and July 4, 1993. Malaysia was among the 20 countries participating in UNOSOM II. In mid-December 1990, Mogadishu was no longer safe to inhabit. The liberation fighters fought with the devout army of Siad Barri. In order to bring down the President Siad Barri Regime, the Hawiya people formed the United Somali Congress. The organisation was finally split due to political discrepancy despite having succeeded in toppling Siad Barri on 20 February 1991. President Siad Barri left Mogadishu for a political asylum in Nigeria (Syed, 1995). The fall of President Siad Barri in January 1991 resulted in a power struggle between clans. The tragedy spread everywhere and even the rest of Somalia was turbulent. The civil war lasted from January to November 1991. The fiercest clashes took place in the capital of Mogadishu where both sides - supporters of President Ali Mahdi Mohamad and supporters of the President of the United Somalia Congress, General Mohamed Farah Aideed - often fought. The situation of chaos and the continuing famine in Somalia was such that the official government ceased to exist and the country's economy was destroyed. Famine was widespread among the people because the humanitarian aid given from the world could not be sent to them (Syed, 1995). Thus, force was authorised to allow for the delivery of humanitarian aid (Boulden, 2001). The chaos of war between warring factions that controlled their respective territories did not allow the dispersion of aid by the UN agencies to run smoothly.

Previous Studies

Studies on peacekeeping are crucial as the operations goes on until now. There have been numerous discussions on peacekeeping operations and the UN. For example, Thakur (2006), and Garies and Warwick (2005) discussed on the UN as a peace and security organisation, comprising its definition, roles, contributions and challenges. Lee (1997) analysed the main cause of the Congo conflict and the UN's challenges. Howard (2008) focused on the UN during civil wars. He highlighted that the success of the UN was associated with the contributions of peacekeepers. This is based on three factor, namely situational factors, consensus of the powerful members of the security, and first-level organisational learning on the ground. In order to achieve the third factor, the first and second factors must be fulfilled. Doss (2014) studied the Congo conflict and situations that led to the enforcement of peacekeeping operation. He highlighted other issues including ONUC's challenges, while Boulden (2001) analysed the UN's experience in Congo, Somalia and Bosnia.

Angstrom and Widen (2016) produced guidelines on how to develop a doctrine for military purposes. The output of the doctrine must be measurable and attain certain qualities as proposed. Curran (2013) focused on training for military operations in his study. He ascertained that negotiation and civil military coordination in peacekeeping and peace building are key factors for successful peacekeeping operations. Therefore, these aspects must be included in peacekeeping training. Sandler (2017) studied burden sharing and effectiveness in peacekeeping operations as well as the effectiveness of missions. Peter (2015) undertook a study on UN peacekeeping dilemmas that includes doctrine and practice. He discussed the capability of the UN, its roles, and the implication of peace building and conflicts that occurred.

Sigri and Basar (2015) analysed the challenges in peacekeeping operation management, which comprises of administrative issues, and the nature of peacekeeping operation that is diverse even among leaders and personnel. Both officers and commanders must understand their tasks as well as equip themselves with particular skills to handle unpredictable situations. Najjah et al., (2014) highlighted that

peacekeepers with cultural knowledge of the assigned country contribute significantly to the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. Their findings also showed that the capability of Malaysian peacekeepers deployed in Lebanon were due to certain factors, including their openness to understand and enhance cultural knowledge, and being friendly and respectful.

Furthermore, Diehl and Druckman (2017) analysed challenges that must be considered by scholars in their studies pertaining peacekeeping operation. They suggested that a study of multi-mission peace operations should ideally be able to detect sequencing patterns in operations and assess what works better than others. This type of study is crucial in determining the direction in which tasks were performed, something that is not usually explained from the previous studies. They advised that scholars select case studies rather than large scale analyses for addressing this issue.

Based on the aforementioned discussion on various types of challenges and efforts that has been undertaken by the peacekeepers as well as the UN, it can be concluded that effective peacekeeping operations can be achieved by peacekeepers despite the challenges that they face. It is closely related to several factors that comprise the peacekeepers credibility as well as other factors. The peacekeeper is considered as credible when he has following elements; understands the mandate, aware of different cultural settings, adapts with command relevant to the contemporary needs, and is able to respond and make right decision at the right time.

The credibility of peacekeepers are also associated with other factors, which are negotiation skills, civil military coordination, burden sharing, as well as situational factors and consensus from the member of the security forces. Thus, the present study will explore the challenges faced by peacekeepers especially for two operations, namely in Congo and Somalia. This study will find out their efforts towards accomplishing their tasks too. The selection of these two operations is due to various elements that can be identified from peacekeepers who have been deployed in past. The researchers employed case study research using interview data as well as other related sources such as documents, books and picture.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this paper are: first, to explore the challenges faced by Malaysian peacekeepers deployed in Congo and Somalia; and second, to find out the Malaysian peacekeepers' efforts to attain the required mandate as stipulated in the United Nation Security Council.

Research Methodology

This is a multiple case study comprising of a series of interviews with two participants, one deployed in Congo (ONUC) and the other deployed in Somalia (UNOSOM II). The participant that was deployed in Congo, namely Lt. Col. Tan Siew Soo (Retired), had been in the Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF) from 1957 to November 1990. He participated in ONUC from October 1960 to July 1961 and June 1962 to April 1963. The second participant, who participated in UNOSOM II, namely Brig. Gen. Datuk Abdul Latif Ahmad (Retired), was in the MAF for 35 years, seven months and seven days. He was a brigadier general and was in Somalia for seven months. The data was transcribed verbatim and analysed thematically. It was then triangulated with other sources including books and articles.

Findings

The findings will first focus on the challenges and efforts of Malaysian peacekeepers towards accomplishing their tasks in ONUC Operation. Second, this section will focus on the challenges and efforts of Malaysian peacekeepers in UNOSOM Operation.

i. Challenges in ONUC Operation

The participant in the study namely Lt. Col. Tan Siew Soo (Retired) did not emphasise on the obstacles that he experienced in the operation. He stated some minor issues such as food challenges, weather differences and the existence of two time zones. The participant felt that these issues were not an obstacle in completing the task. However, among the obstacles he and the other Malaysian

Special Force (MSF) personnel experienced was the incident where Malayan soldiers were arrested by the rebels.

a. Food

"Challenge? Food. Supplied by the Americans mostly. We never experienced eating those types of eggs, we called it egg powder. Do not look like fresh eggs. The egg powder was used to make something like omelets. Every day we had egg powder (laughed), not fresh eggs," said Lt. Col. Tan Siew Soo (Retired).

b. Weather

"Leopodville is more like this (Malaysia), but if you go to the east in Kavu, Goma, it is cold. It is about 5,000 feet, like Cameron Highlands. However, this is about 1,000, 2, 000 km away, the air is cooler," said Lt. Col. Tan Siew Soo (Retired). The difference in seasons affected the mission. He said *"My second time in Katanga, I remember having experience in Congo, Vokabu, it was cold, but still ok. During the first day of patrolling, my fingers were numb! ...cannot hold, cannot switch the trigger, numb completely! Cool!))... on the ferret, during patrolling and then the UN gave us coats, which we wore at night. We would also make a camp fire. They provided pullovers, but they were not enough."*

c. Two time zones

"Congo is twenty times bigger than Peninsular Malaysia. It has two time zones. When we got the messages, we had to watch the time to prevent mistakes (because of two time zones)" said Lt. Col. Tan Siew Soo (Retired)

d. Normal negotiation

"Malayan soldiers were arrested and then released through negotiations when the rebels found out that the people that they arrested were not Belgians," Lt. Col. Tan Siew Soo (Retired)

ii. Efforts in ONUC Operation

There were various efforts contributed by the Malaysians peacekeepers that were recognised by others. Among their prominent efforts include; the MSF was well-organised, put in excellent effort, did numerous challenging tasks, and finally got recognition from the Congolese leaders and locals, and other countries. Interestingly, they got recognition from many parties.

a. MSF Well-Organised

Lt. Col. Tan Siew Soo (Retired) mentioned: *"There was no radio link between the Tunisians and ONUC. This lack of communication at the sub-unit levels was an inherent weakness of some ONUC contingents. Fortunately, the MSF did not experience this weakness due to its well thought out organisation. The lack of communication coupled with the darkness caused nothing to move from the UN side. The whole MSF was in full battle order, ready for deployment and physically commanded by a Second Lieutenant! The telephone line between Chanic Camp and the Officers's Mess was naturally kept busy. HQ Tunisian Brigade, where the MSF was placed under command, was located adjacent to Chanic Camp, which also had truck-loads of soldiers ready for action."*

He also stated that there were many circumstances where he was approached for armoured escorts by the Tunisians but nothing came about as they were asked to refer the matter to the MSF commander: *"The ANC were out to avenge the death of their Garrison commander. The whole ONUC HQ became jittery, everyone wanted protection and the task of providing security to HQ fell to the MSF. The MSF was still under the command of HQ Tunisian Brigade but operating rather independently."*

b. MSF Excellent Effort

The higher command at HQ ONUC recognised the MSF and kept receiving favourable feedback from different quarters. The MSF had already been in Leopoldville for more than three weeks and they were supposed to deploy in Kasai but the higher command was reluctant to do so as the MSF did a good job.

"It would be difficult to single out any particular facet of the MSF for the good name it had been making for itself. Since the first day at Ozone Camp, the very first convoy of 'C' Squadron armoured vehicles from the railway station into Ozone Camp, the splendid performance at the various static guard duties, the numerous road patrolling conducted where in some instances they had eyeball to eyeball contact with the ANC at road blocks in very tense situations without resorting to clashes, were all the contributory factors to the good reputation of the MSF," said Lt. Col. Tan Siew Soo (Retired).

c. MSF Won Everyone's Heart

"The Nigerians withdrew under cover of the MSF, who quickly took over the airport. Kindu airport became the fortified base of the MSF. Day and night everyone was busy digging trenches and carrying out other defensive preparations. 'Show of flag' patrols were despatched immediately into the town to inspire confidence among the Congolese and non-Congolese alike. After about a fortnight, the MSF won over the confidence of everyone including the 23rd Battalion ANC, the local resident battalion of Kindu. The MSF actually conducted a one-month retraining programme for this battalion," said Lt. Col. Tan Siew Soo (Retired).

d. Doing well in the Biggest Task

They were given biggest task at Kindu. He explained: *"The biggest task performed by the MSF at Kindu was the rescue and protection of civilians, in particular the European population. The white population, especially the missionaries, must have experienced life in living hell prior to the arrival of the MSF. They were brutally beaten-up practically every day by the ANC. Now, hundreds they came streaming into Kindu as refugees for homeward repatriation through the MSF. Many were literally plucked out from their missions by MSF patrols and brought into town."*

e. Capable to Monitor Thrilling Areas

They were also given the opportunity to monitor specific thrilling areas. For instance, he stated *"Having ensured peace and stability in Kindu town and the surrounding areas, the MSF patrols worked progressively outward by conducting long range patrols. The Kasongo long range patrol was an example of the numerous patrols carried out by the MSF from Kindu. There were other thrilling patrols that were sent to places such as Punia and Labutu, to the north of Kindu near the Kivu-Orientale border; to Kabambare, east of Kasongo; and Kibombo and Samba, to the south of Kindu."*

f. Committed to Serve as Peacekeepers

Despite of numerous obstacles they had already experienced, Malaysian peacekeepers got high motivation to accomplish their accountability although some contingents withdrew from the deployment.

"Some contingents withdrew from ONUC (Egypt, Mali, Guinea, Morocco). But The Federation of Malaya increased the MSF strength from 613 all ranks to 1413 all ranks".

iii. Obstacles in UNOSOM Operation

Based on this study, Brig. Gen. Datuk Abdul Latif Ahmad (Retired) explained the obstacles or challenges that the Malaysian peacekeepers experienced in Somalia. The challenges were logistic problems, lack of information, illness, unpredictable situation and being a non-enforcement peacekeeper.

a. Logistic problems

He explained that *"The problem that we faced was that there was no place to serve food. Besides that, we faced pressure from outside, when the tents were not ready then they were shot daily from (outside) so we did not know if we can see the sun the next day because there was nothing to cover. Thus, the problem was logistics because we did not have the supply and, we needed to travel from Kenya but sometimes we were not able to do so. For example, we wanted to build our place for defence...because we have been shot by mortars, machine gun bullets and rockets, so we needed have cover. Normally as soldiers, we must be ready to cover against fire-mortar shots, machine gun bullets and rockets so we have to have cover. However, we did not (because we do not have that facilities... we were in trouble, we only had our sandbag there; not so strong."* He continued: *"We got a tent; it was a long tent. There was a story, the weather was extremely hot! When we installed this tent, we had to close the 'door' because if we did not do that, the sand goes in. However, when we closed it, inside it was hot! (Laughter) There was a fan, but it produced hot wind. If we opened the 'door', then the sand would come in, flies also! When we wanted to eat, there were flies! A lot of flies, tiny sand...There was also no water. These were all the problems when we started up, I brought mineral water bottles, then we got water from an American tube well."*

b. No defence stone

He also mentioned that, *"We did not have a lot of sandbags, and we were supposed to go as a peacekeeper, not as enforcement. However, when we arrived, we enforced the peace. We went as peacekeepers, so our equipment was small; we took small arms, little ones. We keep safe, patrolling."*

c. Insufficient armoured cars

"When we wanted to come back, the armoured car was not functioning and the equipment was not enough. Our shields had to be fit all the time there for operations, otherwise they would shoot. We managed to prepare our own shields, we also had logistic flight coming every three months, but we had to wait. There were no computers, so we had to wait for the logistics flight every three months for mail. Among other things, some of the officers would come with the logistic flights to visit us once, visit for a while," said Brig. Gen. Datuk Abdul Latif Ahmad (Retired).

d. Difficulty to move smoothly without specific information

"We made patrols in the Mogadishu area so that people can walk safely. We walked and so on; among them were in vehicles and we do not know them either. All of them looked alike! When it happens, for instance we wanted to create a 'raid', when we obtained information on where there is weapons catchment, which has been kept by the rebels, so when we went for the raid, surge-destroy operation, we went accompanied with the Americans, Pakistanis and all that; because we do not know the situation; it could be worse. When we entered the particular area, it was not easy for us to move. There was a tactic; they would put women in front and we could not shoot them. That was a problem. We did not know whether they are conspiring with Aidid to bring trouble."

e. Illness

Brig. Gen. Datuk Abdul Latif Ahmad (Retired) also shared his view on illness. He said *"You can name it, all kinds of illness, so we got many injections; we had all kinds the pain there."*

f. Unpredictable situations

"Another problem, you never know when you must look for shelter because of rockets and mortar, one mortar fell and luckily it did not explode. We could stay in the bunker because it was not enough and we were already numbering about a thousand (Malaysian peacekeepers). Rockets were fired every day at two in the morning, three in the morning," said Brig. Gen. Datuk Abdul Latif Ahmad (Retired).

g. As peacekeepers not an enforcement

Among the obstacles they experienced was they had to remind themselves that they were assigned as peacekeepers and not for enforcement. He said: *"So many problems (we experienced) ... indeed problems. Among the problems (that we encountered), we have to keep in mind that we were there as a peacekeeper, so when it comes to firing, it was hard to shoot back. We could not fight back, otherwise it would injure civilians. So what do we do? There were obstacles. There was, one time they shot at us, so we shot them too, right. Shot back. Then, they did not shoot back! It was a bit of relief; it was a bit. However, four or five days, later they fired from there; from the outside, they were firing inside. Thus, we have to be careful. We have to be very careful, to ensure we did not kill innocent people. That was important, we needed to be careful."*

iv. Efforts in UNOSOM Operation

The researchers found that the participant and other Malaysian peacekeepers deployed in Somalia contributed a lot to the UNOSOM through their efforts, as they had relevant characteristics such as high motivation, friendly with other contingents, opportunities for logistics, sources, responsible, patience, ability to adapt with the environment, loyal, and good tactical approach.

a. Keep up the spirit

Brig. Gen. Datuk Abdul Latif Ahmad (Retired) explained that they had to keep up their spirit throughout their deployment. He said: *"We had to keep up our spirit. We could not go out, or we would be shot. When we went out, it was just for our tasks, such as patrolling, day and night, to ensure safety of the area, etc., and these were different from special operation such as search and special raids."*

b. Give something to locals

They put in some effort to have a good rapport among the locals despite the limited engagement with them. "We bring groceries, we give oil (cooking oil) because our job as Malaysians were to win the hearts and minds of the people. We think, when we get it (groceries), we brought it for the locals, when it was safe, we just want out. For the orphans we gave stationery and so on and also *muqaddam*. As they wrote on the board, we brought stationery ... it is to win their hearts and minds," said Brig. Gen. Datuk Abdul Latif Ahmad (Retired).

c. Expectation before deployment

They were aware that they would be given difficult tasks: *"Somalia was not a safe play to stay, everything was difficult. With many diseases, it was hard to find the food, water hard to find, all hard, very tough, with the wind, with weather, with heat, we cannot expect the best. You (must) expect the worse (no entertainment) ... We asked for it! This was our job!"*

Discussion

Based on this study, the peacekeeping personnel from Malaysia faced a number of challenges, which required them to take various appropriate actions to ensure that the missions were carried out smoothly. They had to take appropriate actions to avoid conflicts that could endanger lives and situations, facilitated difficult situations, and employed numerous efforts to overcome these challenges. Among the challenges faced by officers in the ONUC were food, seasonal differences and negotiations that need to be done. Interestingly, the ONUC participant did not consider all such aspects as an obstacle but instead regarded them as a custom faced by the duty officer in the context of overseas assignments, particularly in peacekeeping operations. This scenario portrays the capability of our peacekeepers having the right moral and principles during deployment overseas, even though they were working in different settings. Graaff et al., (2015) stressed on the significance of taking appropriate moral in different settings, in which this statement shows that our peacekeepers were already in the right position since earlier peacekeeping missions.

Meanwhile, the challenges faced by participant in the UNOSOM operations involved logistic problems and getting the right information. These challenges occurred due to their uncertain conditions. However, these difficulties were successfully overcome by the Malaysian peacekeepers as they had more initiatives among them by building good relationships between all the parties that they need to engage. This is sort of burden sharing has been mentioned by Sadler (2017) empirically, but was already employed by our peacekeepers since previous peacekeeping deployments. Thus, it is very crucial to have good relationships that lead to the next stage in building tolerance among different parties in sharing accommodations, facilities as well as some equipment and logistics. All the efforts highlighted by the officers in the ONUC and UNOSOM operations showed that they were committed to the given tasks even though they experienced diverse challenges. They also adapted themselves with people from different places, ranks and communities' despite being assigned in critical areas. The good understanding of the situations was associated with our knowledgeable peacekeepers of multicultural communities that facilitated them to deal with various parties. The findings of this study have been empirically documented so that the experience of Malaysian peacekeepers in Congo and Somalia can be part of Malaysian history as well as to portray the success of these missions despite the lack of technology and logistics available. Despite its remarkable findings, the study has several limitations which can also be considered as directions for future research. The study focuses on Congo and Somalia context, which can be extended to other countries in which our peacekeepers have been deployed. Next, a bigger sample size and more outcomes of challenges and efforts from Malaysian peacekeepers' views from different backgrounds can be taken into consideration in future for better understanding of the concept.

Conclusion

The findings show that the Malaysian peacekeepers deployed in Congo and Somalia applied diverse ways in order to carry out their tasks effectively with some early exposure from their training in Malaysia. There were numerous differences on how they adapted with their tasks from different countries of deployments, yet relevant to the present deployments. A Malaysian General was appointed as a first Commander by the UN Secretary General in UNOSOM II, which was the first time ever since Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) was initiated in 1957. Normally, a few generals would be called for interview. Our troops successfully overcame the obstacles that they faced with their excellent efforts. They did their best to fulfil the UN mandate. In order to attain success from the Malaysian perspective, there should be a clear, credible and achievable mandate, with well trained personnel, logistics and financial resources. At the same time, the host country should endure commitment to unhindered UN operations and freedom of movement. Our troops have successfully attained the UN mandate, which was for the UN peacekeeping force to maintain the element of effective diplomacy. The warring parties gave their consent and cooperation with our peacekeeping mission, while the UN peacekeeping force was less successful.

Fig. 1

Brig. Gen. Datuk Abdul Latif Ahmad (Retired)-left
The researcher-middle
Lt. Col. Tan Siew Soo (Retired)-right



Fig. 2

Research participants and the researchers



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