

## II. New peace operations in 2011

CLAIRE FANCHINI

### **Sudan and South Sudan: the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan and the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei**

South Sudan's proclamation of independence on 9 July 2011 was the culmination of a six-and-a-half-year peace process. The process began on 9 January 2005 with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Sudanese Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), ending the 28-year intrastate conflict.<sup>1</sup> Although almost 99 per cent of the participants in the January 2011 referendum supported independence, South Sudan was born into a complex and fragile environment. Between January and mid-May 2011, insecurity had resulted in more than 116 000 internally displaced persons in southern Sudan.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, humanitarian access to areas affected by conflict had been hampered. Conflict and deadly violence against large numbers of civilians persisted until early July.

South Sudan's independence also led to a significant reconfiguration of the UN presence in the former territory of Sudan. There were numerous discussions on whether the UN Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) should essentially split into two operations, and how unresolved issues surrounding the states of Blue Nile and South Kordufan (in particular, the Abyei Area) would be treated (see figure 3.5).<sup>3</sup> However, immediately following the results of the referendum, the Sudanese Government signalled to the UN that it had no intention of consenting to an extension of UNMIS's mandate when it expired in July 2011.<sup>4</sup> It argued that, since the focus of the mandate was the implementation of the CPA and the mission's geographical focus was in what was to become South Sudan, it was no longer necessary for the UN to maintain a mission in Sudan. Sudan's opposition led to the closure of UNMIS, which represented the nominal withdrawal of over 10 000 military and police personnel and 965 international civilian personnel. In practice, the majority of the personnel were redeployed to the new UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) and to the

<sup>1</sup> Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Sudan People's Liberation Army, signed 9 Jan. 2009, annex to UN document S/2005/78, 10 Feb. 2005.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, Security Council, Special report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan, S/2011/314, 17 May 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Lederer, E. M., 'UN votes to wrap up peacekeeping force monitoring 2005 Sudan peace deal', Associated Press, 11 July 2011, <<http://www.680news.com/news/world/article/252442--un-votes-to-wrap-up-peacekeeping-force-monitoring-2005-sudan-peace-deal>>.

<sup>4</sup> 'UNMIS's mandate will not be extended beyond July, Sudan says', *Sudan Tribune*, 15 Feb. 2011.



**Figure 3.5.** Map of South Sudan and Sudan

new border-monitoring mission, the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 1997, 11 July 2011.

### *The UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan*

Planning for UNMISS was fraught with political uncertainties in the run-up to South Sudan's independence on 9 July 2011. Following several rounds of deliberation, the UN Security Council mandated UNMISS to support the South Sudanese Government in political transition and governance, and assist in security sector reform; the rule of law; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) strategies; the protection of civilians; and conflict prevention.<sup>6</sup> The latter two areas of the mandate rely on the establishment and implementation of a mission-wide early-warning capacity, which in turn will rely on information sharing (gathering, monitoring, verification and dissemination) and follow-up mechanisms. The explicit inclusion of conflict prevention, in particular its early-warning component, is relatively novel.<sup>7</sup> UNMISS's other core responsibilities were essentially the same as UNMIS's. There were high expectations that UNMISS would be more successful in implementing its mandate than UNMIS, since the South Sudanese Government is more receptive to UNMISS's presence than the Sudanese Government was to UNMIS. However, concerns remain about the feasibility and appropriateness of the mission's DDR strategies, given that the security situation remains tense.

The new mission is only slightly smaller than its predecessor. The UN Security Council authorized a maximum of 7000 military personnel and 900 civilian police personnel and an appropriate civilian component. The appropriate size of UNMISS was apparently a point of contention among Security Council members: some thought it was relatively small given that protection of civilians was a central mandate coupled with the worsening situation in Abyei; others viewed it as disproportionately large for a country the size of South Sudan.<sup>8</sup> One of the key determinants of the authorized troop levels was the presence of UNISFA and its subsequent relationship with UNMISS.

### *The UN Interim Security Force for Abyei*

The impending independence of South Sudan also led to the deterioration of the security situation along the border with Sudan and especially in the resource-rich territories on and near the border in South Kordufan (including the Abyei Area) and Blue Nile. Abyei is probably the most intractable of these heavily disputed territories, and the dispute over its future status was one of the greatest obstacles to the implementation of the CPA and a major cause of instability in the region. Competition over land

<sup>6</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 1996, 8 July 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Saferworld, 'UNMISS: A second chance for UN peacekeeping in South Sudan', *South Sudan Monitor*, Aug. 2011.

<sup>8</sup> 'South Sudan', *Security Council Report: Monthly Forecast*, July 2011.

ownership and use between local communities, which was intensified by the presence of high-quality oil reserves, meant that Abyei remained on the brink of conflict and resulted in serious clashes between the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) of South Sudan and the Sudanese Armed Forces.

In response to the escalation of deadly violence and population displacement in the area as South Sudan was preparing for independence, on 20 June 2011 the two parties to the CPA—facilitated by the African Union (AU) High-level Implementation Panel on Sudan, Ethiopia, UNMIS and other stakeholders—signed an agreement on the administration and security of the Abyei Area.<sup>9</sup> The agreement provides for the establishment of an Abyei Area Administration and for the total withdrawal and full demilitarization of all armed elements in the area. In order to support these arrangements and provide security in the Abyei Area, the parties requested that the UN deploy a peace operation.

The UN Security Council duly authorized the deployment of UNISFA on 27 June.<sup>10</sup> Notable elements of the mission's mandate include monitoring and verifying the redeployment of any troops of the Sudan Armed Forces or the SPLA (or its successor) from the Abyei Area; facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid and the free movement of humanitarian personnel; and, when necessary, providing security for the region's oil infrastructure. The operation is also authorized to use force in protecting civilians and humanitarian workers in Abyei. It is comprised of a maximum of 4200 military personnel and 50 civilian police personnel and an appropriate civilian component.<sup>11</sup> Unlike other UN operations, only six countries have contributed to UNISFA (see table 3.2 in section IV below). It is led by Ethiopia, which provided an armoured brigade.

South Sudan's independence on 9 July 2011 transformed the nature of the dispute over the final status of Abyei and other South Sudan–Sudan border areas from an internal Sudanese matter into a bilateral concern between two sovereign states. The achievement of stable and peaceful relations between South Sudan and Sudan, as well as wider regional stability, will depend on the resolution of the Abyei issue and the broader problem of the growing militarization of the 2100 kilometre-long border.

On 30 July the South Sudanese and Sudanese governments signed an agreement on the establishment of a Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM), as well as a Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM), to oversee the demilitarization and security of the 10-km-wide Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ) that had been created

<sup>9</sup> Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on temporary arrangements for the administration and security of the Abyei Area, signed 20 June 2011, annex to UN document S/2011/384, 24 June 2011.

<sup>10</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 1990, 27 June 2011.

<sup>11</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 2032, 22 Dec. 2011.

on 29 June.<sup>12</sup> The agreement called for UNISFA's support for and protection of the monitoring teams. UN Security Council Resolution 2024 of 14 December 2011 extended UNISFA's mandate, requiring it to support the operational activities of the JBVMM in undertaking verification, investigations, monitoring, reporting and patrols, and to provide security as appropriate.<sup>13</sup>

Despite the successful deployment of UNMISS and UNISFA, the security situation in the border area at the end of 2011 remained of serious concern. Both the South Sudanese and Sudanese governments had yet to live up to their commitments under the 20 June agreement on Abyei, with the continued presence of security forces increasing the already considerable tension between the two countries. In December 2011 the border town of Jau was the scene of violent clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the SPLA. In addition, Jongoli state in South Sudan was subjected to deadly violence for weeks on end.<sup>14</sup>

At the same time, the stability of the wider region was threatened, particularly in South Kordufan and Blue Nile, where a security vacuum had been created by the withdrawal of UNMIS and the Sudanese Government's ban on international aid agencies and media.<sup>15</sup> Many groups remain vulnerable to humanitarian crises and are victims of the escalating violence.

### **Libya: NATO's Operation Unified Protector and the UN Support Mission in Libya**

After the successful and relatively peaceful protests in Tunisia and Egypt, the Arab Spring spread to Libya in February 2011.<sup>16</sup> The protests escalated rapidly, despite the violent attempts of the Libyan authorities to crush the uprising. The international community widely condemned the serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed in Libya. On 20 February the European Union (EU) 'condemned the repression against peaceful demonstrators' and urged the Libyan authorities to immediately refrain from further use of violence against protesters.<sup>17</sup> Three

<sup>12</sup> Agreement on the Border Monitoring Support Mission between the Government of Sudan and the Government of South Sudan, signed 30 July 2011, <<http://www.scribd.com/doc/61383096/Agreement-on-the-Border-Monitoring-Support-Mission>>; and Agreement between the Government of the Sudan and the Government of Southern Sudan on Border Security and the Joint Political and Security Mechanism, signed 29 June 2011, <<http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/pdfs/facts-figures/abyei/Agreement-Border-Security-JPSM-29-June-2011.pdf>>.

<sup>13</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 2024, 14 Dec. 2011.

<sup>14</sup> 'South Sudan', *Security Council Report: Monthly Forecast*, Jan. 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Pantuliano, S., 'South Sudan: referendum—one year on', AllAfrica, 13 Jan. 2012, <<http://allafrica.com/stories/201201131008.html>>.

<sup>16</sup> On the conflict in Libya see also chapter 2, section I, in this volume.

<sup>17</sup> European Union, 'Declaration by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on behalf of the European Union on events in Libya', 6795/1/11, 20 Feb. 2011, <[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/cfsp/119397.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/cfsp/119397.pdf)>.

days later, the AU also condemned the crackdown, despite the extensive influence of the Libyan leader, Muammar Gaddafi, over the organization.<sup>18</sup> On 26 February the UN Security Council, through Resolution 1970, imposed an arms embargo.<sup>19</sup> However, despite repeated condemnations and sanctions, the situation deteriorated, resulting in heavy civilian casualties. On 8 March the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) called on the UN Security Council to impose a no-fly zone over Libya and the Arab League followed suit on 12 March.<sup>20</sup>

On 17 March, after Gaddafi indicated in a radio address to Benghazi residents that his armed forces would search every house in the opposition stronghold that night and show 'no mercy' to fighters who resisted them, and in response to the calls from the Arab League and the GCC, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1973. The resolution established the legal basis for military intervention in the Libyan conflict, authorizing the international community to use all means necessary to protect Libyan civilians and to implement a no-fly zone.<sup>21</sup> Resolution 1973 was unusual in several respects. First, its calling for a military intervention 'to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack' led some observers to assert that it was the first time that the UN had referred to the 'responsibility to protect' (R2P) framework since its adoption of Resolution 1706 on the situation in Darfur, Sudan, on 31 August 2006.<sup>22</sup> Second, the resolution was adopted by a vote of 10 in favour to none against, with China and Russia, which could have vetoed it, among the five abstentions.

### *NATO and Libya: Operation Unified Protector*

NATO responded to the UN resolution by launching Operation Unified Protector (OUP) on 22 March 2011.<sup>23</sup> On 31 March, NATO took control of

<sup>18</sup> African Union, Peace and Security Council, 261st Meeting, Communiqué on the situation in Libya, 23 Feb. 2011.

<sup>19</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 1970, 26 Feb. 2011. See also chapter 10, section III, in this volume.

<sup>20</sup> Joint Statement of the Joint Ministerial Meeting on the Strategic Dialogue between the countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab Gulf States and Australia, Gulf Cooperation Council, 8 Mar. 2011, <<http://www.gcc-sg.org/indexc23e.html?action=News&Sub=ShowOne&ID=1919>> (in Arabic), para. 3; Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, 'First Joint Ministerial Meeting on GCC-Australia Strategic Dialogue', Communiqué, 8 Mar. 2011, <[http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2011/kr\\_mr\\_110308c.html](http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2011/kr_mr_110308c.html)>; and Leiby, R. and Mansour M., 'Arab League asks U.N. for no-fly zone over Libya', *Washington Post*, 12 Mar. 2011.

<sup>21</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 1973, 17 Mar. 2011; and Reuters, 'Gaddafi tells rebel city, Benghazi, "We will show no mercy"', *Huffington Post*, 17 Mar. 2011, <[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/03/17/gaddafi-benghazi-libya-news\\_n\\_837245.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/03/17/gaddafi-benghazi-libya-news_n_837245.html)>.

<sup>22</sup> International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect, 'The crisis in Libya', <<http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/crises/crisis-in-libya>>. On the R2P principle see chapter 1 in this volume.

<sup>23</sup> Note that NATO's Operation Unified Protector does not meet SIPRI's definition of a peace operation (see section IV below) since it did not serve as an instrument to facilitate the implementation of a peace agreement (as there was no peace agreement in place); it was not mandated to support a peace operation; and it did not assist with conflict-prevention or peacebuilding efforts in the

all military operations in Libya under UN Security Council resolutions and was therefore charged with the enforcement of the arms embargo, the enforcement of the no-fly zone and the protection of civilians from attack or the threat of attack. The operation was carried out by air and sea, while, in accordance with the terms of Resolution 1973, forces on the ground only played a support role. OUP, far from being a purely defensive operation, consisted of daily air strikes across the country targeting Libyan Government ground forces, air defences, artillery, rocket launchers, command-and-control centres, radar systems, military bases, bunkers, ammunition storage sites, logistical targets and missile storage sites. NATO also used aircraft and warships to enforce a naval blockade of Libya. The approaches to Libyan territorial waters were patrolled and NATO forces worked to interdict ships and aircraft carrying weapons or mercenaries. At its peak, OUP used over 260 air assets—which flew over 26 500 sorties, including over 9700 strike sorties—and 21 naval assets, with the support of approximately 8000 troops.<sup>24</sup>

Members of the international community and civil society organizations actively challenged the way in which OUP was conducted, with some accusing NATO of not only interpreting Resolution 1973 in the broadest sense but also acting above and beyond its mandate.<sup>25</sup> In June 2011 leaders of several African states, along with China and Russia, demanded an immediate end to NATO's bombing campaign in Libya.<sup>26</sup> However, the case could also be made that the UN had deliberately granted wide powers to the operation as it was relying on NATO to make up for its own lack of military forces. Indeed, in late August as the UN was envisaging deploying a mission in Libya, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Post-conflict Planning for Libya, Ian Martin, asserted in a leaked report that the military support required in order to stabilize Tripoli would remain

country. It is thus not included in the table of peace operations for 2011 in section IV and is excluded from the statistics presented in sections I and III.

<sup>24</sup> 'Air assets' refers to fighter aircraft, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft, air-to-air refuellers, unmanned aerial vehicles and attack helicopters. 'Naval assets' refers to supply ships, frigates, destroyers, submarines, amphibious assault ships and aircraft carriers. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 'Operation Unified Protector: final mission stats', Fact sheet, 2 Nov. 2011, <<http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/71679.htm>>.

<sup>25</sup> 'More countries slam NATO action in Libya', ABC Radio Australia, 29 Mar. 2011, <<http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/asiapac/stories/201103/s3177136.htm>>; and Agence France-Presse, 'L'Otan outrepatte le mandat de l'ONU en Libya, affirme Moscou' [NATO goes beyond the mandate of the UN in Libya, says Moscow], France 24, 15 Apr. 2011, <<http://www.france24.com/fr/20110415-russie-libye-crise-actions-otan-outrepassent-mandant-onu-nations-unies-resolution-diplomatie>>.

<sup>26</sup> E.g. South African President Jacob Zuma stated on 14 June 2011 that the UN resolution authorizing military action was being abused for regime change, political assassinations and foreign military occupation. 'African leaders demand halt to NATO bombing campaign in Libya', Bloomberg, 15 June 2011, <<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-06-15/african-leaders-demand-halt-to-nato-bombing-campaign-in-libya.html>>.

NATO's responsibility.<sup>27</sup> Martin also stated that if UN military observers needed military protection, this protection would have to come from a source other than a UN contingent, given the lengthy time needed for the UN to generate and deploy troops.

Despite the mixed reaction to the way the operation was conducted, NATO's intervention was a turning point in the conflict as it managed to galvanize rebel forces struggling against the Gaddafi regime's superior resources.

Following the opposition's capture of most strategic towns and locations, the widespread international recognition of the National Transitional Council (NTC) as the legitimate new representative of the Libyan people, the killing, defection or capture of a large part of the Gaddafi regime and family, and finally Gaddafi's death on 20 October 2011, NATO declared that it had, with the support of its partners, successfully implemented the UN mandate to protect the people of Libya and that it would terminate its operation in coordination with the UN and the NTC.<sup>28</sup> At a meeting of NATO defence ministers on 6 October the guidelines for determining when to terminate the operation were agreed as follows: the operation would end when Gaddafi and his regime no longer threatened the security of the Libyan people and the NTC would be able to provide for their security.<sup>29</sup>

On 27 October the UN Security Council, taking note of the NTC's 'Declaration of Liberation' of Libya on 23 October, decided to end the authorization for a no-fly zone, as well as the action to protect civilians, as of 31 October.<sup>30</sup> Operation Unified Protector thus ended after seven months of its sea and air operation.

### *The UN and Libya: the UN Support Mission in Libya*

Concurrent to the NATO deployment, the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, had appointed Ian Martin as Special Adviser on Post-conflict Planning for Libya, charging him with determining whether the UN could and would have a role in post-conflict Libya. As part of his mandate, in April 2011 Martin led a UN integrated pre-assessment process for post-conflict planning for Libya. He met with several UN agencies, funds and programmes as well as the World Bank and the International Organization for Migration and, later in the process, consulted with the new Libyan

<sup>27</sup> Martin, I., 'United Nations post-conflict deployment to Libya', Introductory note to the Consolidated report of the integrated pre-assessment process for Libya post-conflict planning, 22 Aug. 2011, <<http://www.innercitypress.com/martin1unlibyalicp.pdf>>.

<sup>28</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 'Statement by the NATO Secretary General on Libya', Press Release 128, 20 Oct. 2011, <[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-27364A7E-5456866F/nato-live/news\\_79742.htm?mode=pressrelease](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-27364A7E-5456866F/nato-live/news_79742.htm?mode=pressrelease)>.

<sup>29</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 'NATO and Libya—Operation Unified Protector: Ending the mission', [n.d.], <[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_71652.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_71652.htm)>.

<sup>30</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 2016, 27 Oct. 2011.



transitional authorities on areas in which they would like to receive UN support. On 16 September 2011, responding to the NTC's formal request for assistance from the UN, the UN Security Council established the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL).<sup>31</sup>

UNSMIL is essentially tasked with assisting the new Libyan authorities in restoring public security and the rule of law; promoting inclusive political dialogue and national reconciliation; and supporting the NTC as it embarks on the drafting of a new constitution and preparing for elections. Following Gaddafi's death, the NTC announced that it intended to organize elections within eight months.<sup>32</sup> Ban considered this to be a 'challenging timeline in a country where there has been limited or no electoral experience in over 45 years'.<sup>33</sup>

Regardless of the timeline, UNSMIL was initially established for a period of three months in order to give the UN the opportunity to continue its discussions with the Libyan transitional authorities on longer-term UN support, while delivering urgent initial advice and assistance.<sup>34</sup> The Libyan transitional authorities were expected to engage in defining the needs and wishes of Libya for the scope and nature of UN support beyond this initial phase. The Security Council subsequently extended UNSMIL's mandate for an additional three months, 'as the prolongation of the conflict had delayed the formation of the interim Government and other developments essential for the dialogue and assessment of needs required for mission planning'.<sup>35</sup> The resolution also broadened the mandate of UNSMIL to include assisting and supporting Libyan national efforts to prevent the proliferation of arms, especially from Libya. In doing so, it sought to address the risks of destabilization that Libya posed in the Sahel region; its potential fuelling of terrorist activities in the broader North Africa region; and its potential impact on regional and international peace and security. In mid-December 2011 well over a hundred Libyan militias had a total of 125 000 armed members.<sup>36</sup> Considering UNSMIL's broad and exacting mandate, its further extension is highly likely.

<sup>31</sup> 'Libya', *Security Council Report: Monthly Forecast*, Oct. 2011; and UN Security Council Resolution 2009, 16 Sep. 2011.

<sup>32</sup> 'Libya's Jibril sees elections within eight months', Reuters, 22 Oct. 2011, <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/10/22/us-libya-elections-idUSTRE79L0LD20111022>>.

<sup>33</sup> United Nations, Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, S/2011/727, 22 Nov. 2011.

<sup>34</sup> 'Security Council mulls resolution on potential UN mission for Libya', UN News Centre, 9 Sep. 2011, <<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=39497&Cr=libya&Cr1>>.

<sup>35</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 2022, 2 Dec. 2011; and United Nations (note 33).

<sup>36</sup> International Crisis Group, 'Holding Libya together: security challenges after Qadhafi', Press release, 14 Dec. 2011, <<http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/publication-type/media-releases/2011/mena/holding-libya-together-security-challenges-after-qadhafi.aspx>>.

### **Syria: the Arab League Observer Mission to Syria<sup>37</sup>**

The Arab League played a central role in attempts to address the conflicts related to the Arab Spring in 2011. Its adamant support for external military intervention in Libya came as a surprise to many observers. As the Libyan conflict worsened and the UN remained paralysed, the Arab League became a critical actor.

The Arab League expressed its first forceful condemnation of the violent repression of protests in Syria in August 2011.<sup>38</sup> Following a series of diplomatic démarches, it finally adopted an Arab Plan of Action on 2 November 2011, with the agreement of the Syrian Government.<sup>39</sup> The Arab League's peace plan attempted to facilitate a resolution to the Syrian uprising and protect civilians. It called on the Syrian Government to halt the violence directed at civilians, to withdraw all its security forces from civilian areas and to release tens of thousands of political prisoners.<sup>40</sup> A key aspect of the plan was the Arab League's demand for its immediate implementation.<sup>41</sup> However, the Syrian Government's failure to comply with this demand resulted in the Arab League suspending Syria's membership and imposing economic sanctions on 12 November.<sup>42</sup>

On 19 December 2011 the Syrian Government finally acquiesced and signed a protocol on the plan with the Arab League, including the deployment of the Arab League Observer Mission to Syria. By signing the protocol the Syrian Government agreed to fully cooperate with the mission; provide free movement in Syria to both observers and approved media; and assist the observers by providing necessary support. Approximately 150 observers (down from the initial 500 proposed by the Arab League) were to be deployed within a week of the signing of the protocol, with a limited mandate of one month.<sup>43</sup> Syria reportedly made the deployment conditional on a reduced number of observers and coordination of their activities with the

<sup>37</sup> Xenia Avezov, SIPRI Intern, assisted in the writing of this subsection.

<sup>38</sup> International Freedom of Expression Exchange, 'Arab League breaks its silence and condemns Assad's massacre of protesters; journalists disappear', 17 Aug. 2011, <[http://www.ifex.org/syria/2011/08/17/Arab\\_League\\_speaks\\_out/](http://www.ifex.org/syria/2011/08/17/Arab_League_speaks_out/)>.

<sup>39</sup> The plan of action is annexed to Arab League Council Resolution 7436, 2 Nov. 2011 (in Arabic). See also 'Syria accepts Arab League peace plan after Cairo talks', BBC News, 2 Nov. 2011, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-15560322>>.

<sup>40</sup> MacFarquhar, N., 'Arab League votes to suspend Syria over crackdown', *New York Times*, 12 Nov. 2011.

<sup>41</sup> Black, I., 'Syrian acceptance of Arab League ceasefire plan met with scepticism', *The Guardian*, 2 Nov. 2011.

<sup>42</sup> 'Syria calls Arab League decision to suspend its membership "violation of charter"', Al Arabiya News, 12 Nov. 2011, <<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/11/12/176668.html>>; and MacFarquhar, N. and Bakri, N., 'Isolating Syria, Arab League imposes broad sanctions', *New York Times*, 27 Nov. 2011.

<sup>43</sup> 'Syria unrest: Arab League monitors' advance team arrives', BBC News, 22 Dec. 2011, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-16296255>>.

government.<sup>44</sup> The observers were posted in 20 cities—with a concentration in high-conflict areas including Damascus, Homs, Rif Homs, Idlib, Dará and Hamah—in order to monitor and observe any cessation of violence. The mission was also mandated to ensure that the Syrian security services ‘and so-called shabiha gangs do not obstruct peaceful demonstrations’, and to verify the withdrawal of the military from residential areas and the release of detainees.<sup>45</sup>

However, from the start of its deployment, the mission was unable to effectively carry out its mandate and quickly became mired in controversy and criticism.<sup>46</sup> On 28 January 2012 the Arab League Observer Mission to Syria suspended its operations due to an escalation of violence against civilians and observers. On 12 February 2012 the Arab League proposed a joint peacekeeping mission with the UN to supervise the ceasefire process in Syria. The proposal drew support from the United States, European powers and Turkey but was opposed by Russia and China. Finally, on 14 April 2012, the UN Security Council voted unanimously to authorize a UN observer mission to monitor the ceasefire.<sup>47</sup>

## Conclusions

The criticism of the way in which OUP was conducted and the international community’s hesitation over the Syria crisis highlight the differences that exist between countries and regions on how R2P principles should be implemented. Despite these differences, both the international community’s call for military intervention to protect the Libyan people and the UN’s use of R2P principles in Resolution 1973 in order to provide a legal basis for this military intervention suggest that a consensus is forming around these principles.

While it is unlikely that future operations will adopt the OUP model wholesale, elements of it may be used for similar operations. For example, future operations may become increasingly dependent on air support for the protection of civilians. Peacekeeping is in a state of flux and the boundaries between humanitarian and military intervention and peace operations have been eroded and blurred.

<sup>44</sup> ‘Negotiations on Syria Draft Resolution’, What’s in Blue blog, Security Council Report, 22 Dec. 2011, <<http://whatsinblue.org/2011/12/negotiations-on-syria-draft-resolution.php>>.

<sup>45</sup> Arab League, Report of the Head of the League of Arab States Observer Mission to Syria for the period from 24 December 2011 to 18 January 2012, English translation available at e.g. <<http://un-report.blogspot.se/2012/02/al-dabis-report-on-arab-league-observer.html>>.

<sup>46</sup> Fahim, K., ‘Chief of Arab League’s mission in Syria is lightning rod for criticism’, *New York Times*, 2 Jan. 2012.

<sup>47</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 2042, 14 Apr. 2012; and United Nations, Security Council, ‘Security Council unanimously adopts Resolution 2042 (2012), authorizing advance team to monitor ceasefire in Syria’, Press Release SC/10609, 14 Apr. 2012, <<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/sc10609.doc.htm>>.