

US leads high-profile focus on Africa

Security Council hesitates over Congo, doubles UN peacekeepers in Sierra Leone



AP / Peter Busomoke

Rebel troops in Kisangani, Democratic Republic of Congo: debate on the continuing conflict in DRC was the centrepiece of the UN Security Council's 'Month of Africa.'

By Michael Fleshman

After months of hesitation and increasingly angry African charges of a double standard in its handling of conflict in Africa, the UN Security Council on 24 February unanimously authorized the deployment of a peacekeeping force in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). This action, taken to help bring an end to the bloody conflict, was termed a "litmus test" of the Council's commitment to peacekeeping in Africa by South African Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo. It was also the most important result of a publicity-conscious Security Council "Month of Africa" initiated by the US in January.

But the small size of the mission — no more than 5,537 military and civilian personnel in a country the size of western Europe — and its limited mandate have led some people to suggest that the international community is getting very late to its African peacekeeping obligations,

and arriving with too little, if it arrives at all. New offensives in March by both government and rebel troops, the latest in a string of cease-fire violations, threw fresh doubt on how soon a deployment of the UN force could occur.

Speaking in his capacity as Security Council President, Ambassador Anwaral Chowdhury of Bangladesh told reporters on 22 March that the Council demanded an immediate halt to the fighting and was "deeply concerned" by evidence that the parties were re-equipping their forces for continued combat. He cautioned that UN troops would be deployed only if the cease-fire were respected. Chowdhury's message was bluntly reinforced in Washington the following day when US State Department spokesman James Rubin called for an end to the cease-fire violations.

Without this, he said, "the US believes it will be impossible to deploy UN...peacekeepers."

In early April, military representatives of the belligerents met in Kampala and agreed to halt the fighting and establish a 30-km buffer zone between their forces to prevent future violations. Whether or not this agreement will hold where others have failed remains to be seen, but senior UN officials will closely monitor compliance with the cease-fire during the five months it will take to organize deployment of a peacekeeping force in the DRC.

Africa focus

The "Month of Africa" began on 10 January 2000, the first Security Council meeting of the new millennium, with an unprecedented debate on the HIV/AIDS epidemic ravaging East and Southern Africa in particular. The January agenda included the strained peace agreement in Sierra Leone, the continuing civil war in Angola and the plight of refugees and internally displaced people. The Council also heard the newly-appointed mediator in the civil war in Burundi, former South African President Nelson Mandela, outline his peacemaking strategy.

The "Month of Africa," was initiated by US Ambassador Richard Holbrooke when the US assumed the monthly, rotating Security Council presidency. During the UK's presidency in December, there was a less well-publicized Security Council focus on Africa that included a meeting on Sierra Leone. This paved the

way for the Council to authorize on 7 February 2000 the doubling of the UN peacekeeping presence there. The Security Council also held an "interactive" meeting on conflicts in Africa on 15 December addressed by over 50 speakers.

Security Council debates on African conflicts are scarcely unusual: in recent years

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the Council has devoted over half its time to Africa. But the US and other permanent members have been notably reluctant to undertake major peacekeeping missions on the continent since the failed operation in Somalia in the early 1990s. The distinguishing feature of the Month of Africa, beyond the inclusion of public health and humanitarian issues not normally on the Security Council docket, were the decisions that followed — decisions that represent a major expansion of the UN peacekeeping presence in Africa.

'Litmus test'

The most urgent issue before the Security Council during the Month of Africa was the far-reaching conflict in the DRC. Since fighting resumed there in August 1998, barely a year after the ouster of longtime dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, a number of Congolese opposition groups, backed by Rwandan and Ugandan troops, have sought to topple the government of President Laurent-Désiré Kabila, which receives military support from Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia.

Limited UN mandate in the DRC

On 24 February 2000, the Security Council authorized the expansion of the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) to include up to 5,537 personnel. Some people think its size and mandate are inadequate in a country the size of Europe. Deployment will occur only "as and if" the Secretary-General receives sufficient guarantees of security and freedom of operation from the belligerents. MONUC will set up common headquarters and operational facilities with the Joint Military Commission of the Lusaka agreement to enhance coordination during the deployment of UN forces.

Key features of the MONUC mandate:

- Monitoring compliance with and investigating violations of the cease-fire agreement
- Establishing and maintaining continuous contact with the field headquarters of the parties' armed forces
- Developing a plan of action for the disengagement, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed groups and the withdrawal of foreign forces
- Providing technical assistance and support for the facilitator of the inter-Congolese dialogue, Sir Ketumile Masire; working for the release of prisoners of war and assisting UN and non-governmental agencies in humanitarian activities
- Developing a national de-mining programme and conducting de-mining operations

MONUC is authorized under Chapter Seven of the UN Charter to take "necessary action" to protect UN and JMC personnel and facilities, ensure its freedom of operation and protect civilian populations under threat of attack "in the area of deployment of its infantry battalions and as it deems within its capabilities."

Many thousands of people have died in the fighting and at least 700,000 more have been driven from their homes. The conflict also involves thousands of heavily armed Hutu sol-

diers and militia members who led the 1994 genocide against Rwanda's Tutsi population. These forces, alleged to be loosely allied with the Kabila government, have staged attacks into Rwanda from DRC territory and are considered a major threat by the Rwandan government to regional security.

On January 24, the Security Council opened a week-long summit on the DRC crisis that brought together the then heads of state of five of the six countries directly involved in the fighting: Presidents Jose Eduardo dos Santos (Angola), Laurent-Désiré Kabila, Pasteur Bizimungu (Rwanda), Yoweri Museveni (Uganda) and Robert Mugabe (Zimbabwe). The sixth combatant, Namibia, was represented by Foreign Minister Theo-Ben Gurirab, the current President of the UN General Assembly. They were joined by Presidents Frederick Chiluba (Zambia) and Joaquim Alberto Chissano (Mozambique), UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Organization of African Unity (OAU) Secretary-General Salim A. Salim and former Botswanan President Sir Ketumile Masire. The foreign ministers of Belgium, Burundi, Canada and South Africa, the US Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and other senior African and European diplomats also participated.

African leaders came to the UN to re-affirm their commitment to peace and press the Security Council to deploy peacekeeping troops to monitor and enforce the cease-fire agreement

Key provisions of the Lusaka cease-fire agreement

The Lusaka agreement recognizes the internal and external aspects of the conflict by linking the following: internal democratization and national reconciliation in the Democratic Republic of Congo; respect for its sovereignty; withdrawal of foreign forces and accommodation of the legitimate security interests of neighbouring states. Its clauses include:

- Cessation of hostilities within 24 hours of the signing of the cease-fire agreement; a ban on disseminating hostile propaganda, harassing civilians, inciting ethnic hatred and moving arms and war material to the field
- Establishment of a Joint Military Commission (JMC) comprising representatives of the belligerents. Working with UN and OAU observers, it is to oversee troop disengagement, develop procedures for disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating combatants, and ensure compliance with the cease-fire until UN peacekeepers arrive
- Release of prisoners and hostages; establishment of safe corridors for moving and distributing humanitarian aid
- Re-establishment of government administration, resumption of health, education and other services, and free movement of people and goods throughout the country
- Selection of a mediator and beginning of an inclusive inter-Congolese dialogue based on mutual respect and equality before the law for all ethnic groups and nationalities within the DRC. Out of this dialogue shall emerge agreement on the composition of a new national army, a new constitution and free elections
- Deployment of an "appropriate" UN peacekeeping force (within 120 days of the signing of the agreement) to monitor the cease-fire, investigate violations with the JMC; disarm, demobilize and reintegrate armed groups; arrest perpetrators of crimes against humanity, including people suspected of involvement in genocide in Rwanda; and oversee the withdrawal of foreign forces from the DRC
- Cooperation in security matters along common borders; no arming, training or harbouring of armed opposition groups intent on destabilizing neighbouring states

negotiated by President Chiluba under a peace-making initiative of the OAU and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The Lusaka agreement, which calls for the halt of hostilities, a dialogue within the DRC leading to national elections and the withdrawal of foreign forces, was signed by the belligerent states on 10 July 1999. The principal Congolese rebel organizations signed a month later.

The agreement has been marred by continued fighting in some regions and undermined by a lack of financial and logistical resources for the Joint Military Commission (JMC). This body comprises military officials drawn from all the various combatants and is responsible for halting and investigating cease-fire violations and ensuring compliance with the other military provisions of the Lusaka agreement. The beginning of the inter-Congolese dialogue, a key component of the accord, was delayed by the failure of the parties to agree on a mediator.

The Security Council welcomed the Lusaka agreement in a 6 August 1999 resolution, but declined to authorize early deployment of the large UN peacekeeping force envisioned by the accord. Noting the repeated cease-fire violations, some Council members balked at the size, cost and scope of such an operation. Under pressure from African governments to support the fragile agreement, the Security Council began a "phased deployment" last August with 90



President Robert Mugabe (Zimbabwe)

military liaison officers. Their principal tasks were to establish contact with the belligerents, advise the Secretary-General on possible additional deployments of UN personnel and provide technical assistance to the JMC.

In November, the Security Council authorized the Secretary-General to prepare for phase two of the DRC deployment: the dispatch of up to 500 military observers. Cease-fire violations continued and UN military liaison officers were denied access to some parts of the country, making deployment of the observers impossible and reinforcing the views of Security Council skeptics.

Speaking in the Council on 15 December, Mr. Holbrooke acknowledged that his government was "part of the reason for the delay in the Democratic Republic of Congo" of the deployment of UN forces. Virtually every provision of the Lusaka agreement has been violated or ignored, he said, and the UN cannot impose a

cease-fire on unwilling belligerents. The US is prepared to support a larger international role in the DRC, "but we must get it right."

Such arguments have fueled African charges of a Security Council "double standard" toward peacekeeping in Africa. Despite the appointment of former Botswanan President Masire to the key post of facilitator of the inter-Congolese dialogue in December, there was mounting concern that the Lusaka agreement would fail without effective and visible international support.

'Peacekeepers now'

When the Council convened on 24 January to take up the issue of the DRC, it was under enormous political pressure to authorize the deployment of peacekeeping troops. The Council had before it a recommendation from Secretary-General

Annan to augment the 500 military observers already approved for the UN Organization Mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), with an additional 5,000 personnel, including four infantry battalions, two marine companies and logistical units, as well as human rights and child protection officers.

Mr. Annan made it clear, however, that the mandate of the military component should be limited to providing security for

the UN military observers and assisting humanitarian and peacemaking operations — not separating combatants, patrolling borders or disarming armed groups. Speaking to Security Council members and African leaders at the opening of the January summit, Mr. Annan said that the Lusaka agreement remained "the most viable blueprint" for peace in the Great Lakes region, yet "there have been many cease-fire violations which have caused fresh suffering." The warring parties, he continued, "need to demonstrate the political will to apply the agreement fully, without further delay. All else flows from this essential requirement....The belligerents must do better."

President Chiluba readily acknowledged problems with the implementation of the

agreement but said that the appointment of former President Masire and improved security conditions in much of the country showed that the peace plan was working. "The international community is reluctant to send peacekeepers to the Democratic Republic of Congo unless the Lusaka agreement registers a perfect score on some performance chart," he asserted. "To the best of my knowledge, no other cease-fire agreement anywhere in the world has been subjected to such a test."

President Mugabe, reflecting the views of the other heads of state in attendance, echoed President Chiluba's criticism and called for immediate action. "This Council has been observing the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo from afar for too long," he said. "The message is, 'peacekeepers now.'"

After a week of intensive consultations between African leaders, Security Council members and senior UN staff, that message appeared to have been heard. On 24 February, the Security Council voted unanimously to authorize the deployment of up to 5,537 UN personnel in the DRC to support the Lusaka agreement. Its mandate, in keeping with its capabilities, is limited. MONUC will work jointly with the JMC to monitor — but not enforce — the cease-fire. It will facilitate humanitarian assistance operations, provide logistical and technical assistance to Mr. Masire in conducting the inter-Congolese dialogue and provide security for UN and JMC personnel.

MONUC is also authorized, "as it deems within its capabilities," to protect civilians under imminent threat of attack.

Getting it right

That a force the size of MONUC can succeed in a country as large and as challenging as the DRC is very much in doubt. Military units will be deployed in different parts of the country to provide security to the military observers and the JMC, leaving only small numbers of armed peacekeepers in any given location. Communications and travel in the DRC are extremely difficult, with few passable roads or railways and even fewer telephones outside the capital city. In such circumstances, UN troops could be within a few miles of a community



Then President Pasteur Bizimungu (Rwanda)



President Yoweri Museveni (Uganda)

under attack and be unaware of the violence or unable to respond in time.

On 24 January, Mr. Annan cautioned the African leaders present against inflated expectations and repeated that the parties themselves bear primary responsibility for implementing the Lusaka plan. "The UN is here to help," he said, "but the UN has also had bitter experience of help gone wrong," an apparent reference to Somalia and Bosnia.

The size and capability of the UN force was very much on President Chiluba's mind when he told *Africa Recovery* that 5,500 peacekeepers "would be quite insufficient." He expressed hope that additional peacekeeping troops would follow. "To do a half job would only leave it undone, and we would never be able to handle that."

President Chiluba's concerns are shared by many senior UN officials, one of whom estimated that it would take a deployment of 14 million soldiers in the DRC to match the number of troops per square kilometre that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) currently deploys in Kosovo. Even then, the official noted grimly, NATO is having a very difficult time maintaining order. If things do go wrong, he said, MONUC will not be able to cope.

Despite such concerns, President Chiluba described the Security Council's focus on the DRC as "a very wonderful exercise. We are all going back more determined and aware that the world is looking at the Congo." Africa came to the Security Council looking for effective support, he said, "and this has come."

Mr. Annan has sought an initial financial authorization of \$200 mn for deployment of the expanded MONUC, should it finally occur. Annual costs are estimated at \$500 mn.

Sierra Leone force boosted

The Security Council also acted to bolster the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), voting on 7 February to increase the military component from 6,000 to 11,100. The additional troops were authorized in response to a recent decision by ECOMOG, the West African regional peacekeeping force, to withdraw its forces from Sierra Leone after

years of involvement.

The expansion came against a backdrop of continuing violations of the Lomé peace accord and delays in the programme to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate about 45,000 former combatants. In his report to the Security Council on 21 January, Mr. Annan called for the deployment of a "militarily credible" force to assume security duties previously performed by West African troops. A number of confrontations between rebel units and UN troops in December and January underscored the need for careful coordination of the transfer of authority from ECOMOG to UNAMSIL during the transition phase. The expansion, which



President Laurent-Désiré Kabila (DRC)

includes six additional infantry battalions and support units, 54 civilian police and 170 civilian staff, is expected to cost an additional \$110.8 mn, bringing the annual cost of the mission to just under \$311 mn, up until June 2000.

Dramatic testimony

The Council also took up the continuing conflict in Angola, hearing testimony from UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Kieran Prendergast and Canadian Ambassador Robert Fowler, the head of a Security Council committee investigating sanctions-breaking by the Angolan rebel movement UNITA.

Mr. Prendergast presented the Secretary-General's 14 January report on new developments in Angola, noting that since UNITA resumed the war in December 1998, recent battlefield successes by the Angolan armed forces have returned large areas of the country to government control. Clashes between UNITA and security forces in Namibia and Zambia are disturbing evidence of the regionalization of the Angolan conflict, he said, emphasizing that UNITA

should comply with its obligations under the 1994 Lusaka Protocol peace agreement.

The humanitarian situation remains desperate, he continued. Two million Angolans have been internally displaced by the fighting, over 40,000 are refugees in neighbouring states and

an additional 1.7 million Angolans have been affected. Nearly half of Angolan children under 5 are malnourished and over 400 people were killed or injured by land mines during 1999.

Ambassador Fowler had just returned from an eight-day visit to Angola to further his investigation into the violation of UN arms and financial sanctions imposed on UNITA, an investigation authorized by the Security Council last May. Mr. Fowler outlined a global diamonds-for-arms bartering system that delivered tanks, armoured vehicles and munitions of every type to UNITA's supply bases deep inside Angola. Since late 1998, he noted, UNITA has been able to secure hundreds of thousands of litres of fuel for its war machine — all brought in by air and all purchased with uncut diamonds.

The most dramatic testimony came in a videotaped interview with two former senior UNITA officers now in the Angolan armed forces, who charged that UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi had ordered the destruction of two UN aircraft in December 1998 and January 1999. Some of the dialogue in the video, which Ambassador Fowler showed to the Security Council, follows:

Officer: We had instructions to shoot down any type of aircraft.

Mr. Fowler: Including United Nations aircraft?

Officer: Everything that was an aircraft because Savimbi said that United Nations aircraft were in the service of the government.

Mr. Fowler: Were there any survivors from the first flight?

Officer: No, there were none.

Mr. Fowler: When Savimbi was informed of the shooting down of the first UN aircraft, did you see his reaction?

Officer: I talked to him.

Mr. Fowler: And how did he react?

Officer: He was happy, and he said that this was a way of pressuring all those who were working with the UN to quit.

Mr. Fowler: What happened to the individual who had fired the missile?

Officer: He was promoted.

Mr. Fowler: And Savimbi's reaction to the second [shooting down]?

Officer: Happiness.

Ambassador Fowler's full study was presented to the Security Council in March and generated substantial controversy. There was sharp criticism of its use of testimony by former UNITA members to support allegations of



President Jose Eduardo dos Santos (Angola)



President Joaquim Chissano (Mozambique)



Burundi facilitator Nelson Mandela and Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

been dismissed as malicious and inaccurate by many of the governments concerned. In the next few months, the Council will consider the study's 39 recommendations on tighter sanctions against UNITA.

Spotlight on Burundi

On 19 January, the Council focused on the civil war in Burundi. Mr. Annan said the conflict is among the most urgent tasks in Africa, as it could descend into a repeat of the 1994 genocide in neighbouring Rwanda. He described as "appalling" the suffering of some 500,000 refugees in

surrounding states and 800,000 internally displaced people, including 300,000 forced by the government into poorly supplied "regroupment" camps as a security measure.

Mr. Mandela was named facilitator of the Arusha peace talks following the death of the previous facilitator, former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere. It is hoped that Mr. Mandela's global prominence will focus international attention on the flagging peace talks. At his first meeting with Burundian leaders in Arusha on 16 January, he set a new tone of urgency by lambasting them as "leaders without talent or vision" if they insisted on pursuing the conflict.

In his remarks to the Security Council, however, Mr. Mandela characterized the parties

sanctions busting by some African and European governments and payoffs by UNITA to some African heads of state. The report has

'Now is the time for peace' in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Zambian President Frederick Chiluba spoke to Africa Recovery during the Security Council meeting

What is your assessment of this week-long Security Council debate on the DRC?

First of all I must tell you that we are here because of Ambassador Holbrooke. He had in mind to call us to come and look each other in the face and renew our contacts, hostile or friendly. And he has succeeded.

We are not really discussing the Lusaka agreement. We are seeking support so that it can be implemented. Any kind of procrastination might set the clock back and violations become the order of the day and the whole agreement might be thrown overboard.

The US and other permanent members of the Security Council have said that it is too risky to deploy peacekeeping forces.

The US has a point in a way. They have experiences where forces sent under the auspices of the UN have been sitting ducks. But I think that the case of the Congo is a totally different matter. The structure of the agreement is such that the UN won't just be dropped into the Congo on unfamiliar ground. We have the Joint Military Commission (JMC) to work with. We have the Joint Political Committee to work with.

Of course they will face a few problems. They are going there because they have to establish peace. To wait is to make the whole of this work irrelevant. We appreciate the concerns of the US. They are genuine. But we are saying that the same way they handled Kosovo by NATO, the same way they handled East

Timor by the UN must be the same way they handle the DRC.

Mr. Annan has proposed a deployment of some 5,500 UN peacekeepers.

I think it is really a very wonderful development for us. The sooner it is really put in place the better. For those violating the agreement on the ground will know that the game is up. They can no longer continue at will to do what is against the signed agreement. Our appearance here is not in vain. We raised the status of the case of the Congo to a very high level. We hope that it cannot be forgotten or shelved aside.

Is that deployment adequate?

For the observer teams, you don't need so many. But the size of the Congo means that a force of 5,500 would be very insignificant. I'm sure that as they observe the operations on the ground, they will be reminded of the fact that the numbers are not sufficient and require immediate beefing up. I think the numbers will move as the process is started.

What are the priorities right now?

We need financial resources on three levels: to make the JMC more effective and operational,

to assist the office of the facilitator, so that the internal dialogue starts, and for the entire peacekeeping operation.



"The international community is reluctant to send peacekeepers to the Democratic Republic of Congo unless the Lusaka agreement registers a perfect score on some performance chart."

I have a feeling the internal dialogue might be the ultimate goal. Why did the war start, apart from the external dimension? The internal one was that they were asking to broaden the political space. They were saying, "We must begin to democratize the Congo." That can only come about through the office of the facilitator. Sitting them down, having a discussion. If it fails and falls apart, we've had it.

What are the greatest obstacles to peace?

We will be our own obstacles if our minds don't clear up. And that's why I am so optimistic. I believe sincerely that this thing will be

resolved because all the actors in this war want to end it. None of them believes today that they can settle this thing militarily. All of us want to start the process of peace.

And besides, the people in the Congo have suffered long enough. They want peace. I know how they welcomed me when I went on one of my trips. There were millions of people lining the streets, looking for me and getting the message straight. "We want peace. We want peace."

And now is the time. ■

to the Arusha talks as “people of outstanding intelligence and education.” He outlined the progress made in the negotiations to date and the remaining obstacles to a settlement, particularly the absence of the Hutu guerrillas from the Arusha process. Mr. Mandela emphasized the responsibility of the parties to make and keep the peace. “It is time for Burundians to get down to business,” he declared. “The responsibility rests squarely with their leaders now to find the necessary arrangements by which Burundians can live together.”

He was equally insistent that international responsibility in Burundi is not limited to the provision of humanitarian aid. “The international community has a part to play politically,” he noted. “The problems of Burundi are the concern of us all, as are the problems in any other part of the world.” To underline the point, he invited US President Bill Clinton and other world leaders to join him in Arusha for the next round of negotiations, arguing that pressure on the parties to end the war “can only be reinforced by the participation of other heads of state and countries.”

When Mr. Mandela opened the talks in Arusha on 22 February, he was joined by President Museveni, President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania, President Chissano and French Cooperation Minister Charles Josselin. Joining the meeting via video conference from Washington, President Clinton pledged continuing US support for the Arusha process and urged Burundian leaders to “accept the risks of

announcement that some of the “regroupment camps” would be dismantled. Another encouraging development occurred when rebel leaders agreed to join the talks. Controversy erupted, however, over Mr. Mandela’s acceptance in principle of majority rule as the basis for power sharing between Burundi’s Hutu majority and the minority Tutsi who dominate the government. Some Tutsi parties threatened to walk out of the talks, arguing that majority rule posed grave security risks to their supporters.

Refugee crisis

Ms. Sadako Ogata, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was the featured speaker at a 13 January Security Council session on refugees. She began by noting that a majority of Africans have begun the millennium “struggling to survive, in misery and in fear.” UNHCR is responsible for the well-being

of 6 million refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees in Africa, she said, calling for urgent Security Council action to end the particularly devastating conflicts in the Great Lakes, West Africa and Angola. Only by preventing or resolving conflicts and thereby halting the flow of refugees and displaced people, can Africa’s humanitarian crisis be resolved, she said.

Mrs. Ogata also noted that “donor fatigue” had greatly reduced the resources available to UNHCR. The UN consolidated appeal for \$60 mn to fund humanitarian aid in the DRC for July-December 1999, for example, generated only \$12 mn in pledges. Similarly, other UN agencies requested \$21.4 mn for emergency assistance to the DRC but only \$3.32 mn has been pledged so far.

She addressed the issue of equity in refugee assistance, arguing that a double standard

towards African refugees exists among donors. “What is provided to refugees in Africa, including food and other basic survival items, is far less than in other parts of the world. This is unacceptable. I hope that the ‘Month of Africa’ at the Security Council will prompt the international



A soldier and a land mine victim in Cuito, Angola.

AP / Ami Cohen

community to address — seriously — this grave imbalance in material resources.”

New beginning?

In his final address as Security Council president on 31 January, Mr. Holbrooke said that one objective of the “Month of Africa” was “to refute the belief that the international community has one set of rules for Europe or Asia and another for Africa...I think that so far, we can say we have succeeded.”

Namibian Foreign Minister and General Assembly President Theo-Ben Gurirab took a longer view of Africa’s relationship with the Security Council. He welcomed the attention given Africa but told *Africa Recovery* that recent actions do not disprove African allegations of a double standard. He hoped instead that the “Month of Africa” signals the end of that double standard.

“If this is going to be a new beginning for the Security Council to give Africa the same attention it gives other regions, then we very much welcome it.” For Mr. Gurirab, the Security Council’s seriousness about Africa will be demonstrated not by headlines and special months but by consistent, appropriate and timely action to maintain peace and security on the continent, “and on that one the jury is still out.” ■



During his December 1999 trip to Africa, US Ambassador Richard Holbrooke toured a camp in Luanda for Angolans displaced by war.

AP / Themba Hadebe

peacemaking... Do not condemn your young children to what you have known in the past. Give them a different future.”

Amidst the slow progress at the Arusha talks, UN and non-governmental aid agencies welcomed the Burundian government’s