



SIMULATION: THE CRISIS IN EQUATORIAL KUNDU

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this scenario exercise is to help the UNOC 2022 students better understand how the United Nations (UN) may handle and possibly intervene in a major crisis in a Member State in order to maintain international peace and security.

This exercise is set in the hypothetical country of **Equatorial Kundu** and exhibits many of the same characteristics that can be found in today's complex environments where the United Nations is often requested to intervene.

Participants will break into smaller syndicates of 6-7 people to discuss and answer specific tasks. Selected group will then be asked to present their main findings in plenary.



A CHALLENGE TO PEACE AND STABILITY OF EQUATORIAL KUNDU

Background: Equatorial Kundo is a land-locked country in the Sahel region of West Africa with approximately 18 million inhabitants and a size of 580 000 km² (roughly same as Kenya or). In the northwest, Kundo is a land of vast deserts and mountains populated by nomadic tribes and marked by four historic cities (Badan, Mireet, Baz-Nkommi and Djotau) that still serve as commercial centers and logistics bases for traditional trade routes. The largest tribal groups in the North are Fulani and Hausa. They are mostly Muslim, nomadic and rely upon trading, smuggling and raising livestock for their livelihood.

The South, in contrast, benefits from more moderate temperatures, more rainfall and has an economy based mostly on agriculture and commerce. The capital, Azunaka, and the two other big southern cities, Lati and Kirkun, are modern by regional standards. The population in these cities is more modern, western-oriented, and the most common tribal background is Yoruba and Mande. The religion here is a mix of Muslim, tribal and partly secular, but with smaller Christian communities from the period of X-land colonial rule which ended in 1961.

Kundo has mostly had a history of relative peace and prosperity. However, the country has lately suffered from youth unemployment, sectarian divisions, and ethnic rivalries. These divisions were suppressed, however, by a long period of one-party, authoritarian rule. Additionally, the North's pastoral economy has become threatened in recent years by desertification. As land becomes more inhospitable, the nomadic tribes have been forced to relocate south and are encroaching on farmland inhabited by southerners for generations.

The last few years, Equatorial Kundo has been at in the middle of a region in turmoil, rocked by political, ethnic and sectarian violence.

In early 2020, initially peaceful street demonstrations against the authoritarian rule of President Jehangir were followed by an armed revolt of the northern tribal groups that for many years they have felt marginalized. They therefore joined forces in a movement called



Figure 1: Protests in Azunaka

North Kundo Liberation Movement (NKLM). The government deployed the Kundo Armed Forces (KAF) in a military operation to try to control the rebellion. KAF however, was not very disciplined or successful and reports indicated they engaged in many human rights violations and serious atrocities.

Sensing an opportunity to quickly gain public support, The Sahel Great Caliphate (SGC), an Islamist Jihadi group mostly composed of former mercenaries from neighboring country East Qumran, joined the fighting on the side of NKLM. Armed with high powered weapons looted from East

Qumranian arms depots, NKLM and SGC fighters defeated the government forces (KAF), sending bands of disorganized, demoralized but still dangerous government soldiers back into the country's southern region again. Groups of demotivated soldiers began raiding towns along the route of their retreat towards the capital, preying upon small, but relatively affluent Christian communities.



Figure 2: AQIS Soldiers north of Badan

With a disorganized army and protesters at the palace gate, President Jenhagir fled the country in May 2021, leaving a weak and unorganized government led by the Minister of Interior, Mr. Ibrahim Diallo.

By July 2021 SGC rapidly took control of the key four northern cities, pushing aside NKLM and started establishing a Islamist regime under Sharia law with a goal to seize the entire country. The movement of AQIS forces south of Badan city towards the capital Azunaka set off alarms in neighboring countries and also in UN HQ. Emergency meetings of the UN Security Council (UNSC) were held to discuss the growing humanitarian crisis and the deteriorating security situation.

The UN Country Team in Kundu, consisting of UNDP, OCHA, UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP, WHO and other UN agencies, funds and programs, reported of severe challenges operating because of the worsened security situation, and several non-essential staff were evacuated.

The Security Council therefore on 1 Aug 2021 adopted a resolution condemning the violence, calling on the parties for a cease-fire and pacific (peaceful) settlement of disputers, and calling on the international community to provide emergency relief aid. The Office of the Special Envoy for the Sahel was called to mediate and negotiate a possible political solution.

The interim government of Kundu reached out to neighboring countries and former colonial power Mercury for help in self-defense. The African Union started planning an international intervention by a regional military AU Force. International humanitarian and development organizations began mobilizing emergency resources to aid refugees and IDPs.

At a new meeting in the Security Council on November 1, UNSC Resolution 2133 was adopted. The resolution authorized an African Union-led mission to intervene to restore security, stabilize the country, protect civilians and help addressing the humanitarian crisis. The resolution also authorized the Mercury government to deploy a military force of up to 4,000 troops to counter SGC and other armed terrorist groups. The AU and Mercury forces started deploying forces in Dec 2021 and had several units on ground in Kundu in early 2022.

RECENT SITUATION IN EQUATORIAL KUNDU

Up to mid-2022, the overall situation in Kundu continued to deteriorate. The small Mercury intervention force was able to stop the forward progress of SGC and gained control the four major cities in the North, but the force is spread too thin to undertake major offensive operations and suffer from frequent attacks on their camps and patrols.

Meanwhile, the North Kundu Liberation Movement (NKLM) tribal militias have regrouped, and consolidated areas of control outside population centers in the North, and with weapons supplied from SGC and smuggled from East Qumran they have a considerable armed and trained militia force of up to 10 000 soldiers who could pose a major threat to the government if a civil war erupts. The political side of NKLM still threatens the government that unless they are given more influence or autonomy over the North and gain access to grazing land for the livestock they will push for independence or take over the government.

The units of the approximately 5000 AU regional forces (AMEK) that deployed in Kundu have proven to be less effective due to lack of equipment and logistic support.

In the South, many civilians fearing a possible civil war have left their homes and gathered for protection in camps for IDPs (internally displaced persons) around the cities Lati, Kirkun and the capital Azunaka. The IDP camps are partly protected by AMEK troops but some of these units are accused by human rights groups of sexual exploitation and abuse of civilians.

Several efforts to negotiate a lasting ceasefire and establish a comprehensive peace agreement by the UN Special Envoy for the Sahel have failed several times. In Azunaka, the acting president presides over a government palace with looted offices and without proper staff. The Kundu National Police (KNP) force has been more or less dissolved and is not functioning well despite EU efforts to establish local police training programs.

Months of instability have shattered the already fragile economy. In addition, new large diamonds and minerals areas were discovered in the border area towards East Qumran and this has led to an influx of criminals and fortune hunters in the border area.

General unrest and food insecurity further increase the risk of a large humanitarian crisis and possible civil war. There is growing awareness in capitals around the world and in the UNHQ that the current situation is untenable and that further international intervention is required.

Student instructions:

As the UNOC course starts on Monday we find ourselves in the scenario timeline on 1 July 2022, and the big question is what the United Nations (and the UNOC course) will do about the crisis in Equatorial Kundu?