



Comment by Sandline International

5 June 2000: Open letter from Sandline on peacekeeping and PMCs

Peacekeeping - an alternative?

Peacekeeping deployments in Africa are doomed to failure until the UN recognises that it is unacceptable issuing blue helmets to ill-equipped and inadequately trained troops from helpful nations simply because they are the only countries that proffer assistance, as has been demonstrated most recently and regretfully in Sierra Leone. Establishing, enforcing and maintaining peace in volatile regions in Africa requires a more robust and effective form of intervention.

In the absence of participation in UN forces by countries such as the UK and US perhaps the UN should consider a more radical solution -- continuing to accept the offers of help from other nations but supplementing this by contracting with private military companies to provide the cadre of experienced officers and senior NCOs who can plan, lead and enhance the skills of these forces in the field? These officers are professional soldiers who will have been amongst the best in their national forces. PMCs that provide them have already proven their ability to not just monitor but to end conflict in Africa.

For some in the governments of developed nations and the UN the use of the private sector has, until now, been an unacceptable option but until a better practical alternative is proposed the people in the conflict regions of Africa continue to suffer and die as a direct result of ineffective intervention. They deserve the best chance of survival and peace -- any political consequences of contracting with the private sector to deliver an effective solution should take a back seat.

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