



## THE UN PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS IN CONGO

### OPÉRATION DES NATIONS UNIES AU CONGO (ONUC), THE FIRST UN MISSION IN CONGO (1960-1964)

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo) gained independence from Belgian control on 30 June 1960. The Congolese Army mutinied after independence, prompting Belgium to invade DR Congo.

At the same time, the mineral-rich provinces of Katanga and Kasai seceded from the country. The Congolese government requested assistance from the United Nations, which was quickly granted on 14 July 1960. Due to the complexity and the wide geographical expanse of operation and the number of forces deployed, the UN Operations in the Congo (Operation des Nations Unies au Congo) was the UN's largest peacekeeping operation up to that point. It was also the first time a UN peacekeeping operation was caught up in a tumultuous internal conflict. The Security Council approved a resolution on 21 February 1961, authorizing ONUC to use force, as a last resort to prevent civil conflict. As a result, Indian Army's action, which was deployed in Congo at that point in time, became the first peace enforcement operation in the history of the United Nations.

### INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION IN ONUC

India's participation in ONUC began in July 1960, with the deployment of supply, technical and medical personnel. Following that, India increased its contingent to a brigade group. three infantry battalions, an armored squadron, a heavy mortar battery, an engineer company, a machine gun company, a field ambulance, and six Indian Air Force Canberra aircrafts were sent to Congo. The 99 Infantry Brigade Group conducted several operations in Katanga province, successfully liberating large areas from rebel control. Captain GS Salaria, 3/1 GORKHA RIFLES, was awarded the Param Vir Chakra (Posthumously) for gallantry of the highest order during one of these actions. In May 1962, Indian Army contingents supported by the Air Force led to ONUC gained full control over Katanga. However, by the end of 1962, the strikes on ONUC resumed.

The splinter factions were astonished and surprised when Indian contingents swung their way into the important towns of Katanga. In the face of severe opposition, many rivers were crossed using improvised methods, which were ably supported by air operations. Due to the bold manoeuvres of the Indian contingent, the rebel troops capitulated fearing an onslaught. The reunification of Congo



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was achieved by the aid of Indian contingent, which resulted in the mission's termination. The Indian Army suffered 147 casualties during the deployment, including 39 fatalities. Professional ethics and decisive military action by the Indian Army contingent were lauded by all. One Param Vir Chakra, three Mahavir Chakras, 14 Vir Chakras, and 23 Sena Medals were bestowed for the contingent's valour.



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*Figure 1: Major S.P. Mahadevan checking the stand-to at a post manned by 4 Madras serving with the UN Mission in the Congo, 1962.*

Source: For The Honour of India: A History of Indian Peacekeeping by Lieutenant General Satish Nambiar, PVSM, AVSM, Vrc (Retd)



MISSION DE L'ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES EN RÉPUBLIQUE  
DÉMOCRATIQUE DU CONGO (MONUC), THE SECOND UN MISSION IN CONGO  
(1999-2010)

The first UN Mission (ONUC) ensured the integration of the Democratic Republic of Congo. However, the country continued to be plagued by ineffective government and corrupt autocratic regimes. This led to wide spread poverty and lack of development in most parts of the country. Armed separatist organizations grew in number over time, attempting to dominate the country's mineral-rich regions in the east and south. For economic and political reasons, neighboring countries backed separatist movements. Internal schisms in the Congolese army, as well as violence within the country, resulted in a war in 1999, with foreign armies being actively involved. The war caused a humanitarian crisis leading to a large-scale displacement of the population. The United Nations Security Council negotiated a cease-fire and peace accord between the countries involved. A UN mission was established to oversee the withdrawal of foreign soldiers and maintain political stability.



*Figure 2: MONUC Peacekeepers and FADRC on a Joint Patrol*

Source: For the Honour of India: A History of Indian Peacekeeping by Lieutenant General Satish Nambiar, PVSM, AVSM, VrC (Retd)





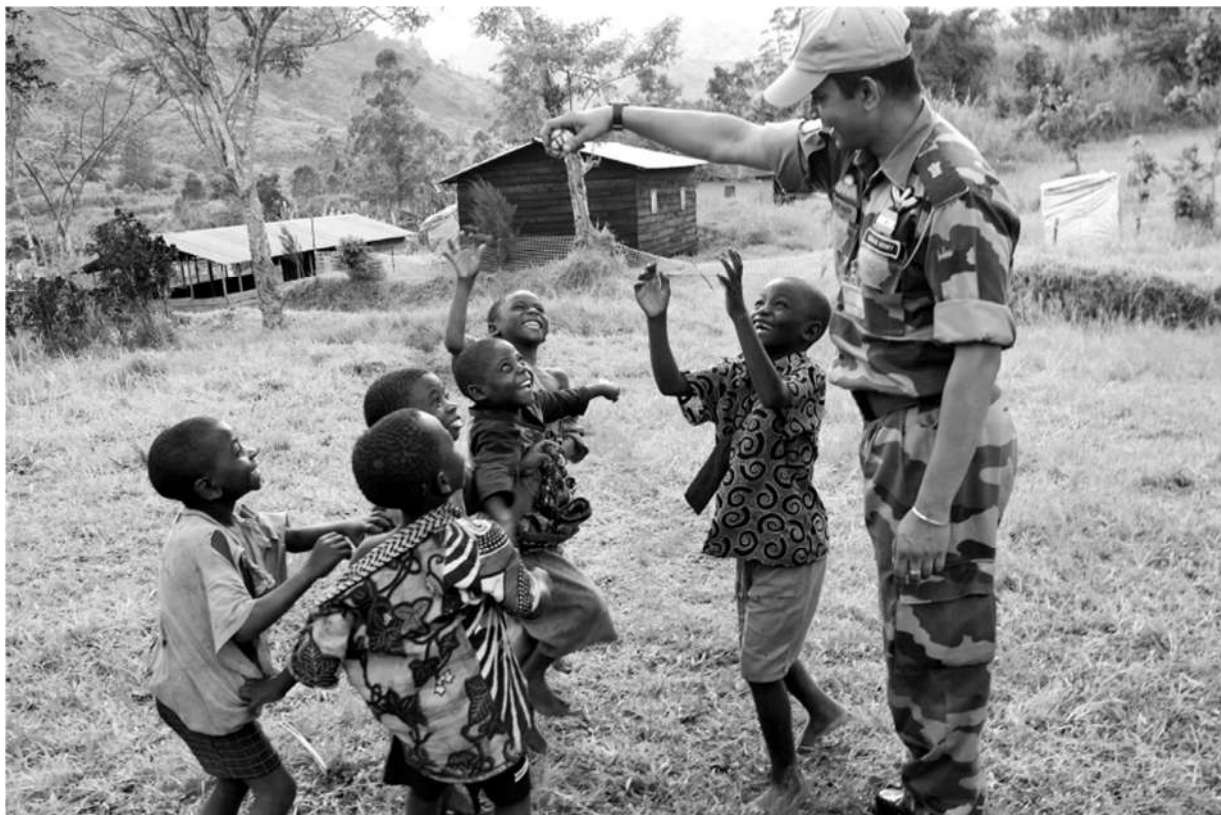
## INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION IN MONUC

India remained among the top contributors of troops, with one infantry brigade group, four infantry battalions, an aviation flight, a field hospital, and other supporting components, as well as staff officers and observers. Mi-17 and Mi-35 helicopters were also supplied by the Indian Air Force. The Indian contingents were actively involved in the opening of key communication axes, the performance of targeted offensive actions, and the safeguarding of key towns. By deploying significant number of area dominance patrols the Indian contingents were able to provide peace and stability to their respective areas of operation. The training and integration of Congolese forces was carried out successfully in order to improve the host nation's capabilities. The mission was later renamed a stabilization mission called MONUSCO. This transition marks the beginning of a new phase in the country. Ever since 2010, India remains one of the top contributors to MOUSCO which continues to date.



*Figure 3: MONUC Military Personnel Train FARDC Members. Members of the Indian contingent of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) train officers and soldiers of the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) at Sake, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 28 February 2008.*

Source: For The Honour of India: A History of Indian Peacekeeping by Lieutenant General Satish Nambiar, PVSM, AVSM, VrC (Retd)



*Figure 4: MONUC Peacekeeper Plays with Village Boys. Member of the Indian battalion of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) plays with the village boys, as he waits for the repair of a generator used to power the film projector, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 18 April 2008*

Source: For The Honour of India: A History of Indian Peacekeeping by Lieutenant General Satish Nambiar, PVSM, AVSM, VrC (Retd)



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