

The basic answer to the first question is that, since the ultimate goal of peacekeeping is to contribute to the resolution of conflict, every reasonable opportunity to do so should be seized. Beyond that, peacekeeping forces can bring certain relevant skills to bear which can contribute to the more certain success of the ceasefire. It is at this point that we begin to answer the second question.

A humanitarian ceasefire is an informal arrangement, and neither side involved provides the other with any assurance that they will not unilaterally break the ceasefire. In El Salvador, this meant that the protagonists felt they could not trust each other enough to halt the fighting for more than one day at a time.

The introduction of a peacekeeping force to monitor the ceasefire arrangement might help alleviate this problem. It could instill greater confidence in both sides that the informal arrangement would be respected. This, in turn, could allow for the negotiation of a longer ceasefire. As Kjell Skjelsbaek notes, military forces opposing each other along a ceasefire line are less inclined to start firing, or trying to improve their respective positions if they are convinced that such a move will be reported or resisted by an international and impartial peacekeeping force.¹⁰⁰ The presence of a peacekeeping force accompanying the modes of transport might have proved valuable in OLS, where there were sporadic instances of relief vehicles being attacked and robbed by unidentified assailants, with, in some instances relief workers being killed.

The neutral and impartial character of peacekeeping forces makes them ideal for participation in a humanitarian operation, and means that their presence, or potential presence, should not be a factor complicating negotiations with the warring parties. In fact, a mandate, stipulating that the force would be in place only for the time it takes to complete the successful delivery of the assistance, might help allay any fears the belligerents

¹⁰⁰ Kjell Skjelsbaek, "Peaceful Settlement of Disputes by the United Nations and Other Inter-governmental Bodies." *Nupi Notat* No. 350, March 1986, p. 8.