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978-1-107-05210-9 - Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics
of International Intervention
Séverine Autesserre
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Peaceland

*Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics
of International Intervention*

This book suggests a new explanation for why international peace interventions often fail to reach their full potential. Based on several years of ethnographic research in conflict zones around the world, it demonstrates that everyday elements – such as the expatriates’ social habits and usual approaches to understanding their areas of operation – strongly influence peacebuilding effectiveness. Individuals from all over the world and all walks of life share numerous practices, habits, and narratives when they serve as interveners in conflict zones. These common attitudes and actions enable foreign peacebuilders to function in the field, but they also result in unintended consequences that thwart international efforts. Certain expatriates follow alternative modes of thinking and acting, often with notable results, but they remain in the minority. Through an in-depth analysis of the interveners’ everyday life and work, this book proposes innovative ways to better help host populations build a sustainable peace.

Séverine Autesserre is Assistant Professor of Political Science, specializing in International Relations and African Studies, at Barnard College, Columbia University. Autesserre’s work has appeared in such publications as *Foreign Affairs*, *International Organization*, *African Affairs*, the *New York Times*, the *International Herald Tribune*, *Critique Internationale*, the *Review of African Political Economy*, the *African Studies Review*, the *African Security Review*, and the *Journal of Humanitarian Affairs*. Her previous book, *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), won the 2012 Grawemeyer Award for Ideas Improving World Order and the 2011 Chadwick Alger Prize presented by the International Studies Association to the best book on international organizations and multilateralism. Autesserre has won several prestigious fellowships for her work, notably research grants from the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation and the United States Institute of Peace.

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Advance Praise for *Peaceland*

“In this groundbreaking inquest, Autesserre builds on her previous work on the Congo to show the vital significance of ‘doing’ peacebuilding from the ground up, with sustained attention to the local dynamics of conflict. The number of case studies investigated, the originality of her methodology, the breadth of supporting evidence, and the range of arresting insights are among the principal merits of this outstanding contribution. One can only hope that it will be widely read by peacebuilders everywhere, but also by scholars, journalists, and policy wonks in search of a new angle of vision for making ‘Peaceland’ a reality.”

– René Lemarchand, Emeritus Professor, University of Florida

“Essential reading for practitioners, policy makers, and donors involved in international interventions in conflict areas. Drawing on her worldwide field experience, Professor Autesserre’s comprehensive research offers new perspectives on how and why interveners should develop a thorough understanding of the local history, culture, and customs of populations in conflict zones. Much can be learned from her critical insights as we endeavor to assist those populations in danger.”

– Catherine Dumait-Harper, Former MSF Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders Representative to the United Nations

“In recent years peacebuilding has become something of a vogue in international circles. So Séverine Autesserre’s book is a timely and well-reasoned reminder for all would-be peacebuilders and the organizations that stand behind them that they need to be prudent and patient in both their prescriptions for peace and the way they go about trying to achieve them. Good intentions are not enough.”

– Alan Doss, Senior Political Advisor, Kofi Annan Foundation

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*To the victims of violence and those who try to help them
And among the latter, of course, to Philippe*

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Cover image: An Indian UN peacekeeper stands guard as hundreds of displaced civilians seek shelter near the UN base in Kiwanja, in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, January 21, 2006. Copyright © David Lewis / Reuters / Corbis.

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