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**SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE IN U.N
PEACEKEEPING**

Bachelor's Thesis

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I declare I have written the bachelor's thesis independently.

All works and major viewpoints of the other authors, data from other sources of literature and elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

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ABSTRACT

United Nations peacekeeping personnel have been linked to the sexual exploitation and abuse, referred to as SEA during the research, of women and children from the 1990s. Cases of SEA have been documented in the vast majority of the peacekeeping missions, with three distinct operations providing the clear majority of SEA cases. This research examines the common elements between these three missions and dissects the factors that evidently lead to an elevated risk of SEA happening during peacekeeping missions. The hypotheses states that the efforts made to stop this growing problem have been, and still are gravely inadequate, and to achieve permanent change monumental changes have to be made in the core of the U.N, as well as in the relationship between the U.N and its member states. In addition the objective of this thesis is to look at the methods and tools in which the U.N has tried to combat this issue in the past and explain why they have been unsuccessful in their various efforts. The hypotheses was proved correct in the research, as was the unsuccessfulness of previous methods employed by the U.N, the ten codes of conduct, the zero-tolerance policy and the present three-pronged strategy. Potential solutions for the unfortunate problem will be listed and examined in the final part of the thesis. Inter alia the following recommendations are made, increasing transparency on the matter, removing political immunity from U.N staff, proper enforcement of U.N resolutions and the addition of more women to the peacekeeping personnel, especially to mission areas prone to these problems.

Title: Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in U.N Peacekeeping

Keywords: United Nations, Peacekeeping, Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations (U.N) defines sexual exploitation as “Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another”, and sexual abuse as “the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions” (U.N 2003, 1). These definitions are found in the 2003 United Nations Secretary-General’s Bulletin on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, where it is also clearly stated, “United Nations forces conducting operations under United Nations command and control are prohibited from committing acts of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, and have a particular duty of care towards women and children” (2003, 1). As surprising as it may be to some, the unfortunate truth is that these values have to be separately emphasized as SEA still persists in various missions.

The sexual exploitation and abuse of women and children in various war-torn countries is unfortunately not unheard of in our society, and goes back hundreds, if not thousands of years. However when it is done by the hands of the very people that supposedly came to help, in this case the U.N peacekeeping personnel, it is a rather new but persistent criminal phenomenon during peacekeeping missions. The first publicly documented cases of SEA trace back to the 1990s to U.N peacekeeping missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Cambodia and Timor Leste (U.N 2005, 7). Ever since then cases of alleged abuse have occurred quite frequently in various missions and countries around the world. Regardless of multiple efforts from the U.N the situation has not gotten much better, as exploitation and abuse are still reported from multiple mission bases, along side of an unknown number of crimes witnessed that are left unreported.

The recurrent occurrence of SEA in peacekeeping operations is a major problem for many reasons. First, it undermines the credibility and effectiveness of the peacekeeping missions and creates distrust among the local people and the peacekeeping personnel, severely harming the country’s development towards a functioning civil society. Second, it contributes to the spreading of sexually transmitted diseases in the area, and to the significant

rise in prostitution during and after the missions stay (Rehn, Sirleaf 2002, 61). Third, it creates new problems in the area, for example “peacekeeper babies” as the U.N calls them, meaning babies that are born from sexual encounters with local girls and women, who are then left to taking care of them alone, with no support from the fathers, not even acknowledgement of paternity (U.N 2005, 8). Finally, with every new SEA case and scandal the credibility of the U.N’s peacekeeping missions, and the U.N itself crumbles.

The U.N has employed various different measures in trying to combat this problem; unfortunately they have all proved to be gravely insufficient. In 1998 it released the “Ten Rules: Code of Personal Conduct for Blue Helmets” which provided the peacekeeping personnel ten rules to obey in order to avoid any type of misconduct (U.N Conduct and Discipline Unit). To ensure that the codes were followed, the cards were to be carried by the personnel at all times while on the mission (Neudorfer 2014, 7). However, the codes had no substantial effect to the exploitation, on the contrary, during the following years the cases kept on coming in greater numbers, until a downward trend finally began in 2009 (U.N Conduct and Discipline Unit). In response to the growing influx of SEA cases in the beginning of the 21st century the U.N introduced its Zero-Tolerance Policy in 2003, in which the message was clear, if found guilty of any criminal behavior certain repatriation would follow. The new policy specifically forbid any sexual relations with prostitutes and people under 18, in addition it strongly discouraged these relationships with adults in the receiving end of U.N assistance (U.N Conduct and Discipline Unit). Again, contrary to high expectations the policy did little to nothing in protecting the locals from exploitation and abuse (Jennings, 2015). At the moment the U.N follows a three-pronged strategy in addressing all misconduct, SEA included, with the three steps being; prevention of misconduct, enforcement of U.N standards of conduct, and remedial action (U.N Conduct and Discipline Unit).

When it comes to the U.N’s actions regarding this issue, they have not been as effective as hoped and expected, or otherwise there would not be an issue of this scale still. Therefore to understand the reasons behind this, the research question of the thesis is, what has the U.N done in order to solve this problem, and why hasn’t the solutions worked as well as expected. Objective of the research is to answer to the questions on why the U.N’s interference has not been successful and who, if anybody, is to blame for this. The reasons will most likely highlight the lack of proper enforcement of rules by both the U.N and its troop contributing countries, as well as the lack of U.N’s definite authority over its troops.

The hypotheses of the research states that the efforts have been, and still are gravely inadequate, and to truly achieve permanent improvements monumental changes have to be made in the core of the U.N, as well as in the cooperative relationship between the U.N and its member states, especially troop contributing countries.

To prove the hypotheses and the aforementioned objectives the following issues will be researched and examined. First, U.N's response to SEA cases and other misconduct from the 1990s, when the first cases were uncovered, will be viewed and compared to the organizations current stance on the matter, what perceptions and attitudes have stayed the same and what have changed. Second, the tools in which the U.N has tried to combat this problem will be examined and the reasons behind their inadequacy covered. And third, the unpredictable and unfortunate effects of the political immunity granted for all U.N peacekeeping personnel will be analyzed in accordance with SEA behavior. All in all, U.N's efforts, and its various tools and methods in solving this issue have to be carefully examined in order to be able to answer the research question.

This research will be based on qualitative methods with various references to several literature and article sources regarding the subject. The liberal feminist theory in accordance with the militarized masculinity theory will be used in examining the problem and in complementing the research. The immunity that the U.N peacekeeping personnel enjoy, the lack of enforcement from the organization and the reluctance of member countries to publicly prosecute any troop members accused of misconduct are concluded as the main reasons behind unsuccessful interference.

1. THEORIES OF SEA

In this part of the research the theories of liberal feminism and militarized masculinity are used in further examining the issue and complementing the research. These theories have been chosen because of their relevance to the growing problem of SEA, which can be analyzed and understood through using either one of these theories. It is important to understand why the U.N has been unsuccessful in their efforts in weeding out the abuse and why these cases keep happening, regardless of a more thorough and all around better knowledge of the severe harms inflicted on local population by this abusive behavior. However, before we can thoroughly analyze the reasons behind the unsuccessful interference we have to look at the reasons behind the abuse itself, and find out what it is that drives these trained professionals to criminal acts and cruel violations of human rights, especially when their training and what they stand for are the clear opposite of such behavior.

The next chapters will be concentrating on examining the problem using first, the liberal feminist theory, which highlights the relevance of gender differences and the clear confrontations between genders present in these societies, where men and women are seldom offered the same opportunities in life. Following this, the issue will be examined through a theory of militarized masculinity, which emphasizes the masculine power mentality and thinking of masculine superiority, created and encouraged in military environment.

Terminology: Liberal Feminist Theory, Culture of Masculine Superiority, Gender Roles, Gender Inequality, Militarized Masculinity

1.1. Feminist theory

The feminist theory has concentrated on publicly displaying the gender inequalities present in our society since the publication of the first true feminist works in the end of the 18th century. The feminist theory's contribution to this research is the examination and thorough understanding of the true nature of these gender inequalities. It is specifically used to highlight the gender inequalities strongly present in mission countries as well as the mentality of male superiority, which both contribute to a significantly higher risk of SEA during peacekeeping operations. In this chapter these gender inequalities presented in times of conflict, violence and extreme poverty will be examined closely, highlighting the relationship between peacekeepers who are in power, and the locals, especially women and children, who represent the weakest of the society.

1.1.1. Liberal feminist theory

The liberal feminist theory focuses specifically on women's ability to promote and showcase equality in the society through their own actions. "Liberal feminists argue that society holds the false belief that women are, by nature, less intellectually and physically capable than men; thus it tends to discriminate against women in the academy, the forum, and the marketplace" (Mudzingwa 2013, 18-19). This research showcases multiple instances where the women of the society are indeed confronted with these beliefs that they are somehow lesser than men and thus are not presented with equal opportunities in the society, and are hence viewed as second class citizens. By viewing the problem through a liberal feminist theory the inequalities in these societies are more easily spotted, and the issues that the female population are confronted with during and after violent conflicts, like rape and forced prostitution showcase how women are constantly subjected to a secondary role in the society. This is especially visible in the three U.N missions that have experienced the highest number of SEA, presented more thoroughly during the second part of the research.

The liberal feminist theory further states that, "female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that blocks women's entrance to and success in the so-called public world" (Mudzingwa 2013, 19). Many of the undeveloped countries where U.N peacekeeping operations have been held have projected these "traditional" family values in their societies and used them as excuses to prevent women from rising in the society.

“Discrimination against girls often has deep historical and cultural roots. In many cultures boys have been valued more than girls from the moment of birth. Female infanticide, inadequate food and medical care, physical abuse, genital mutilation, forced sex and early childbirth take many girls’ lives. In some countries the number of adult men is higher than the number of adult women because of such discrimination.” (World Youth Report 2003, 251)

Showing that this problem of exploitation and abuse cannot be examined as something totally separate from gender, as it clearly stems its roots precisely from that difference of power and status that has always existed, but is more prevailing in war torn and undeveloped countries where violence and need is still constantly present. During conflict the environment of violence and extreme poverty stresses these already existing confrontations between genders. “The violence women suffer during conflict does not arise out of the conditions of war, but is an extension of the violence directed towards women in peacetime” (Rehn, Sirleaf 2002, 10).

Further examining the aforementioned cases in the second part of the research clearly indicates that women are generally denied access to the economic and higher social field, as they are still often viewed as the weaker gender, and unwanted in business. These cultures showcase the confrontation of genders where men are valued for their economic output and social stance and women are held as secondary citizens, solely in charge of home keeping. This discriminatory behavior ensures a bleak future for many women who in the midst of war have lost their husbands or fathers, and thus have to resort to begging or prostitution to survive, since the society has never showed them any other alternatives.

The recurrent cases of SEA slow down the rebuilding process in these countries as they only strengthen the gender inequalities already present in these societies. One of the definite changes the U.N peacekeeping personnel are trying to promote in mission countries is gender equality (U.N Peacekeeping), however, sex work has still exponentially risen in several of the mission countries after the arrival of troops, which is clearly contradicting their goals of creating equality. “Lessons from past missions, including those in Haiti, Mozambique, East Timor, Bosnia, Kosovo and Cambodia, inform us that the arrival of peacekeepers increases the demand for prostitutes substantially” (Kent 2007, 45). Growing prostitution and especially the influx of demand after the arrival of troops hinders the rebuilding process of the whole society, as more women and children are “recruited” to the

business by the allurements of richer customers, tearing them away from meaningful social contribution in the “public world”. The official U.N peacekeeping goals are thus trampled in the reality of the growing demand and supply in prostitution, which is, needless to say, only enforcing the already existing gender roles and pushing women and adolescents in a circle of sex work and exploitation.

The SEA cases by the hands of the peacekeeping personnel can be thus seen as extremely detrimental to the whole operation. When the persons bringing promises and hopes of a better future and equal opportunities are exploiting the same inequalities that they are supposed to be weeding out, the promotion of gender equality and the rebuilding process of the society inevitably suffer. Further displaying the message of the inferior position of women in the society, as even the peacekeepers, the supposed guardians are using local women as simple tools in serving the desires of men.

1.2. Militarized masculinity

The militarized masculinity theory states that the masculine roles and views implanted on young men in the military; representing some of the most aggressive, discriminatory and violent features of men are to blame for abusive behavior during peacekeeping missions. Several theorists view this promotion of hyper-masculine traits as the main contributor behind recurrent abuse (Lopes 2013, 5). During military training young men are trained to be warriors and killers, with the sole purpose of defeating the enemy at war. According to Sandra Whitworth, the author of ‘Men, Militarism and UN Peacekeeping, A Gendered Analysis’ “soldiers are not born, they are made; and part of what goes into the making of a soldier is a celebration and reinforcement of some of the most aggressive, and most insecure, elements of masculinity: those that promote violence, misogyny, homophobia, and racism” (Whitworth 2004, 3). These hyper masculine elements can thus be seen as enforcing exploitative and abusive behavior, as questionable behavior is accepted and even encouraged for multiple years during military training.

Militarized masculinity thus creates “machines” or warriors with these extremely promoted features that are useful in war. This building of a warrior, ready to fight at command, undoubtedly helps men survive war and violent conflict, but can easily turn to violent and entitled behavior outside those extreme military situations (Lopes, 2013, 17), for

example during peacekeeping missions. Furthermore the theorists argue that in order to increase the interest of men becoming soldiers, the military teaches new recruits that they are entitled to have sex with women (Whitworth 2004, 163; Lopes 2013, 17). When these hyper masculine traits have then been enforced and encouraged for years it is no wonder that the peacekeepers can often perceive the local women and children to be used and abused with permission. The military can thus be seen as creating and even encouraging this problematic behavior.

Whitworth further highlights the effect to which feminine traits are ridiculed during training and displaying any emotions, except anger is deemed as weak and unmanly. Trainers constantly question the manhood of the soldiers, and poor performances are mocked with degrading name-calling for example, “sissy”, “lady” and “faggot” (2004, 161). This inadvertently or not, further encourages unequal thinking and the viewing of women as the secondary, weaker gender. Even further the theory suggests that not only are the men strongly encouraged to get rid of these feminine traits but also to resent of anything else “different”, such as women, people of color and homosexuals (Lopes 2013, 16). “...soldiers are taught to eliminate the “other” within themselves and to dehumanize the perceived external “other” in order to be capable of eliminating the enemy during combat ... as a result, local women in conflict-ridden countries are more vulnerable to threats to their security because they are “othered” through both their gendered and ethnic identities (2004: 159)” (Ibid.).

In some cases these hyper-masculine traits might even be enforced during missions as the cultures already often deal with stronger gender inequalities. These already present inequalities in the society can further encourage the power mentality and false sense of entitlement of the soldiers.

“CDU members face the problem that cultures of masculine privilege — which suggest that men ought to be able to dominate women and have what they want – are strong and pervasive within both UN contingents (Higate and Henry 2004, Higate 2007, Martin 2005) and societies where missions are being conducted. Several analysts have focused on the problem of use of regular armies, with their especially heightened senses of male entitlement, to staff peacekeeping missions.” (Lutz, et al. 2009, 6)

Hence the already grave inequalities between genders in mission countries can further aggravate the notion of militarized masculinity, and vice versa.

The theory goes on to suggest that sexually abusing women becomes a way for the soldiers to socially bond and to prove their manhood for their comrades.

“Instead, sexual exploitation of women is a form of bonding among soldiers, because militarized masculinity is a “social masculinity,” meaning that soldiers constantly need affirmation of their masculine identity. Thus, engaging in the sexual exploitation of women becomes a form of legitimization for the soldier’s masculine identity, because it shows that the soldier embodies the traits associated with militarized masculinity such as heterosexuality, toughness, and hypermasculine behavior.” (Lopes 2011, 7)

When the soldiers are engaging in SEA conducts and further justifying them to others by the legitimization of their masculinities, the threshold for others to engage in similar conduct may drastically decline. Furthermore it showcases how indifferently some of the soldiers view the abusing of women.

Militarized masculinity can thus be seen as one of the main reasons behind recurring abuse. These aforementioned hyper masculine traits might prove detrimental in war but are proved to persist in soldiers even outside those situations (Lopes 2013, 16). The problem hasn’t gone unnoticed in the organization either, as already in 1996 it stressed the importance of finding a gentler gender approach during military training. “Military training should emphasize gender sensitivity, child rights and responsible behavior towards women and children” (U.N 1996, 107). Needless to say, this has not yet been achieved. Of the current approximate number of 120,000 U.N personnel serving in peacekeeping operations, 90,000 are troops; soldiers who have went through extensive military training and are now serving as peacekeepers (U.N Peacekeeping).

2. UNITED NATIONS AND SEA

The following chapters will first concentrate on opening the background behind the U.N's peacekeeping operations. The fundamentals of past and present operations, as well as the U.N's response to the abuse will be covered in order to present a thorough view of the topic and help the reader understand the scope of the issue. Furthermore, U.N's past "boys will be boys" stance on the issue will be examined, and its far-reaching consequences and effects still influencing the matter today exposed. The research will continue by examining the three cases in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Haiti and Liberia that have contributed the most to allegations during past years. Especially concentrating on researching and highlighting the factors that evidently lead to a higher risk of SEA during missions.

To answer the research question properly, the methods and tools in which the U.N has tried to combat this problem will be briefly examined and the reasons behind their unsuccessfulness analyzed. These reasons *inter alia* include the lack of transparency by U.N, the reluctance of member countries, especially the troop providing countries, to implement U.N recommended prosecution of perpetrators, and the diplomatic immunity that prevents the organization from prosecuting those found guilty. Finally I will make my own recommendations on the growing problem and add suggestions on how to achieve sustainable, realistic and definite developments regarding the matter. This will be followed by the conclusions.

2.1. Background

The United Nations was established in 1945 after the Second World War left the world in ruins. Now it consists of 193 countries worldwide, with one common goal, the maintaining of international co-operation, peace and security (U.N About the U.N). To promote this co-operation and stabilization of the world, the organization established peacekeeping operations, separate operations specifically concentrating in maintaining

worldwide security, and helping the rebuilding process of societies and countries in order to achieve a stable and peaceful world.

“Peacekeeping has proven to be one of the most effective tools available to the UN to assist host countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace. Today's multidimensional peacekeeping operations are called upon not only to maintain peace and security, but also to facilitate political processes, protect civilians, assist in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants; support constitutional processes and the organization of elections, protect and promote human rights and assist in restoring the rule of law and extending legitimate state authority.” (U.N What We Do)

In 1946, the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of United Nations determined that to reach optimal results U.N personnel needed immunity over any member country's laws. Thus immunity was granted, with far-reaching problematic consequences unforeseen at the time.

“the Organization shall enjoy in the territory of each of its Members such privileges and immunities as are necessary for the fulfilment of its purposes and that representatives of the Members of the United Nations and officials of the Organization shall similarly enjoy such privileges and immunities as are necessary for the independent exercise of their functions in connection with the Organization.” (Chesterman, et al. 2016, 557)

The peacekeeping missions started from as early on as the 1948 with the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) set up in the Middle East, with the purpose of bringing stability to the area. Much has happened within the organization since; it has carried out 71 peacekeeping operations, with 16 more ongoing missions. (U.N Peacekeeping) There have been many unfortunate failures, along with even greater successes, as the peacekeeping missions are to thank for ceasefires, peace agreements and stability reached in many conflict-ridden areas. The peacekeeping branch was even recognized with the Nobel Peace Prize in 1988, as “the Peacekeeping Forces through their efforts have made important contributions towards the realization of one of the fundamental tenets of the United Nations. Thus, the world organization has come to play a more central part in world affairs

and has been invested with increasing trust” (Frängsmyr, Abrams 1997, 206). Now that 20 years has passed a lot of that invested trust is in jeopardy.

The U.N peacekeeping forces are in and out of the public eye but with much less pleasant news, as scandals of sexual exploitation and abuse have come out consistently for the past 20 years, revealing the dark side of the operations where, “...rape, trafficking in women and children, sexual enslavement and child abuse often coexist alongside peace operations” (Rehn, Sirleaf 2002, 70). The first claims of sexual abuse trace back to the 1990s, just a couple years after receiving the Nobel Prize. Accusations started coming from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Cambodia, Timor Leste and Mozambique (U.N 2005, 7). In 1996 the U.N released a report on the impacts of armed conflicts on children, and discovered the alarming scope of the issue, “In 6 out of 12 country studies on sexual exploitation of children in situations of armed conflict prepared for the present report, the arrival of peacekeeping troops has been associated with a rapid rise in child prostitution” (U.N 1996, 98). The latest accusations come from April of 2016, from Central African Republic where over 100 women, girls and boys claim to have been raped by both U.N forces and non-U.N troops, with the vast majority of victims being children (Berlinger, et al., 2016). The abuse now amounts to over 20 years worth of victims of sexual exploitation by the very people that supposedly came to help, promoting equal rights and promising a brighter future.

The U.N has had significant proof of the abuse tracing back at least to the 1990s when the media and various human rights organizations started to document the abuse (U.N 2005, 7), and yet it is still a problem they are forced to repeatedly face, over 20 years later. The most SEA cases and the more wide spread abuse have been documented in Bosnia in the 1990s, in the DRC in the beginning of the 21st century, as well as in the missions in Kosovo, Haiti, Sudan, Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire (U.N 2005, 7). The allegations facing the U.N personnel vary from forced prostitution, rape, sexual exploitation, abuse and pedophilia (Róisín 2014, 3). Specifically concerning children the accusations cover trading sex for food, forced sex, verbal sexual abuse, child prostitution, child pornography, sexual slavery, indecent sexual assault and child trafficking (Nordiska Afrikainstitutet 2009, 2). Undeniably the growing issue of abuse is forming quite a stain on the impeccable reputation of the U.N, as the world’s largest peacekeeping organization can no longer be blindly trusted.

2.1.1. “Boys will be boys”

When the abuse was first documented in the 1990s the U.N’s response to it was seemingly lenient. In a statement regarding the abuse in Cambodia, a high-ranking U.N official commented on the issue by simply stating that, “boys will be boys.” (Neudorfer 2014, 1) This lax perception regarding misconduct, and especially SEA was tightly knit in the U.N as later, another U.N official; the US ambassador to the U.N again justified the abuse by simply noting that, “human nature is human nature. Where peacekeepers go they attract prostitutes.” (Mazurana, et al. 2005, 34) Despite of the recurrent abuse the mentality stayed the same; men were more or less forgiven for their behavior, as it was not seen as serious enough to take action. Instead of facing disciplinary actions soldiers were encouraged to more discretion, by not wearing uniforms and other distinctive U.N symbols before engaging in sexual encounters (Lopes 2013, 11).

This attitude let on that men were not responsible for their actions, as biological natural urges were more prevailing in the masculine gender and thus rendered the sexual relations more approvable (Lopes 2013, 19). Hence the boys will be boys’ attitude made it socially acceptable for the male peacekeeping forces to exploit the weaker, the children and the women of the local population. This attitude inadvertently promoted SEA during missions, as there seemingly were no consequences for criminal behavior. Furthermore, “The “boys will be boys” theory explaining sexual exploitation of local women as expressions of biological natural urges is often used by militaries and soldiers to naturalize militarized masculinity” (Lopes, 2013, 19). There is a documented widespread belief among peacekeeping personnel that they are indeed entitled to behave as they wish, perhaps partly owing precisely to this nonchalant attitude and silent acceptance of abuse in the past.

The reputation of the U.N peacekeeping operations is tarnished little by little every time a new abuse scandal comes to light, and the U.N has often faced criticism for its seemingly lenient way of handling the abuse cases. In the 1990s a U.N staff member, Kathryn Bolkovac uncovered the wide spread abuse going on in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where young girls and women were forced into prostitution, all while the U.N forces there turned a blind eye on the sex trafficking, or even worse participated,

“The thing that stood out about these cases in Bosnia, and cases that have been reported in other [UN] mission areas, is ... that police and humanitarian workers were frequently

involved in not only the facilitation of forced sexual abuse, and the use of children and young women in brothels, but in many instances became involved in the trade by racketeering, bribery and outright falsifying of documents as part of a broader criminal syndicate.” (Vulliamy, 2012)

Eventually this lenient attitude backfired on the U.N, as the perpetrators noticed that exploitative behavior was silently accepted, the number of SEA cases spiked, causing public scandals in various operations, most notably in the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) (U.N Conduct and Discipline Unit). The attitude can also be seen as especially harmful for the victims as their assailants were not punished, thus tarnishing the impeccable reputation of the U.N blue helmets among the local population.

At the beginning of the 21st century the ever-growing abuse scandals and the headlines of exploitation from different missions were too much to be ignored and the U.N had to drastically change its stance. In 2001 a report by Save the Children and U.N High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) described the ongoing abuse and exploitation, documenting widespread sexual exploitation of children in several West African countries (UNHCR, Save the Children 2002, 3). The issue was further examined and confirmed true by the Office of Internal Oversight (OIOS) who “identified new cases of sexual exploitation, ranging from consensual relationships that occurred as a result of the exploiter’s position of power to allegations of sodomy and rape of refugees” (U.N 2002, 3). It became evident that the U.N had neglected their responsibility by failing to act on time. They had placed practically no measures to guard the guardians working under their distinctive blue helmets. The report and its aftermath forced the U.N to rearrange its stand concerning the matter, as it no longer could dismiss the issue by a simple shrug.

2.1.2 To “Zero Tolerance” and beyond

Following the aftermath of its report the U.N quickly moved ahead with multiple drastic measures showing that it would no longer downplay the growing issue. Exploitative and abusive behavior was publicly condemned, as the former Secretary-General of the U.N, Kofi Annan addressed the issue by stating,

"Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian staff cannot be tolerated. It violates everything the United Nations stands for. Men, women and children displaced by conflict or other disasters are among the most vulnerable people on earth. They look to the United Nations and its humanitarian partners for shelter and protection. Anyone employed by or affiliated with the United Nations who breaks that sacred trust must be held accountable and, when the circumstances so warrant, prosecuted." (U.N 2002, 1)

In 1998 it had come out with the Ten Codes of Conduct for their peacekeepers, after the worrying reports of growing exploitation in several missions (U.N Conduct and Discipline). However at the time they were only available for the personnel, and in the official languages of the U.N. It wasn't until these public scandals that U.N decided to enforce the codes by U.N official recommendation that they be translated to the official languages of mission countries, as well as printed and published generously during missions. (U.N 2005, 13) Unfortunately the codes were deemed as a failure, as they had no substantial effect when it came to combatting the problem of SEA. (Róisín 2014, 33)

In 2003 the organization announced its new definite stand against SEA in peacekeeping missions, when the Secretary-General's Bulletin on, "Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse" introduced the Zero Tolerance Policy, which banned the exchange of various valuables, like food or money for sex, as well as all sexual relations with people under 18. Additionally it strongly discouraged the sexual relations between peacekeepers and the beneficiaries of U.N assistance, on the basis of the clearly unequal power dynamics. (U.N 2005, 2)

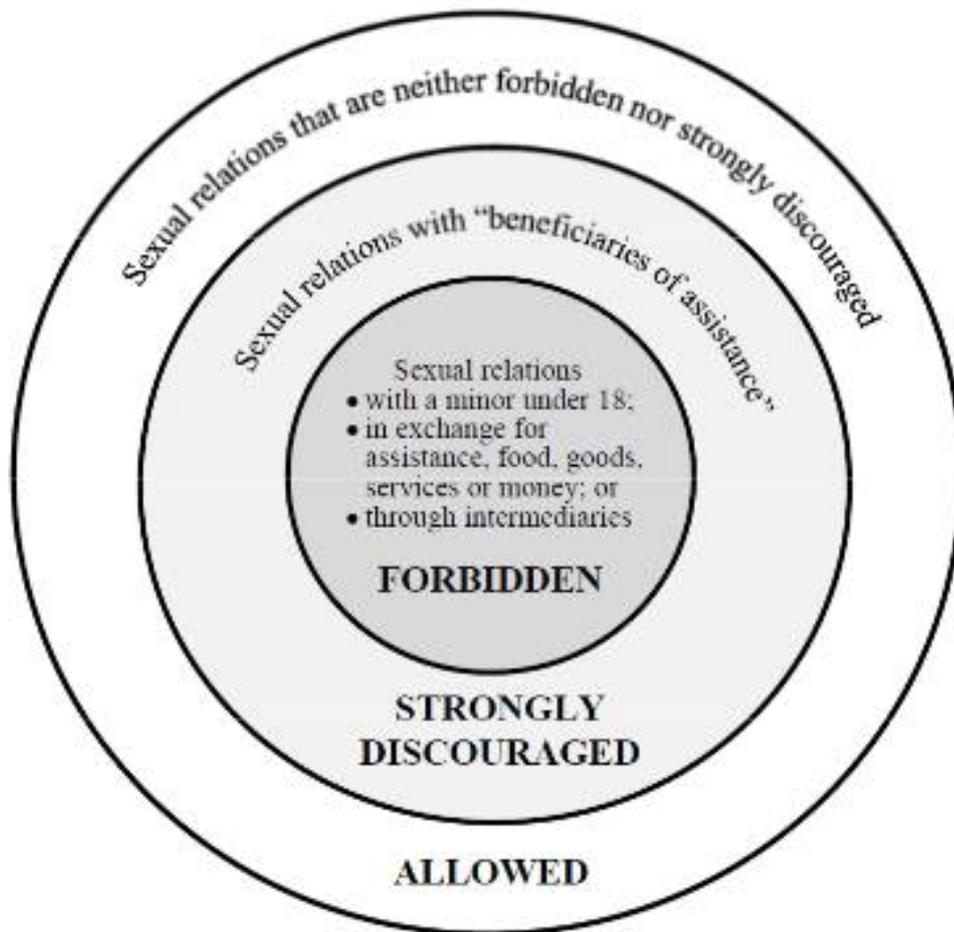


Figure 1. Zero Tolerance Policy

Source: (OIOS 2015, 7)

Furthermore the organization created a new strategy in preventing SEA from happening in the future, the three-pronged strategy consisting first, of prevention of misconduct, based on training, awareness-raising and preventative measures. Second, of the enforcement of the U.N standards of conduct, highlighting the responsibility to investigate and discipline the accused personnel and to report all misconduct. And third, of remedial action, in cases where the abuse has already happened, ensuring that all victims get the help they need. (U.N Conduct and Discipline Unit)

Moreover the U.N commissioned Prince Zeid al-Hussein of Jordan to further investigate the problem and to come up with effective solutions. The report, "A Comprehensive Strategy to Eliminate Future Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations", came to be known simply, as the Zeid Report, and

became one of the most important tools in understanding and fighting the wide spread abuse. (U.N 2005, 1) In the wake of the report the U.N established Conduct and Discipline Teams in 2005, which two years later became the Conduct and Discipline Unit (CDU). The units' sole purpose is to provide right direction regarding the conduct and discipline of the peacekeeping staff, specifically regarding the issue of SEA. "The scope of CDU's work includes formulating policies, developing training and awareness raising activities and ensuring oversight of the handling of allegations of misconduct." (U.N. Conduct and Discipline Unit)

These various efforts during past years have proven that the U.N has taken on the issue of SEA with a newfound seriousness, and has placed a lot of thought and preparation to effectively combat the matter. Undeniably there are many things that could have been done better; for example, an earlier response to the matter would have been vital in wiping out the abuse before it became an epidemic of this scale. Nevertheless, despite of these various efforts implemented by the organization it is still no closer to a definite solution, as cases are still emerging from multiple missions, increasingly involving more and more minors. (OIOS 2015, 4)

2.2. Missions responsible for the most misconduct (SEA)

The most SEA allegations have come from three specific missions during U.N history; the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in 2010, its predecessor being the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) established in 1999, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) established in 2004, and finally the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) established in 2003 (U.N Conduct and Discipline Statistics). In the next chapter the history of these countries leading up to the establishment of U.N peacekeeping forces in the country will be briefly examined, in an attempt to find common factors explaining the high number of SEA cases during each mission.

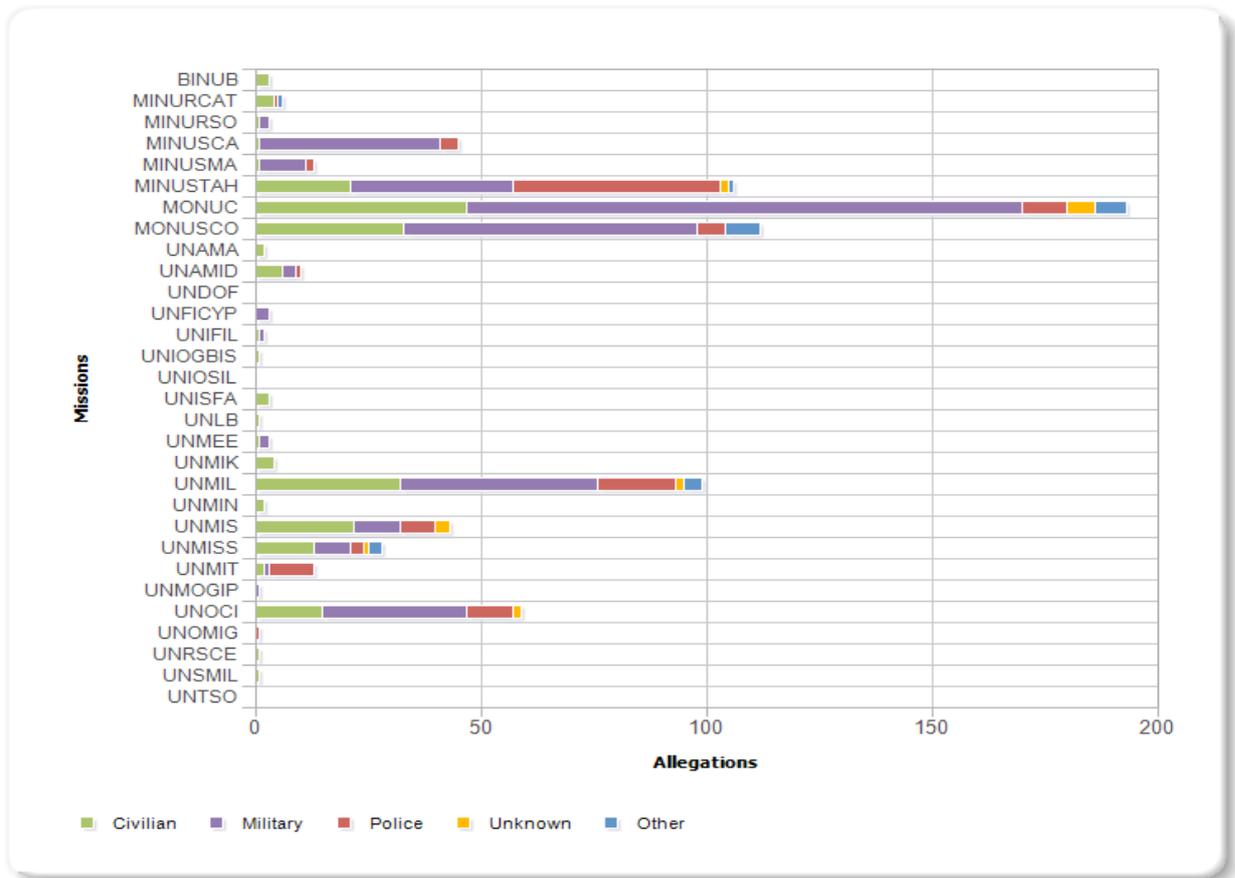


Figure 2. Allegations by Category of Personnel Per Mission

Source: (U.N Conduct and Discipline Unit)

2.2.1. MONUSCO & MONUC

The 1994 Rwandan genocide set the stage for many unstable and violent years in the history of Central Africa. Rebellions and violent conflicts followed the nation as the Congolese Civil Wars brought more destruction, and the losses of millions of people. (Coghlan et al. 2006, li) In 1997 rebel forces overthrew the legitimate government and established the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, violence persisted as new rebellions sparked, spreading destruction to neighboring areas. Eventually the conflict-ridden period was brought to an end, as the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement was established between parties in 1999. (U.N 1999, 1) MONUC, the predecessor of MONUSCO was established the same year to sustain the ceasefire and promote the peaceful liaison between the parties involved. In many ways the operation was successful, as it supported the country's first free

elections in 46 years. In 2010, MONUC was renamed as MONUSCO to properly depict the country's entry to a new stable phase. (U.N Peacekeeping Operations)

MONUC first received international attention in the beginning of the 21st century as the true scale of the SEA situation came to light. Multiple media outlets covered the scandal; and depicted the horrendous exploitation, which included sexual relations with girls as young as 10 and in exchange for milk, eggs or peanut butter (Notar 2006, 417). Further investigations conducted by OIOS revealed disturbing details from the mission where, “numerous reports by victims of peacekeepers engaging in detailed and disturbing acts, such as videotaping themselves torturing, raping, and abusing naked women and girls (Notar 2006: 417)” (Lopes 2013, 15). The two missions in the DRC are singlehandedly responsible for nearly half of the documented SEA cases during past years (OIOS 2015, 9).

2.2.2. MINUSTAH

The first U.N mission in Haiti, UNMIH was set up after the violent political coup of 1991 and the overthrowing of the legitimate president. The U.N peacekeeping forces officially deployed in 1994, to help in the return of the legitimate authorities of the country, as well as in the promotion of a stable and peaceful environment. The operation was deemed successful and as great strides were made the U.N forces left the country in 1996. However, the mission was reestablished not long after, in 2004, after another violent rebellion compromised the peace and security already once established in the country. MINUSTAH was created to reestablish the once secure and stable government, and to maintain the rule of law and public order in Haiti. (U.N Peacekeeping Operations) Unfortunately in the beginning of 2010 the country was struck with a 7.0 magnitude earthquake and the rebuilding process was severely set back as the country suffered the devastating losses of over 300,000 people. Only 10 months later an outbreak of cholera, deemed the worst in recent history, hit Haiti, killing almost 10 000 and hospitalizing thousands more. (Fisher, Kramer, 2012) Regardless of the obvious hardships of the mission MINUSTAH succeeded to support the country through its presidential and legislative elections (U.N Peacekeeping Operations).

When OIOS conducted SEA interviews in Haiti, 231 individuals came forward and admitted to having sex with peacekeepers in return for different goods. Some to secure their position in the society, or to gain luxuries like cellphones, clothes or other desired valuables. However there were also those who cited hunger, lack of shelter, baby care items, and

medications as the reason for agreeing to sex. (OIOS 2015, 21) As transactional sex is commonly defined as sexual intercourse driven by material exchanges (Choi, 2011), it is clearly against the rules of U.N's Zero Tolerance Policy, prohibiting sexual relations in exchange for assistance, goods, money etc. Thus revealing the indifferent attitude peacekeepers have towards U.N regulations.

2.2.3. UNMIL

In 1989 Liberia ended up in the middle of its first civil war, lasting until 1996. The war started when the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) led by former government official Charles Taylor sought to overthrow the repressive government of Samuel Doe. The violent conflict deemed the lives of over 200,000 Liberians and forced almost a million others out of their home and as refugees in neighboring countries. (Left, 2003) In 1993 the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) succeeded in negotiating a peace agreement between the parties and UNOMIL, the predecessor of UNMIL was established to observe and help in the realization of the peace. However, the peaceful times in Liberia did not last long as new rebellions sparked almost instantly after the election of the new president, Charles Taylor, restarting the already once stopped civil war. The violence and conflict continued to devastate the country up until 2003, when Taylor stepped down and U.N forces were again deployed in the country. UNMIL helped the country to rise from the devastation of its violent past and achieved the securing of the peace and rebuilding of the society, longed for over a decade by the Liberian people. (U.N Peacekeeping Operations)

UNMIL has reached its fair share of negative attention with multiple allegations claiming that U.N peacekeepers routinely engaged in sexual relations with Liberian girls, sometimes aged as young as 12 (Bowcott, 2005). An internal U.N letter confirmed the violations, "...girls as young as 12 years of age are engaged in prostitution, forced into sex acts and sometimes photographed by U.N. peacekeepers in exchange for \$10 or food or other commodities" (Lynch, 2005). Furthermore findings suggest that over the course of nine years, approximately 58,000 Liberian women and adolescents in Liberia's capital city, Monrovia, have engaged in transactional sex with U.N peacekeepers (Beber, et al. 2015, 4). These numbers are clear indication of radical underreporting concerning SEA.

2.3. Lead factors causing a higher risk of SEA

In many of the countries experiencing a higher number of SEA, a culture of exploitation already persists, encouraging abusive behavior and its silent acceptance. Of all the missions, the worst cases, numerically and otherwise have been in countries where the economic situation has been hopeless and the local people are desperate for basic necessities like food and water. Furthermore, the country's history has often been bloody and violent, with civil wars, conflicts and rebellions dictating much of the past. These past instabilities affect the cultures by normalizing the concept of violence and oppression and reinforcing the inequalities present in the society.

2.3.1. Sexually violent subculture

Every U.N peacekeeping mission has started in order to bring or maintain a more stable environment in the society, after events that have deeply disturbed the country, often for multiple years, or even decades (U.N Peacekeeping). By looking at the background of the aforementioned countries it is highly evident that a higher risk in SEA is correlated with a violent and conflict-ridden history of the country, that frequently translates to a violent present.

“Both during and in the aftermath of armed conflict the vulnerability of the civilian population may well be increased, in particular that of women and children. Poverty, institutional collapse, erosion of the Rule of Law, insufficient control of international borders, lack of economic opportunity, and widespread IHRL and IHL violations, all contribute to environments where rape, trafficking, prostitution (forced or otherwise) and other forms of SEA are more likely to be prevalent.” (Róisín 2014, 4)

Inevitably the display of decades of aggression, violence and oppression leaves its traces in the people. “Along with the deepening violence women experience during war, the long-term effects of conflict and militarization create a culture of violence that renders women especially vulnerable after war” (Rehn, Sirleaf 2002, 1). After women have experienced years of aggressive and abusive behavior, the threshold to prostitution and further

exploitation can significantly decrease (2002, 49). Thus also increasing the risk of locals engaging in sexual relations with U.N peacekeepers deployed in the country.

Research points that regardless of the peacekeepers home countries stance on sexual violence, when placed in countries with high tolerance for SEA and a strong culture for impunity, the risk for conforming to such behavior increases (Neudorfer 2014, 152). Thus to effectively combat and prevent future cases, U.N should give special attention to those countries reporting of high social inequalities and sexual abuse cases, already before the missions establishment.

2.3.2. Poverty

Poverty plays a big part in the play for risk factors of SEA. The three highest SEA contributing countries, the DRC, Haiti and Liberia are all located in the top 20 poorest nations in the world (Pasquali, 2015). A desperate economic situation translates to desperate measures for the locals. This generally means that local women have to prostitute themselves in order to survive, which is unfortunately further promoting sexual relations and exploitative behavior between peacekeepers and locals, and even making it more generally accepted in the community.

“Feminine gender identities in the DRC both sexualize and pacify women in ways subordinate to men. For example, female prostitutes were viewed as active participants who negotiated the price on their own bodies (Higate, 2007: 106-7). This view ignores the reality that the economic conditions of these women are desperate and that prostitution is often a way of survival. Furthermore, the economic juxtaposition between the peacekeepers who receive monthly thousands of dollars and the local women who live on tens of dollars renders negotiation illusionary.” (Gilliard 2012, 29)

It is important to distinguish a line between “survival sex” and “commercial sex” when it comes to prostitution. In the case of the peacekeeping missions, the prostitution depicted is more than often categorized as “survival sex”, meaning that the locals are selling their body in lack of any other options, to survive, and not to make profit. (Neudorfer 2014, 19) Thus it is evident that peacekeepers who employ this view of women being actively involved in the

discussion, are simply choosing to ignore the obvious economic disparities to further justify their appalling actions.

Poverty is often used to justify and explain exploitative and abusive behavior. Some peacekeepers for example see that women selling themselves for money have done so out of choice and thus sexual relations with them is not wrong. They might even see themselves as benefactors, since they are offering the locals “gifts” for their services.

“For example, many will not agree that sex with adult members of the society in which the mission is located is problematic, and/or disagree about what constitutes prostitution (some seeing “gifts” given to impoverished women with whom they have a relationship as acceptable). Many also believe that the problem is not so much a UN problem as a local one, arguing that women in mission areas, and in Haiti particularly, “throw themselves” at peacekeepers. One CDU member mentioned that he believes that local mothers are angry with the CDU for ruining their opportunities to have their daughters make money through prostitution. (Lutz, et al. 2009, 6)

Needless to say, that regardless of the peacekeepers views, even the providing of “gifts” for women who they have sexual relations with still constitutes exploitation and is not a victimless crime.

In countries where the economic situation is this extreme, the numbers of SEA inevitably rise. The poorer the area, the more blatant the exploitation usually becomes, and the more brazen the abusers get. In Haiti, the poorest country in the Western hemisphere, girls were paid 1 dollar in exchange for sexual services with peacekeepers (Williams, 2007). And in the DRC peacekeepers provided “gifts” for young orphans, for example as little as two eggs in exchange for sexual services (Bowcott, 2005). It seems as though the more peacekeepers find ways in justifying the abuse, like pretending that the women have a choice in the matter or offering gifts for the victims, the more it becomes rampant and generally accepted in the community, and as such, even harder to get rid of.

2.3.3. Gender inequality

“Throughout the world, women experience violence because they are women, and often because they do not have the same rights or autonomy that men do. They are subjected to gender-based persecution, discrimination and oppression, including sexual violence and slavery” (Rehn, Sirleaf 2002, 10). Hence women often don’t hold a strong footing in the society, this can further lead to a higher risk for women to engage in prostitution, as the society has not offered them many other economic opportunities. “Equality for women cannot become a reality so long as women are denied the very basic means of survival: decent economic opportunities and equality in the marketplace. Maintaining prostitution as the last refuge for poverty stricken women is exploitation and cannot lead to gender equality.” (Post, 2013)

With no possibility for a steady income prostitution is one of the few options for women, and even children for providing for themselves in these countries where women are systemically held as inferiors to men. For example in the DRC there are several laws and regulations depriving women and girls from their rights, and thus making them more dependent on men. “...women can be married off without their consent, they cannot buy or sell property and there is no effective judicial mechanism to deal with the rampant sexualized violence which terrorizes the Congo. (Meger, 2010:129-30)” (Gilliard 2012, 30). This notion of holding men and women to drastically different standards clearly intervenes with the possibilities of women to successfully enter the society and reflects the essence of liberal feminist theory, proclaiming that “female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that blocks women’s entrance to and success in the so-called public world” (Mudzingwa 2013, 19).

Although the peacekeeping troops are supposed to be promoting gender equality (U.N Peacekeeping), their actions sometimes say otherwise, as prostitution has significantly gone up in several countries after the arrival of troops (Kent 2007, 45). If gender discrimination is clearly visible in the mission country, the peacekeepers might be more inclined to take part themselves as they see it more acceptable in the local community.

2.3.4. Lack of cultural knowledge

Without basic knowledge of cultural norms, women's rights and the country's customs, clashes and misunderstandings with the locals happen more frequently, affecting the attitudes towards peacekeeping personnel, creating the context for abuse (Lutz, et al. 2009, 8).

“Lack of cultural knowledge about the society in which a mission is established occurs widely (Chopra and Hohe 2004, Myint-U and Sellwood 1999, Sion 2008). This has several special consequences related to SEA. These include failure to collect, understand, and use information from local populations about gender, sexuality, class/poverty, and the use of force. Inattention to questions of local cultural processes also leads to lack of regular, systematic attention to reports from, or reports potentially available from, local populations about the behavior of peacekeepers.” (Lutz, et al. 2009, 6)

Thus a cultural gap between the locals and peacekeepers can further alienate the peacekeeping personnel from the local population, and thus further fade the feeling of equality and compassion that the forces are trying to spread.

This lack of cultural knowledge can be attributed to the theory of militarized masculinity. “The theory of militarized masculinity suggests that soldiers are rarely trained in gender and cultural sensitivity because it is understood that a soldiers' compassion towards the enemy takes away their ability to kill (Whitworth 2004: 155)” (Lopes 2013, 20). Thus when peacekeepers actively avoid connecting to the local culture and people, the viewing of locals as “others”, characterized by militarized masculinity (2013, 16), can significantly increase, making it easier to abuse and exploit the locals.

2.4. What keeps the U.N from success?

Despite of multiple efforts and strategically thought resolutions the problem persists. One might have to admit that when it comes down to it, it simply is impossible to force regulations and values on those who have decided otherwise. However, there are a few reasons why past efforts might have fallen short of expectations.

2.4.1. Lack of enforcement

On multiple occasions the U.N has been criticized on its lack of properly enforcing resolutions targeting SEA. “Enforcement remains a problem, with many UN personnel we spoke with saying they have observed or heard that SEA occurs much more often than it is identified and punished” (Lutz, et al. 2009, 3). Thus even though the Zero Tolerance Policy and the three-pronged strategy sound promising there is still a long way in between the resolutions, and their proper implementation on the ground. Hence the U.N should actively concentrate on enforcing these already established resolutions and rules, especially since the past lack of enforcement hasn’t gone unnoticed from perpetrators and is enforcing the culture of impunity strongly present in peacekeeping operations.

Enforcement is not only the U.N’s problem, as member countries too are guilty of the same, if not worse, inaction. As the U.N only has marginal authority over its troops, conducting proper investigations and prosecuting those found guilty is up to the troop contributing country of the peacekeepers (OIOS 2015, 4). However there has been significant reluctance by troop contributing countries to carry out these requirements.

“Troop-contributing countries frequently complain that the current investigative mechanisms of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations do not emphasize that there must be a presumption that the troops investigated have acted properly. Moreover, troopcontributing countries frequently complain that evidence gathered by mission boards of inquiry and in prior preliminary investigations is either not sufficient under their national law for use in subsequent judicial or court martial proceedings or has not been gathered in a manner required by their law. Frequently the troop-contributing country will not even get the entire board of inquiry documentation because of a United Nations policy of not releasing documents that might be used by third parties to make claims against the Organization. It is thus hardly surprising that troopcontributing countries are often reluctant to take action on the basis of the Organization’s procedures.” (U.N 2005, 14)

The lack of enforcement of resolutions has spread among the organization and its member countries, rendering any possible solutions gravely ineffective. It is clear that this culture of inactivity is only making matters worse and enforcing the culture of impunity deeply rooted in the organization.

2.4.2. Feeling of impunity

Owing to the 1946 resolution providing immunity for U.N peacekeeping personnel the arrest and prosecution of the perpetrators have proved to be more difficult than thought. It is more often that not that the perpetrators walk free than are prosecuted for their crimes. “Peacekeepers who commit crimes fall under the jurisdiction of their home countries, which frequently do nothing to hold them accountable legally.” (Wolfe, 2015) This lack of definite authority further encourages the feeling of impunity, as the peacekeepers continue to feel untouchable.

Furthermore, the past mentality of “boys will be boys” instilled a feeling of entitlement and security into the peacekeepers minds that is hard to get rid of. Perpetrators know that even if they get caught the consequences wont be severe, “troop contributing countries are often reluctant to admit publicly to acts of wrong doing and consequently lack the will to court-martial alleged offenders.” (U.N 2005, 24) Consequently the feeling of impunity among the peacekeeping personnel is rampant and makes it even more difficult to effectively combat the problem.

“There is a widespread perception that peacekeeping personnel, whether military or civilian, who commit acts of sexual exploitation and abuse rarely if ever face disciplinary charges for such acts and, at most, suffer administrative consequences. Nor are they held to account financially for the harm that they cause to their victims. There is a similar perception that peacekeeping personnel who commit acts of sexual exploitation and abuse that constitute crimes under generally accepted standards (e.g., rape or sexual relations with young children) are not normally subjected to criminal prosecution, whether by court martial or by trial before a national criminal court, which would have been the inevitable result if they had committed such acts in their home countries. Such perceptions are not without foundation.” (U.N 2005, 24)

Decades of inaction, justifications and looking the other way have clearly had an effect on the mindset of the perpetrators. So much so, that the culture of impunity thrives in U.N missions, and as witnessed, not without foundation. It is evident that the U.N, as well as the member states have miserably failed to act when strong and definite actions were most needed.

2.4.4. Inadequate victim assistance

The first step in weeding out the abuse is to get the perpetrators brought to justice, and as witnessed this is easier said than done. It is common knowledge that only a fraction of the victims have the courage to come forward. “The reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on West Africa and Bunia indicate the difficulty of identifying perpetrators because victims are often frightened, poorly educated young women and children who have difficulty in identifying their foreign assailants.” (U.N 2005, 9) Hence victim assistance programs should be held as priority number one, better medical and psychological support for the victims would encourage more victims to come forward.

In 2007 the organization adopted a resolution regarding this, the United Nations Comprehensive Strategy on Assistance and Support to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Staff and Related Personnel, and it had a specific goal, “The purpose of the Strategy is to ensure that victims of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations staff and related personnel receive appropriate assistance and support in a timely manner. It is imperative that the Organization respond quickly and effectively when sexual exploitation and abuse occur.” (U.N 2008, 2)

Nevertheless, there have been clear failures in the implementation of these policies, as assistance was deemed gravely ineffective and too slow. “Only 26 out of 217 SEA victims (12 per cent) identified by its victim assistance architecture have been referred for assistance and of those referred, little is known what assistance, in reality, was provided to them” (OIOS 2015, 23). It seems that once again effective development has been discouraged by the failure to enforce proper policies.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section of the research I will present my own notes and recommendations regarding the problem. After which the fourth and final part of the research will follow, as the research will be summarized and the most important points highlighted in the conclusions.

3.1. Lifting immunity, guaranteeing prosecution

The first and foremost issue that's standing in the way of properly indicting these criminals is the immunity U.N staff members and troops enjoy. What was once there to ensure that the U.N would achieve optimal results, has become an insurance of impunity for peacekeepers, and actively stands in the way of prosecution.

“These are highly technical and complex legal matters. However, a serious effort is needed to address these shortcomings in accountability because the Charter envisaged that immunity would be functional, and crimes of sexual exploitation and abuse are not within the functions of any staff member or expert on mission. It is therefore recommended that the General Assembly ask the Secretary-General to appoint a group of experts to provide advice on the best way to proceed so as to ensure that the original intent of the Charter can be achieved, namely, that United Nations staff and experts on mission would never effectively be exempt from the consequences of criminal acts that they committed at their duty station.” (U.N 2005, 30)

These recommendations were now made over a decade ago, and still the immunity has not been properly addressed.

Hence, in order to get these perpetrators brought to justice, the immunity they enjoy needs to be lifted. Currently it tends to take more time and effort than what it should, and thus is often left undone. Needless to say, without properly enforcing the criminal accountability of U.N peacekeeping personnel definite improvements are impossible to create, thus the

immunity enjoyed by the personnel should be modified so that in cases of severe misconduct, the resolution wouldn't inadvertently provide protection for these criminals. As currently it is doing precisely that.

3.2. Improving gender equality

As witnessed in the case studies, gender inequalities in the society can lead to a significantly higher risk of SEA happening during missions. Better gender equality would thus correlate with less violence and discrimination towards the women and children of the society. Thus in order for the countries to receive U.N assistance they should engage in talks on how to effectively improve the situation of women in their society. Equality should be strongly encouraged by both the organization and the government, and while this may not sit well with some of the countries, it would at the very least provide much needed pressure for the countries to act. These developments would not come overnight but even the opening of discussion on the matter shows progress. Showcasing all the possibilities open to women today is hugely important in helping these societies become more stable and flourish. Improved gender equality would also mean faster economic growth for the countries, something deeply needed in most cases. Hence, it seems detrimental to actively offer and open more possibilities for women in the society, so in times of need they do not have to resort to selling their body.

Promoting gender equality already is one of the official aims of the U.N peacekeeping troops (U.N Peacekeeping). However, as the growing prostitution in mission countries after the arrival of troops indicates, it is not held in high regard. Thus again we arrive at the root of the problem, the lack of active enforcement of U.N resolutions, like the Zero Tolerance Policy, which specifically prohibits transactional sex from peacekeepers. As long as prostitution is encouraged by the demand of peacekeepers, a definite change is impossible. To truly reach the minds of local women about gender equality this exploitation has to come to an end, as it is severely harming the cause by enforcing these old gender models.

3.3. Adding more women to the missions

For the past 15 years the U.N has encouragingly promoted the concept of adding more women to the peacekeeping personnel (U.N 2000, 1). However, the problem still persists, as currently less than 2 percent of military peacekeepers are female (Bridges, Horsfall 2009, 120). The increasing of women in missions is not so much in the hands of the U.N as it is in the ones of its member countries, providing personnel and although the U.N has on multiple occasions pleaded for the addition of more women in various missions around the globe the threshold for women to join these operations is evidently still too high. This can be attributed to many reasons, however the major one being the prevailing culture of masculine superiority in military environments.

“Militarized masculinity is one of the contributing factors to the low number of women participating in peacekeeping operations. Peacekeeping operations still embody a hypermasculine militarized environment and thus, female peacekeeping personnel do not feel welcome, they often experience ridicule for being “feminine,” and worst of all, they often become victims of sexual harassment and abuse.” (Lopes 2011, 13)

To encourage more women to join the U.N missions this notion of militarized masculinity should be publicly recognized and eradicated. Long enough it has dominated the operations and mentality of those involved, it is time for drastic changes and the implementation of the 1996 U.N recommendations, gender sensitivity, child rights and responsible behavior towards women and children (U.N 1996, 107). Without a gender balance troops the missions are rendered that much harder. As women have been shown to speed up the rebuilding process, and to create a deeper trust in the organization and its goals, in addition the presence of women significantly reduces SEA during missions and increases the number of victims coming forward (Karim, Beardsley 2016, 11). Thus the involvement of women should be actively encouraged, and troop providing countries should highlight the important role women play during missions.

3.4. Increased transparency

The lack of transparency on the issue is actively harming its effective elimination. Most of the cases are dealt with internally, behind closed doors, without any knowledge leaking to the public. A more transparent method could potentially increasingly tarnish the U.Ns reputation on peacekeeping missions, or so they think, but would bring more attention to the abuse, and as such open more of an international platform for discussion on the matter, removing the label of a taboo topic.

A more transparent approach would mean more international pressure on both the perpetrators, and their higher ups. Needless to say, the U.N is not the only one resorting to closed doors; troop contributing countries have been witnessed to handle cases of sexual misconduct quietly and without public attention, in fears of tarnishing the reputation of their military training programs. The wall of silence put up by the organization and its member states is protecting these perpetrators, as fears of embarrassment and pride are dominating over compassion and care.

“And we, the Member States, have refrained from opening up that subject to public discourse over the past 60 years because of what? Because sentiments of pride, mixed in with a deep sense of embarrassment, have often produced in us only outright denials. And yet almost all countries that have participated in United Nations peacekeeping operations have, at one stage or another, had some reason to feel deeply ashamed over the activities of some of their peacekeepers.” (U.N 2005, 3)

Increased transparency on SEA cases would work as a strong incentive for peacekeeping personnel to obey the codes of conduct and properly display the values promoted by the organization. Fears of any criminal behavior during missions being uncovered at home should stop at least some of the perpetrators from acting. “One soldier in the Nepali contingent, for example, noted that they have had no problems with SEA because they anticipate severe punishment if they do, with social humiliation in front of their families at home as the strongest disincentive.” (Lutz, et al. 2009, 10) Additionally increased transparency would also make the collaboration between the U.N and its member states significantly easier, when fears of leaked reports making the organization look bad could be forgotten. It is time for the organization and its member states to swallow their pride and start

actively spreading knowledge of the abuse and exploitation, to stop further harm from happening, and to open the platform for new ideas.

CONCLUSIONS

U.N peacekeeping missions have helped a countless number of people suffering from violence, poverty and need. The missions have brought stability, prosperity and a brighter future to places where it was once deemed impossible. It is unfortunate that there are some who exploit the system, and further abuse those who most need their help, and in doing so blatantly dishonor the values hold by the U.N.

The issue of SEA in the hands of the peacekeepers is a difficult and complex problem, to which there is no easy solution. The epidemic of abuse is causing harm to the pristine reputation of the U.N, as the peacekeeping operations can no longer be the topic of a conversation without mentioning the continuing abuse and horrendous stories of exploitation, some of which are so appalling that it makes one question the capabilities of the human race. Most of all it is harming the true cause of the operations, the rebuilding process and the regrowth of these societies, as locals fall into the circle of sex work and exploitation, hindering development and creating deep distrust in all of U.N's efforts on building a stable and thriving environment. Furthermore, it is causing unforgivable harm for local people, who after periods of war and unimaginable afflictions end up in the hands of those, who despite of making promises of a better future, abuse and exploit them, like others before.

As the issue has now been around for more than two decades it seems clear that any of the current solutions aren't working in the expected way. The ten rules of conduct failed to make a lasting impact, as did the Zero Tolerance Policy and the current three-pronged strategy, and although improvements have been made, they are nowhere near sufficient. There are many troubling issues in the current method of dealing with these cases, however, the lack of defining results seem to boil down to one simple fact, the reluctance to, and thus the lack of enforcing resolutions. That mixed with its culture of impunity present both in these countries, and in the U.N renders possible new solutions and assistance to victims too slow and ineffective.

The resolutions are not properly enforced by the organization, or by its member states, and as such have little to no effect on the ground. In order to eliminate the abuse and

exploitation for good, this reluctance to act should be overcome. This again can be fixed with proper cooperation from member countries and especially troop contributing countries that receive information of misconduct. The unwillingness to admit to certain stigmatized crimes by troop contributing countries, and the downplaying of the abuse, which is still happening both inside and out of the U.N, needs to come to an end.

In the end it is impossible to prevent all abuse from happening, whatever the methods used. However it is not impossible to hold the perpetrators accountable for their actions. There should not be an understanding of impunity among the peacekeeping personnel, as every person should be held accountable in front of the law, especially those who have sworn to help and respect others and the values that the U.N holds.

To achieve definite improvements some drastic changes are in order. The relationship between U.N and its member states should project seamless collaboration; a more transparent stance on SEA issues would make this easier, and thus should be the goal. The cases will no doubt keep occurring unless perpetrators notice a significant change in the consequences of these crimes, and to do so they should be properly investigated and prosecuted. Furthermore, the procedure of prosecution should be made much easier, to not let the perpetrators exploit the system which they are working under. Additionally, the active recruitment of more women to the peacekeeping personnel seems detrimental in decreasing the numbers of SEA, and in creating a deeper connection between the locals and the U.N.

As the exploitation and abuse is no longer the exception to the rule as much as it is the rule itself, it requires new means of targeting the issue, resolute enforcement of the old ones and international recognition in order to remove the stigma surrounding the topic. Bringing more attention and immediate help to the victims, as well as certain prosecution for the perpetrators should be considered detrimental in eliminating the problem for good.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Abbreviations

U.N = United Nations

SEA = Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

MONUC = United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

MONUSCO = United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

MINUSTAH = United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti

UNMIL = United Nations Mission in Liberia

CDU = Conduct and Discipline Unit

OIOS = Office of Internal Oversight

DRC = Democratic Republic of the Congo