

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE IN PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS: UNITED
NATIONS LEGITIMACY

By

MORGAN WALLACE

A Thesis Submitted to The W.A. Franke Honors College

In Partial Fulfillment of the Bachelors degree
With Honors in

Political Science

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

M A Y 2 0 2 2

Approved by:

Dr. Jessica Maves Braithwaite
School of Government and Public Policy

Abstract

This paper discusses the theme of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions, specifically at the hands of peacekeepers and more broadly within the host country. The prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse have threatened the legitimacy of the United Nations and have called into question the peace-building process. To combat negative international attention and bring more focus to the original goals of peacekeeping, the United Nations has undergone reforms in peacekeeping missions. In recent years there has been a stronger focus outside of just conflict containment and maintaining ceasefires. Currently, the United Nations follows the multidimensional approach and creates comprehensive mission mandates that have added more humanitarian focus to missions. Following the passing of Resolution 1325, mission mandates will now commonly include language pertaining to violence against women and more recently specific language about sexual exploitation and abuse. UNMIL, the United Nation's Mission in Liberia, first deploying in 2003 and completing its' mission mandates in 2018 provides a lens into the most recent waves of peacekeeping missions. There is specific language about sexual exploitation and abuse, and as a completed mission there are many studies and articles examining the mission.

Introduction

Peacekeeping operations over time have changed to encompass additional criteria for success, with a focus on humanitarian support. The legitimacy of the United Nations has been called into question, following blatant failures of the United Nations. These failures have conscribed the United Nations to make reforms to their peace-building process.

One of the failures of the United Nations was the prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse of civilians in peacekeeping missions, often being perpetrated by those sent in to provide stability and protection for the population. There is a need for research around this area, as many abuses go unreported and have a devastating impact on the communities affected.

History of Peacekeeping

The United Nations' first peacekeeping mission took place when the Security Council authorized the deploying United Nations military observers to the Middle East in 1948.¹ Overall there have been more than 70 missions deployed from more than 120 different countries.² The United Nations gains the ability to send peacekeeping forces into a host country to carry out a mission mandate under Chapter VI and Chapter VII. "Chapter VI of the Charter to seek a solution by peaceful means, mainly by: (a) Negotiation (b) Conciliation (c) Mediation (d) Arbitration (e) Peaceful settlement (f) Resort to regional agencies or arrangements."³ Chapter VII focuses on the military and nonmilitary actions the United Nations can take to maintain international peace and security. Combined these powers allows for the deployment of United Nations personnel under

¹ "Our History Peacekeeping." United Nations. United Nations. Accessed May 4, 2022. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/our-history>.

² Ibid.

³ Sunil Ram. *Peace Operations Training Institute*. Williamsburg, VA: Peace Operations Training Institute, 2006.

consent from the host country.⁴ The United Nations has played a significant role in the maintenance of international peace and security, conflict mitigation and reduction of conflict, and has even won a Nobel Peace Prize for their work.⁵

The conception of peacekeeping was followed with Cold War tensions. Due to the nature of the Security Council containing five permanent members China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States with veto powers there were often political deadlocks, allowing for only a few peacekeeping missions to be deployed in this time.⁶ The mission types that were deployed were limited to concise mandates with smaller scopes, usually ceasefires and observation missions. As the Cold War ended and tensions were reduced the Security Council began deploying missions more often and with greater scopes. “In the 40 year period between 1948 and 1988, the United Nations launched 15 peacekeeping operations; in the subsequent 10 years, 34 new operations were established.”⁷ The new peacekeeping missions “assumed a much wider range of responsibilities, including the organization and monitoring of elections; promotion and protection of human rights; assistance with the delivery of humanitarian aid; disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of armed groups; and training of police forces.”⁸ These new kind of mission are referred to as multidimensional and have a greater look at humanitarian support, rather than, from just a military perspective. The aim of multidimensional

⁴Usden, Rebecca, and Hubertus Juergenliemk. *History of UN Peacekeeping*. Global Governance Institute , n.d.

⁵ United Nations Peacekeeping Forces – Nobel Lecture. NobelPrize.org. Nobel Prize Outreach AB 2022. Tue. 3 May 2022. <<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1988/un/lecture/>>

⁶ “Our History Peacekeeping.” United Nations. United Nations. Accessed May 4, 2022. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/our-history>.

⁷ John Gledhill, Richard Caplan & Maline Meiske (2021) Developing peace: the evolution of development goals and activities in United Nations peacekeeping, *Oxford Development Studies*, 49:3, 201-229, DOI: [10.1080/13600818.2021.1924126](https://doi.org/10.1080/13600818.2021.1924126)

⁸ Ibid.

missions was to create an environment in the host country where prolonged peace and stability was introduced, through the means of reformation to existing institutions.

The multidimensional missions “generally have three pillars: (1) a diplomatic and political pillar; (2) a military pillar (Blue Helmets); and (3) a humanitarian pillar.”⁹ The personnel that are included within the typical mission are “Blue Helmets (generally in the majority and deployed in contingents), civilian police officers, civilian personnel, UN volunteers and military observers.”¹⁰ The personnel that are typically employed for these mission come from neighboring countries, which presents issues when peacekeeping mission often result out of regional disputes. At the heart of many country’s actions within the United Nations is national self-interest.¹¹ Because peacekeeping forces belong to the military of the country providing peacekeepers to a mission, it is difficult for the United Nations to provide punishments against peacekeepers if they were to abuse their powers.¹²

Conceptualizing Success

Success in peacekeeping missions is difficult to determine as over time their mandates have expanded and there is not existing metric on which to determine success compared to failure. There is heavy debate within the peacebuilding community on what metrics should be considered in evaluating success, as well as how they should be applied to different

⁹ Hatto, Ronald. “From Peacekeeping to Peacebuilding: the Evolution of the Role of the United Nations in Peace Operations.” *International Review of the Red Cross* 95, no. 891-892 (2013): 495–515.
doi:10.1017/S1816383114000277.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Wedgwood, Ruth (1995) "The Evolution of United Nations Peacekeeping," *Cornell International Law Journal*: Vol. 28: Iss. 3, Article 3. Available at: <http://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/cilj/vol28/iss3/3>

¹² “Military Peacekeeping.” United Nations. United Nations. Accessed May 4, 2022.
<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/military>.

peacekeeping missions. There have been multiple waves of peacebuilding; when peacebuilding first became a staple of the United Nations in the 1990s efforts focused on conflict mitigation, however, following the 2000s there was greater emphasis on creating missions with increased parameters and therefore, further places for scrutiny. The debate then centers around if the increase in mission mandates should be evaluated when considering ultimate success of the mission. The most common marker of a successful mission is the reduction of violence or end of a conflict. Conversely, if a host country of a peacekeeping mission were to continue or start conflict after the mission, it would be considered a failure. Success can broadly be defined as limiting violence, reducing human suffering, and containing the conflict as well as fulfilling the missions mandate.¹³ Within the new movement of peacekeeping, effort is being taken to ensure favorable conditions for the subsequent peace process, following reduction of violence.¹⁴ Scholars have identified four main markers of success, however, overall, this area demands further study.

Firstly, the main goal in all peacekeeping missions is to limit violence and conflict. Peacekeepers are often deployed to maintain a ceasefire, especially in the early days of peacekeeping, and maintain no to low violence is a metric by which success can be measured. Secondly, there is the goal to reduce human rights atrocities and abuses, if they were to occur within an active mission this would be a sign of failure. Thirdly, preventing the spread of conflict to other regions or beyond its original boundaries, including refugees is a hallmark of a successful mission. Fourthly, the creation of a stable environment in the host country for elections, military, and

¹³ Darya Pushkina (2006) A recipe for success? Ingredients of a successful peacekeeping mission, *International Peacekeeping*, 13:2, 133-149, DOI: [10.1080/13533310500436508](https://doi.org/10.1080/13533310500436508)

¹⁴ Hultman, Lisa, Jacob Kathman, and Megan Shannon. 2014. "Beyond keeping peace: United Nations effectiveness in the midst of fighting." *American Political Science Review* 108(4): 737-753.

cultural norms to take place in, leading to further stability in the region and an overall reduction of root causes.¹⁵

One sign of success could be economic recovery, as this signals peace for an extended time, as well as having tackled a number of the root causes that often effect the economy.¹⁶ However, often times the metrics that many missions are judged on often have more to do with blatant failures than identifying a target or goal that is deemed successful. Peacekeeping and state-building have become intertwined concepts. The more democratic a state has become the more successful the mission.¹⁷ The goal of peacebuilding is to create not only “negative space” but “positive space” as well.¹⁸ Negative space is defined by the lack of violence such as conflicts or wars, while positive space is defined by the long-term hallmarks of peace. There is an assumption about creating positive programs for change and that change will lead to other positive changes within the root of the problem or all “good things lead to good things.”¹⁹ Some local actors feel as though their becoming pushed out of the creation of their own programs and involvement in their local communities. By engaging with local communities and opening dialogues, longer lasting and more effective changes in building peace can occur.²⁰

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Charles T. Call (2008) *Knowing Peace When You See It: Setting Standards for Peacebuilding Success*, *Civil Wars*, 10:2, 173-194, DOI: [10.1080/13698240802062747](https://doi.org/10.1080/13698240802062747)

¹⁷ Di Salvatore, Jessica, and Andrea Ruggeri. “Effectiveness of peacekeeping operations.” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.586>

¹⁸ Autesserre, Séverine. “International peacebuilding and local success: Assumptions and effectiveness.” *International Studies Review* 19.1 (2017): 114-132.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Smidt, Hannah M. “United Nations peacekeeping locally: enabling conflict resolution, reducing communal violence.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 64.2-3 (2020): 344-372.

Looking at violence against civilians during peacekeeping operations can demonstrate if peacekeepers are limiting violence. The metric for failure is continuation of or reversion to violence, except what happens in the interim is also important. A study looked at rates of violence against civilians before peacekeepers entered and during their deployment. The study found “there is no strong evidence that the behaviour of governments is affected by peace operations: in general, there is no significant dampening effect of peacekeepers on the level of violence carried out by governments.”²¹ Possible explanations for this include retaliation by hostile groups towards civilians as last efforts to prevent United Nations involvement. Peacekeepers have faced criticism before in missions such as Rwanda for not being able to control violence. The legitimacy of peacekeepers and mission success as a whole is threatened by their inability to provide relief in the short term. However, an area that can be overlooked is how much more likely conflict is to occur if peacekeepers are not present. Just the presence of peacekeepers within a country can dissuade violence, a study found that risk of armed conflict increases to over 70% without peacekeeping being deployed to neighboring conflicts.²² Often times there can be spill overs in violence to neighboring countries that are experiencing violence, such as civil war, and the presence of peacekeepers tempers this.

When conceptualizing the successfulness of a peacekeeping mission, all of these components are important to include and assess. The mission mandate can also be a metric of measurement for the successfulness of a mission. When failure to fulfill or explicit violations of the mandate occur, especially when peacekeepers themselves are perpetrators of activities such as sexual

²¹ Lisa Hultman (2010) Keeping Peace or Spurring Violence? Unintended Effects of Peace Operations on Violence against Civilians, *Civil Wars*, 12:1-2, 29-46, DOI: [10.1080/13698249.2010.484897](https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2010.484897)

²² Beardsley, Kyle. 2011. “Peacekeeping and the contagion of armed conflict.” *The Journal of Politics* 73(4): 1051-1064.

exploitation and abuse, it threatens not only the legitimacy of peacekeeping but the success of a mission.

History of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

The United Nations defines sexual abuse as “actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.”²³ The United Nations defines sexual exploitation as “any actual or attempted abuse of 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.”²⁴ Peacekeepers fit this definition of power differentials due to their position. One of the main uses of peacekeepers is to counteract violence and bring stability to the region in which they have been deployed. However, the proliferation of sexual violence during peacekeeping missions, threatens their own legitimacy. The United Nations recognizes that “The UN Standards of Conduct apply to all categories of personnel deployed in UN missions. There is a three-pronged strategy to address misconduct: prevention, enforcement of the UN Standards of Conduct, and remedial action. UN personnel in the field are the face of the Organization to the people we are sent to protect and support, and the Organization is fully committed to working together with Member States to ensure that all United Nations personnel, whether civilian, police, or military are accountable for their conduct while in the service of a UN field mission.”²⁵

²³ Issue brief. *Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse : Report of the Secretary-General. A/58/777*. UN. Secretary-General, 2004.

²⁴ *Glossary on sexual exploitation and Abuse - HR Portal*. (n.d.). Retrieved March 1, 2022, from https://hr.un.org/sites/hr.un.org/files/SEA%20Glossary%20%20%5BSecond%20Edition%20-%202017%5D%20-%20English_0.pdf

²⁵ Conduct in UN Field Missions. Accessed April 30, 2022. <https://conduct.unmissions.org/>.

Historically the United Nations has a far from perfect record when it comes to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions. The first instance of reported sexual exploitation and abuse was in 1993 in the mission in Cambodia, with several following instances. Action first taken was in 2003 when Kofi Annan, the Secretary General at the time, announced the policy that forbade the peacekeeping forces from exchanging money, food, help, or anything of value for sex.²⁶ Data collection on sexual exploitation and abuse has been underwhelming, with often underrepresented numbers. Eventually, the United Nations began to make policies and officially recognize their shortcomings in terms of preventing sexual exploitation and abuse during missions.

The United Nations has passed several landmark Resolutions on the premise that increasing the number of women in the peace building process will be beneficial in limiting sexual exploitation by peacekeeping forces, as well as the community at large. Resolution 1325 was passed in 2000 and was the first attempt at creating language and policies in this area. To highlight a few significant clause, Clause Four “Further urges the Secretary-General to seek to expand the role and contribution of women in United Nations field-based operations, and especially among military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel.” Clause Six touches on providing guidelines and materials on protection and rights of women and girls to United Nations Member States and training programs undertaken in Member States for military and civilian police personnel in preparation for their deployment and the Secretary General will provide the training to civilian personnel in peacekeeping operations. Clause Ten “Calls on all

²⁶ Karim, Sabrina, and Kyle Beardsley. 2016. “Explaining sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions: The role of female peacekeepers and gender equality in contributing countries.” *Journal of Peace Research* 53(1): 100-115.

parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict.” And Clause Eleven “Emphasizes the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls, and in this regard stresses the need to exclude these crimes, where feasible from amnesty provisions.”²⁷

United Nations Resolution 1820 was passed in 2008. To highlight important clauses to the discussion of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions; Clause Six “Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and its Working Group and relevant States, as appropriate, to develop and implement appropriate training programs for all peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel deployed by the United Nations in the context of missions as mandated by the Council to help them better prevent, recognize and respond to sexual violence and other forms of violence against civilians.” Clause Seven “Requests the Secretary-General to continue and strengthen efforts to implement the policy of zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations; and urges troop and police contributing countries to take appropriate preventative action, including pre-deployment and in-theater awareness training, and other action to ensure full accountability in cases of such conduct involving their personnel.” And Clause Eight “Encourages troop and police contributing countries, in consultation with the Secretary-General, to consider steps they could take to heighten awareness and the

²⁷ S/RES/1325 (2000)

responsiveness of their personnel participating in UN peacekeeping operations to protect civilians, including women and children, and prevent sexual violence against women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations, including wherever possible the deployment of a higher percentage of women peacekeepers or police.”²⁸

Resolution 1960 was passed in 2010. The most significant clause is Clause Three which “Encourages the Secretary-General to include in his annual reports submitted pursuant to resolutions 1820 (2008) and 1888 (2009) detailed information on parties to armed conflict that are credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for acts of rape or other forms of sexual violence, and to list in an annex to these annual reports the parties that are credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for patterns of rape and other forms of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict on the Security Council agenda; expresses its intention to use this list as a basis for more focused United Nations engagement with those parties, including, as appropriate, measures in accordance with the procedures of the relevant sanctions committees.”²⁹ Resolution 2467 was passed in 2019 and contains additional language on preventing gender based violence. Clause 24 “Recognizes the role of United Nations peacekeeping contingents in preventing sexual violence, and, in this respect, calls for pre-deployment and in mission training of troop- and police-contributing country contingents to include training on sexual and gender-based violence and encourages integration of this competence into the performance and operational readiness standards against which troops and police are assessed.” And Clause 25 “Welcomes the Secretary-General’s decision that all state actors repeatedly listed in the annexes of his reports on Sexual Violence in Conflict and Children

²⁸ S/RES/1820 (2008)

²⁹ “Security Council Resolution 1960.” PeaceWomen, November 6, 2015. <https://www.peacewomen.org/SCR-1960>.

and Armed Conflict are prohibited from participating in United Nations peacekeeping operations, and urges those troop- and police-contributing countries that are currently listed to cease such violations and abuses, and expeditiously implement action plans in accordance with paragraph 1 of this resolution, thereby avoiding suspension from peace operations.”³⁰

Resolution 1325 does not do a significant amount to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, especially at the hands of peacekeeping forces beyond education. Resolution 1325 focuses more on bringing attention to the issues that continue to prevail in peacekeeping missions. However, because of Resolution 1325, more positive attention was brought to this issue and the United Nations was able to lay the foundation for further actions. This was a significant step forward in terms of bringing visibility, as in the previous decade there was little language in the United Nations discussing the prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions or even more broadly, within the community. Further discussion and action came with Resolution 1820, just eight years later. Resolution 1820 also touches on training programs for peacekeeping personnel; however, it also starts to bring in conjoined issues as well. There is discussion about how peacekeeping forces would be held accountable and awareness of increasing the number of female peacekeepers as a preventative measure. Resolution 1960 has some of the “teeth” that past Resolutions have lacked, as the creation of the list brings some restitution to the victims and in general a greater awareness of the seriousness of the abuse. Resolution 2467 has some more specific language and encourages individual countries to develop training mechanism and hold the troops that they contribute to the United Nations standards. Resolution 2538 passed in 2020

³⁰ S/RES/2467 (2019)

even encourages all countries to include women more substantially in the peacebuilding process.³¹ The United Nations in the past few decades has developed a framework to follow and now struggles to gain uniform application. These resolutions have helped move United Nations policy in a positive direction and over the past few decades there has been considerable growth. However, it is important that the United Nations remains seized of the issue, as there is still much work to be done.

In 2004 the United Nations Secretary General began to issue reports on “Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.” The report overall discusses reports of sexual exploitation and abuse in the prior year, acknowledgement of underreported data, and an outline for combatting sexual exploitation and abuse throughout the United Nations. In the 2004 report, the Secretariat received a response from 48 United Nations entities regarding their query into sexual exploitation and abuse; 6 entities, including the Department of Peacekeeping Operations reported cases. “The Department of Peacekeeping Operations reported 24 new cases. In two of the five cases where the alleged perpetrators were civilian personnel, serious misconduct was found to have occurred and appropriate disciplinary action was taken. As for the 19 cases in which military personnel were allegedly involved, investigations revealed serious misconduct in eight cases and appropriate action was taken,” the 14 cases were all under investigation at the publication of the report.³² The Secretary General’s reports did not begin providing supplemental reports pertaining to numbers and cause of sexual exploitation and abuse until 2017. The section dedicated towards further prevention in the Secretary General’s report, specifically mentions they will seek “the support of Member States in ensuring that military personnel serving with

³¹ S/RES/2538 (2020)

³² A/58/777

United Nations peacekeeping operations are held accountable for any acts of sexual exploitation and abuse.”³³ Overall, there are limited mentions of solutions that go beyond creation of bulletins and raising awareness throughout the programs.

Following the 2004 report, there have been robust efforts by the United Nations to continue to battle the existence of sexual exploitation and abuse throughout all missions as well as generally in the decades that follow their first attempts. In the most recent report, released March of 2022, which details the efforts of 2021, there is a greater breadth of policy and discussion. Since the first report issued, the Secretariat has added more goals and programs to tackle the issue that continues to prevail. In these goals, lies a more victim-based approach; in the early days the United Nations focused on training staff as a tool to prevent. However, currently the United Nations focuses on victim restitution and training victims and citizens more broadly on their rights.³⁴ These approaches, focus on prevention but also seeking aid and resources for those already affected by sexual exploitation and abuse at the hands of peacekeepers.

Sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers damages the societies they are deployed to protect in several ways. Firstly, sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeeping forces is a violation of basic human rights, which the United Nations fights to secure for all. Secondly, sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeeping forces threatens the peacekeepers’ own legitimacy. By practicing this behavior, peacekeepers set back trust in the population and might even lead to having a population they are there to aid, have that population refuse the aid. Thirdly, these actions of exploitation and abuse can set back gender dynamics in the region

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ A/76/702

where peacekeepers are deployed. Commonly, in multidimensional missions, there is a focus on the promotion of gender equality; by having peacekeeping forces participate in sexual exploitation and abuse, these actions threaten the community's perception of gender equality and make them less likely to embrace gender equality, as a whole.³⁵ Lastly, the United Nations has received negative attention from the international community when the allegations of widespread sexual exploitation and abuse at the hands of peacekeepers came to light. The New York Times published an article in 2005 that questioned how peacekeepers could accomplish their mission while they are exploiting a vulnerable population.³⁶ The United Nations, itself, identified in a report that the most significant risk to public legitimacy was sexual exploitation and abuse because the ultimate purpose was to protect civilians and the prevention of conflict recidivism.³⁷

The role of peacekeepers in more recent multidimensional missions is to not just bring peace and security, but to work at the fundamental underlying issues of what contributed to the conflict. Oftentimes following a conflict, peacekeepers will come in and need to deal with a society that was just involved in violence. Militias that were previously active are then disarmed and disbanded, when reintegrating them into societies there can be increased violence to civilians, however, peacekeepers can function as a barrier to prevent exploitation and abuse. Peacekeepers train local police, take care of known abusers, and reform institutions.³⁸

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ "The Worse U.N. Scandal." The New York Times. The New York Times, October 24, 2005. <https://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/24/opinion/the-worse-un-scandal.html>.

³⁷ Moncrief, Stephen. "Military Socialization, Disciplinary Culture, and Sexual Violence in UN Peacekeeping Operations." *Journal of Peace Research* 54, no. 5 (September 2017): 715–30. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343317716784>.

³⁸ Kirschner, Shanna, and Adam Miller. "Does Peacekeeping Really Bring Peace? Peacekeepers and Combatant-Perpetrated Sexual Violence in Civil Wars." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 63, no. 9 (October 2019): 2043–70. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002719831069>.

Overall, this area is vastly understudied. This issue is hard to study and get reliable data on, due to underreporting and stigmas related to sexual exploitation and abuse. Those being abused are unlikely to file complaints about abuse done by peacekeepers due to threat of retaliation and power imbalance. The first study that viewed empirical data related to variation of date related to causation of sexual exploitation and abuse was done in 2013 by Ragnhild Nordås & Siri C. A. Rustad. Quoting the study “the systematic analysis of this data indicates that SEA was more frequently reported in situations with lower levels of battle-related deaths, in larger operations, in more recent operations, the less developed the country hosting the mission, and in operations where the conflict involved high levels of sexual violence.”³⁹ This study demonstrates that even in missions where sexual exploitation and abuse are perpetrated the rates of reporting change and depend on the circumstances of the mission. The reporting that does take place, the United Nations publishes. The United Nations breaks down their data to include the total number of allegations, number of subjects involved, number of victims involved, the distinction between if they were an adult or child, if the allegation pertained to sexual abuse or sexual exploitation, paternity, the department responsible for the investigation, and the results of the investigation.⁴⁰ In general, there are more reports of sexual exploitation and abuse from 2005 onwards.⁴¹ There are several explanations for higher reporting after 2005, most likely resulting from greater attention by the United Nations and their polices to combat sexual exploitation and abuse in the communities where peacekeepers are deployed to. According to the most recent data available,

³⁹ Ragnhild Nordås & Siri C. A. Rustad (2013) Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by Peacekeepers: Understanding Variation, *International Interactions*, 39:4, 511-534, DOI: [10.1080/03050629.2013.805128](https://doi.org/10.1080/03050629.2013.805128)

⁴⁰Rep. *Updated Information on All Allegations, as Reported to Peacekeeping and Special Political Missions between 1 January 2010 and 31 December 2014, Involving Personnel in Field Missions Supported by the Department of Field Support* . United Nations, 2022.
https://conduct.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/update_to_information_on_all_allegations_reported_in_peacekeeping_and_special_political_missions_-_2010-2020.pdf

⁴¹ Ragnhild Nordås & Siri C. A. Rustad (2013) Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by Peacekeepers: Understanding Variation, *International Interactions*, 39:4, 511-534, DOI: [10.1080/03050629.2013.805128](https://doi.org/10.1080/03050629.2013.805128)

in 2020, a breakdown of allegations revealed that in those involving police personnel there were 7 allegations, in allegations involving civilian and other personnel there were 18 allegations, and for allegations involving military personnel there were 41 allegations.⁴²

Reporting of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers is low and contributes to the lack of understanding and knowledge in the topic. There are several contributing factors as to why sexual exploitation and abuse, specifically by peacekeepers, would be under reported. One study asserts that the gender makeup of missions, especially historically, is comprised of men. Due to the male-centered dynamics, this creates a “wall of silence” where the culture inside the organization is to protect the members and therefore, sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers will be underreported.⁴³ Furthermore, there is a stigma against “whistle blowers” and it is not likely that someone would come forward if they saw or knew that sexual exploitation and abuse was taking place. This behavior is institutionalized within the system as the culture is considered “hyper-masculine” and is often written off for male-oriented institutions, such as peacekeeping.⁴⁴

There have been several initiatives and goals by the United Nations to increase the number of female peacekeepers in all positions deployed in missions of all kinds. There has been growth within the past few decades; in 1993 only 1% of deployed uniformed personnel were women, in 2020, “out of approximately 95,000 peacekeepers, women constitute 4.8% of military

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Defeis, Elizabeth F. "U.N. Peacekeepers and Sexual Abuse and Exploitation: An End to Impunity." *Washington University Global Studies Law Review* 7, no. 2 (2008): 185.

⁴⁴ Karim, Sabrina, and Kyle Beardsley. “Explaining Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Peacekeeping Missions: The Role of Female Peacekeepers and Gender Equality in Contributing Countries.” *Journal of Peace Research* 53, no. 1 (2016): 100–115. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43920585>.

contingents and 10.9% of formed police units and 34% of justice and corrections government-provided personnel in UN Peacekeeping missions.”⁴⁵ While the United Nations encourages a greater increase in deployment of women, ultimately that is a decision of the of country contributing the peacekeeping forces. Therefore, there needs to be a larger discussion about gender composition of militaries and similar institutions domestically. “The 2028 target for women serving in military contingents is 15%, and 25% for military observers and staff officers. The 2028 target for women serving in formed police units is 20%, and 30% for individual police officers.”⁴⁶

The push to increase the percentage of women in the peacekeeping sector is supported by the change they are possible in affecting. “Female peacekeepers are able to interact with an often-neglected 50% of the population about particular women's concerns such as sexual violence, domestic abuse, and reproductive health. Female peacekeepers have a comparative operational advantage in sensitive situations like house searches, body searches, working in women's prisons, interviewing victims of SGBV, providing escorts for victims/witnesses, and screening women combatants at disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) sites.”⁴⁷ There are existing cultural prohibitions about how women can discuss issues of a sexual nature with men or women may feel uncomfortable discussing or reporting an assault to a man; by adding women to peacekeeping forces it contributes to a comfortable environment for more additional reporting or discussion of rights to occur.⁴⁸ Increasing the amount of women in peacekeeping missions

⁴⁵ “Women in Peacekeeping Peacekeeping.” United Nations. United Nations. Accessed April 30, 2022. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/women-peacekeeping>.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Sabrina Karim & Kyle Beardsley (2013) Female Peacekeepers and Gender Balancing: Token Gestures or Informed Policymaking?, *International Interactions*, 39:4, 461-488, DOI: [10.1080/03050629.2013.805131](https://doi.org/10.1080/03050629.2013.805131)

⁴⁸ Lesley Pruitt (2012) Looking Back, Moving Forward: International Approaches to Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, 33:4, 299-321, DOI: [10.1080/1554477X.2012.722430](https://doi.org/10.1080/1554477X.2012.722430)

also reflects the makeup of the community they are serving and they are potential role models who can affect positive change for women’s rights in general.⁴⁹ Additionally, by adding female peacekeepers to previously male-centered missions, the United Nations is adding a gendered view of peacebuilding and increases the availability of advocates for women that can aid in counteracting the masculine military culture that is often prevalent in these conflict-affected societies.

Use of Mandates

Mandates are essential in outlining specific tasks that comprise peacekeeping missions and creating a mechanism to ensure success in multiple components. In more recent peacekeeping missions, the mandate often includes a wide variety of goals and formal legal foundation of the mission assigned by the Security Council; while the Security Council holds sole authority to define and ratify mission mandates, they often consult with other branches of the United Nations, passed mission mandates and other authorities.⁵⁰ In the Secretary General’s June 1992 report, the Secretary General recognized that an important component to mission mandates were the practicality of being within the United Nations operational capacity and supported by the host country.⁵¹ Over the years, peacekeeping missions and their mandates have undergone fundamental reform. The tasks assigned by the mandates have significantly expanded due to

⁴⁹ “Women in Peacekeeping Peacekeeping.” United Nations. United Nations. Accessed April 30, 2022. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/women-peacekeeping>.

⁵⁰ Lloyd, Gabriella. “New Data on UN Mission Mandates 1948–2015: Tasks Assigned to Missions in Their Mandates (TAMM).” *Journal of Peace Research* 58, no. 5 (September 2021): 1149–60. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343320980822>.

⁵¹ Office, U.S. Government Accountability. “U.N. Peacekeeping: Observations on Mandates and Operational Capability.” *U.N. Peacekeeping: Observations on Mandates and Operational Capability* | U.S. GAO. Accessed May 4, 2022. <https://www.gao.gov/products/t-nsiad-93-15>.

“shifting patterns of conflict and to best address threats to international peace and security.”⁵²

Additionally, there have been several high-profile failures of peacekeeping missions, such as in Rwanda, that have called for reform in mission mandates and approach at peacebuilding and peacekeeping levels.⁵³

A critic of this reformed approach says that “clarity and brevity of mandate are a rarity. It is now not uncommon for peacekeeping mandates to run for several pages. The mandate for the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), for instance, contains 41 separate tasks. It can be argued that these Christmas wish list mandates, which currently guide many UN peace operations, divert attention away from the core priorities of the mission — the establishment of security and the nurturing of the political process.”⁵⁴

These criticisms certainly have merit as the United Nations may not be able to achieve a long list of goals in every mission. This would technically result in a failure of these goals and peacekeeping missions, that are already placed under scrutiny, could be further questioned.

However, on the other side, by adding more goals and making missions more multidimensional the United Nations is able to dig at deep-seeded, institutionalized issues that past missions have failed to identify or address. By tackling additional challenges, the peacekeeping missions can affect more and longer lasting change within the host country by setting them up for institutionalized success. With longer and more detailed missions the United Nations is also able to include previously overlooked issues, such as sexual violence against women.

⁵² “Mandates and the Legal Basis for Peacekeeping Peacekeeping.” United Nations. United Nations. Accessed May 4, 2022. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mandates-and-legal-basis-peacekeeping>.

⁵³ Tanja R. Müller (2020) Protection of Civilians Mandates and ‘Collateral Damage’ of UN Peacekeeping Missions: Histories of Refugees from Darfur, *International Peacekeeping*, 27:5, 760-784, DOI: [10.1080/13533312.2020.1803745](https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2020.1803745)

⁵⁴ Nadin, Peter. “An Argument for More Focused UN Peacekeeping Mandates.” *Our World*. Accessed May 4, 2022. <https://ourworld.unu.edu/en/an-argument-for-more-focused-un-peacekeeping-mandates>.

After the adoption of Resolution 1325 in 2000, there has been a greater effort to include specific language about women, peace, and security issues in United Nations resolutions and mission mandates. The United Nations after Resolution 1325 took greater effort to expand the role of women in international peace and security and to introduce a greater gender perspective in discussion and application. Currently, of the twelve missions that are active, nine of those missions has a mandate that explicitly includes language about women, peace, and security.⁵⁵

The wording of mandates in peacekeeping missions can often be contentious, as countries with sometimes opposing cultural expectations must come together. The wording of United Nation's resolutions or mandates communicates to the international community the direction and sentiments of the body and can affect application and enforcement. Drafting of language that is used to promote women, peace, and security is usually taken from previous resolutions, as this language has already been approved by Security Council members and is being put into action in other missions. Therefore, new language or a change in language can be difficult to get included and change can be slow moving.

There has been some criticism regarding how mandates related to women, peace, and security frame their language about women.⁵⁶ In the wording of mandates women are often included with children when discussing issues such as providing security or violence perpetrated towards them. By including women with children together as a grouping, this communicates that they lack agency or are helpless. By perpetuating these kinds of stereotypes female peacekeepers are

⁵⁵ Sharland, Lisa. "Women, Peace, and Security Mandates for UN Peacekeeping Operations: Assessing Influence and Impact." International Peace Institute, January 2021.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

viewed as less effective than their male counterparts, which reinforces the idea of the man as the protector and the woman as the one in need of protection. These views can lead to women in the field being marginalized or even reassigned.⁵⁷ Additionally, by including language that only aims to increase their participation it can create more work for female peacekeepers and can lead to potential backlash if they fail. When women are only assigned to gendered roles this can limit their capacity to seek roles outside of these stereotypes that are being reenforced.⁵⁸

The inclusion of language pertaining to women, peace, and security in all mission mandates is generally a step forward, the implementation and result must follow. There must be adequate training, promotion, and support in the field to ensure that mission mandates are being fulfilled to their fullest extent. At the field level it is the responsibility of senior leadership, as well as those deployed to emulate the direction of the United Nations.

UNMIL

By looking at a specific peacekeeping mission that has been deemed a success when completing its' mandates, we can learn more about how to design future peacekeeping missions to address similar issues related to women, peace, and security in other conflict-affected states. The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) was established via Resolution 1509 in 2003, with the aim of creating a ceasefire between the parties engaged in a civil war.⁵⁹ In 2018, UNMIL was deemed to be a success, as it had accomplished its mission mandates and restored peace back to

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Wilén, Nina. "Female Peacekeepers' Added Burden." *International Affairs* 96, no. 6 (2020): 1585–1602. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iaaa132>.

⁵⁹ "UNMIL Peacekeeping." United Nations. United Nations. Accessed May 4, 2022. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/unmil>.

the region. UNMIL was a mission that took place after the major failures of the United Nations in the 1990s and where the focus of UN peacekeeping generally had turned towards adopting multidimensional missions. UNMIL also specifically contains language about sexual exploitation and abuse, which was significant for the United Nations to start including in mission mandates.

Mandates

In the original resolution establishing the mandates for the UNMIL mission, there was a focus on four components: establishing the ceasefire, humanitarian response, security reform, and the peace process. As UNMIL was a product of multilateral mission mandates, it includes specific language on women. Resolution 1509's operative clauses touch gendered perspectives of the mission. Operative clause eleven reads "reaffirms the importance of a gender perspective in peacekeeping operations and post-conflict peace-building in accordance with resolution 1325 (2000), recalls the need to address violence against women and girls as a tool of warfare, and encourages UNMIL as well as the Liberian parties to actively address these issues."⁶⁰ Even within the particular section where the mandate is laid out there is specific language pertaining to the rights of women. Subsection I reads "to contribute towards international efforts to protect and promote human rights in Liberia, with particular attention to vulnerable groups including refugees, returning refugees and internally displaced persons, women, children, and demobilized child soldiers, within UNMIL's capabilities and under acceptable security conditions, in close cooperation with other United Nations agencies, related organizations, governmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations."⁶¹

⁶⁰ S/RES/1509 (2003)

⁶¹ Ibid.

Every year from 2009 until UNMIL’s end, the United Nations revisited the UNMIL mission mandate and added updates, the last installment of updates extended the mission to completion on March 30th, 2018.⁶² Particular operative clauses to note are clause 3 which reads “emphasizes that the Government of Liberia bears primary and ultimate responsibility for security and the protection of its population with special attention to combatting sexual and gender-based violence and combatting impunity for perpetrators of such crimes, and urges the Government to prioritize the effective and rapid development of the security agencies, especially the LNP, which is the priority law enforcement agency tasked with civilian policing responsibilities, including through the timely provision of sufficient financial resources and other support, adequate training and development of senior management.” Clause eight which reads “emphasizes the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding, as recognized in resolution 1325 (2000), underlines that a gender perspective should be taken into account in implementing all aspects of the mandate of UNMIL, encourages UNMIL to work with the Government of Liberia in this area until its closure and requests the Secretary General and other relevant actors to ensure that transition planning and implementation fully integrates a gender perspective and to include in reporting to the Council progress in this area and all other aspects relating to the situation of women and girls, especially regarding protection from sexual and gender-based violence.” And clause nine which reads “expresses its continued concern that women and girls in Liberia continue to face a high incidence of sexual and gender-based violence, reiterates its call on the Government of Liberia to continue to combat sexual violence, particularly against children, and gender-based violence, to combat impunity for perpetrators of such crimes, to provide redress, support and protection to victims, including

⁶² “Mandate.” UNMIL, May 25, 2017. <https://unmil.unmissions.org/mandate>.

through public information campaigns and by continuing to strengthen national police capacity in this area and to raise awareness of existing national legislation on sexual violence, and encourages the Government to reinforce its commitment in this regard, including by funding the implementation of its national action plan on sexual and gender-based violence and improving women and girls' access to justice.”⁶³

Within the updated mandate the section discussing sexual exploitation and abuse reads “(c) Human Rights Promotion and Protection (i) To support the Government of Liberia in carrying out promotion, protection and monitoring activities of human rights in Liberia, with special attention to violations and abuses committed against children and women; (ii) To support the strengthening of efforts by the Government of Liberia to combat sexual and gender-based violence, including its efforts to combat impunity for perpetrators of such crimes.”⁶⁴

The language in this Resolution and updated mission mandates speaks volumes compared to the language that could be found in a mission mandate ten years prior. By including women's issues and even more specifically the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse, the United Nations is bringing attention to these issues. By attempting to eradicate sexual exploitation and abuse in the mission in Liberia, the actions of peacekeepers are also brought into light.

Implementation

⁶³ S/RES/2333 (2016)

⁶⁴ Ibid.

Prior to launching UNMIL, the peacekeeping mission in Liberia, the country had undergone two civil wars that spanned fourteen years and cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.⁶⁵ Prior to 2003, there was only an observer mission, however, it was deemed necessary to upgrade the mission to become multidimensional. UNMIL was a multidimension mission that was composed of “political, military, police, criminal justice, civil affairs, human rights, gender, child protection, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, public information and support components, as well as an electoral component in due course.”⁶⁶ When specifically discussing gender and sexual exploitation and abuse in this peacekeeping mission it is important to understand the overall security of Liberia, the experiences of female peacekeepers, as well as the data regarding sexual exploitation and abuse.

It was estimated that in 2003, 70% of the police force had not received training and was struggling to protect the Liberian population.⁶⁷ When remodeling the Liberian National Police there were existing cultures and norms that had to be addressed when breaking down and rebuilding an effective police unit. A critique of the process is there were limited resources in comparison to other aspects of the UNMIL mission.⁶⁸ Long term police competency is a pillar in establishing long lasting peace and reform, long after the UNMIL mission.⁶⁹ By working to reform the Liberian National Police unit, it engaged local actors in developing training and instilling passion in fighting against sexual exploitation and abuse. An additional policy the

⁶⁵ “Background.” UNMIL, May 24, 2017. <https://unmil.unmissions.org/background>.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Bruce Baker (2010) Resource constraint and policy in Liberia’s post-conflict policing, *Police Practice and Research*, 11:3, 184-196, DOI: [10.1080/15614260902742168](https://doi.org/10.1080/15614260902742168)

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Sabrina Karim & Ryan Gorman (2016) Building a more competent security sector: The case of UNMIL and the Liberian National Police, *International Peacekeeping*, 23:1, 158-191, DOI: [10.1080/13533312.2015.1115354](https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2015.1115354)

Liberian National Police have implemented is the creation of a national gender policy related to Resolution 1325 and expanding the recruitment and role of women across all personnel.

While UNMIL certainly has undertaken initiatives to change the culture of the police force and similar institutions, there are still problems that exist for citizens as well as the peacekeeping forces themselves. In a study that was done by interviewing female peacekeepers that participated in the UNMIL mission, one interviewee said “that being a woman in the mission had its distinct challenges. She has been the subject of sexual harassment and has had to deal with cultural attitudes toward women from male counterparts who sometimes have challenged her authority as a senior manager.”⁷⁰ It is difficult to challenge and change these institutionalized behaviors. However, by including more women in the peacebuilding process change can begin. In the same survey the female peacekeepers were asked if they believed their presence, as women, made a difference and they believed to have improved gender equality in Liberia, as well as the mission environment.⁷¹

In 2004, allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse at the hands of peacekeepers came to light, with girls as young as twelve exchanging sex, for money and food.⁷² While these allegations are startling, as the mission went on these stories became less frequent as the region stabilized, most likely due to increased efforts at policing the matter and action by the United Nations to punish offenders. Overall, Liberian citizens felt more comfortable leaving their homes at night and

⁷⁰ Karim, Sabrina, and Kyle Beardsley. “Perspectives on Discrimination, Protection, and SEAHSV in the UN Mission in Liberia.” *Equal Opportunity Peacekeeping*, 2017, 113–35. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190602420.003.0008>.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Dakar. “UNMIL Investigating Alleged Sexual Misconduct by Peacekeepers in Four Incidents.” *The New Humanitarian*, January 7, 2016. <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/fr/node/221773>.

nighttime violence declined. Some women still experienced sexual exploitation and abuse, however, there was a notable decline.⁷³

Overall, UNMIL was deemed a successful mission. The mission mandate was fulfilled and the main task of ending violence was achieved. Even in successful missions there is room for critique, and by examining the successes and failures it will aid the Security Council in creating language for future peacekeeping missions.

Implications

Following the success of the UNMIL mission there is still discussion as to the lasting effects of the peacekeeping mission. Serious challenges that remain include perception of the mission both locally in Liberia as well as internationally and recidivism in the peace process. True change and sustainability take a very long time to achieve, the Secretary General himself, at the time of deeming the mission a success recognized that there were many root causes of the original conflict that still needed to be addressed.⁷⁴ However, in the same statement he recognized that Liberia made an incredible stride towards democracy and has the potential to achieve long lasting stability.

The permanent representative to the United Nations from Liberia, after the conclusion said “had it not been for peacekeepers, my country would have been further torn apart. I would like to

⁷³ Kirschner, Shanna, and Adam Miller. “Does Peacekeeping Really Bring Peace? Peacekeepers and Combatant-Perpetrated Sexual Violence in Civil Wars.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 63, no. 9 (October 2019): 2043–70. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002719831069>.

⁷⁴ “The Story of Unmil - Liberia.” ReliefWeb. Accessed May 4, 2022. <https://reliefweb.int/report/liberia/story-unmil>.

express appreciation on behalf of His Excellency Dr. George Manneh Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia, the Government and people of the Republic of Liberia for the invaluable contributions made by the Blue Helmets to the peace Liberia enjoys today. The gallant men and women of UNMIL left an indelible mark and words alone cannot express our gratitude to peacekeepers who lost their lives. It is because of their sacrifice that today humanity is better in terms of peace.”⁷⁵ The government of Liberia remains positive about the peacekeeping mission.

In terms of the Liberian population’s perception of UNMIL there is mixed reviews. One article expressed that the reformation in the Liberian National Police, while overall positive should have focused more on the citizens effective change and playing a part in their own country’s politics rather than a foreign actor.⁷⁶ Additionally, after the peacekeeping forces left some of the economic growth the country fell as the peacekeepers had lodging and active participation in the economy; in 2018 the annual economic growth forecast dropped from 4.7 to 0.4 percent.⁷⁷ It must still be noted that almost 90 percent of the original GDP lost during the conflict predating UNMIL was regained, most likely due to stabilizing the conflict and through influx of peacekeeping forces participating in the economy.

Following the UNMIL mission there is not a large amount of data regarding sexual exploitation and abuse. Most allegations happened in the early period of the UNMIL mission. The first cases were reported in 2004 and the mission continued to have negative attention about these

⁷⁵ Peacekeeping, UN. “The Success of Peacekeeping in Liberia.” Medium. Medium, December 6, 2018. <https://unpeacekeeping.medium.com/the-success-of-peacekeeping-in-liberia-9efd440d19d>.

⁷⁶ Bruce Baker (2010) Resource constraint and policy in Liberia’s post-conflict policing, *Police Practice and Research*, 11:3, 184-196, DOI: [10.1080/15614260902742168](https://doi.org/10.1080/15614260902742168)

⁷⁷ Rouse, Lucinda. “Liberia’s Peacekeeper Deficit: What Happens to an Economy When the Blue Helmets Go?” *The New Humanitarian*, November 28, 2019. <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2019/11/25/Liberia-peacekeepers-UNMIL-economy-peace>.

allegations until around 2007, at which point the numbers started to decline. More research must be done following the post mission process to examine the lasting impacts on prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Conclusion

Overall, it is difficult to measure success of peacekeeping operations. Due to the very nature of a peacekeeping mission, success is often defined by the absence of failure. Additionally, many peacekeeping missions remain in operation for years at a time and those that have concluded have not done so that long ago. In twenty years from now, it will certainly be easier for academics to look back at peacekeeping missions and determine more conclusively if a mission had a prolonged impact on peace.

When it comes to the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse at the hands of peacekeepers, the United Nations has made concerted efforts to reform the peacebuilding process. However, change is slow moving and it takes even longer for lasting change to show. After blatant failures by the United Nations, their legitimacy was questioned. Currently, the number reported cases of sexual exploitation and abuse are reduced. However, even after reforms were undertaken there were still alarming cases of sexual exploitation and abuse at the hands of peacekeepers being reported. According to much of the existing theories, many more cases go under reported for a variety of different reasons. The fact remains, that sexual exploitation and abuse takes place, perpetrated by peacekeepers and generally within host countries. While the issue persists, the United Nations' legitimacy will continue to prevail.