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Special Political & Decolonization Committee (GA4)

**THE QUESTION OF ASSAULT ON
THE PART OF PEACEKEEPING
FORCES**

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**International
Community**

**Memorable
Experience**

**Challenges
Skills**



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PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates,

My name is Alfred Alexopoulos, I am an IB2 student at HAEF Psychico College, and I will be your co-chair in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (GA 4). I will be serving as the expert chair on the topic of the question of Assault on the part of Peacekeeping Forces. I hope this study guide provides you with the knowledge needed in order to create a good draft resolution. That being said I wish you best of luck and trust that we will have constructive debates in the Committee. Please do not hesitate to contact me at alexop.alfred@gmail.com if you have any questions concerning the study guide or the conference.

Best regards,

Alfred Alexopoulos



DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

- **Peacekeeping forces**

A force designated to the maintenance of peace, especially the prevention of further fighting between hostile forces in an area (Collins Dictionary)

- **UN Peacekeeping**

UN Peacekeeping helps countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace. We have unique strengths, including legitimacy, burden sharing, and an ability to deploy troops and police from around the world, integrating them with civilian peacekeepers to address a range of mandates set by the UN Security Council and General Assembly (UN Peacekeeping)

- **Assault**

A violent attack committed from one person to another (Cambridge Dictionary)

- **Humanitarian Crisis**

A humanitarian crisis occurs when the human, physical, economic or environmental damage from an event, or series of events, overwhelms a community's capacity to cope

- **Humanitarian Intervention**

Actions undertaken by an organization or organizations (usually a state or a coalition of states) that are intended to alleviate extensive human suffering within the borders of a sovereign state (Britannica)

- **Legitimacy**

The state of being allowed by law or done according to the rules of an organization or activity (Cambridge Online Dictionary)



TIMELINE

Date	Description of Event
1945	End of World War 2, Creation of United Nations (with the goal of maintaining peace around the globe)
1949	Creation of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
1956-1967	1 st UN Peacekeeping Force, “First United Nations Emergency Force”, Egypt and Israel
1992-1994	Creation of United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) force
1992-1995	Establishment of United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia, and FYROM
1995	1 st NATO peacekeeping forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina known as Implementation Force (IFOR)
1996-1998	Second NATO peacekeeping force in Bosnia and Herzegovina known as Stabilization Force (SFOR) which replaced the IFOR
1998-2004	Continuation of SFOR peacekeeping mission
1999	Establishment of United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), which is still in operation in Kosovo
1993-2017	Several UN Peacekeeping Missions in Haiti, United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH), United Nations Support Mission in Haiti (UNSMIH), United Nations Transition Mission in Haiti (UNTMIH), United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH), United Nations General Assembly International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti (MICAH), United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) ¹
2017	Establishment of United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH)

¹ Information on all the above peacekeeping missions was taken from the peacekeeping.un.org site

TOPIC DISCUSSION

One of the UN's most important purposes since its creation in 1945 has been to maintain peace around the globe for another world war to not break out². Although its role has expanded greatly since the end of World War 2, this initial purpose is a key element of the UN today. One of the organs of the UN that attempts to maintain peace in war torn regions is the UN Peacekeeping, which has operated in over 2 dozen countries, including Haiti, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Mozambique, with questionable success in most of them.

However, the UN is not the only international organization that sends peacekeeping forces around the globe in the name of peace. The African Union and the Economic Community of West African State have also began assembling peacekeeping missions to countries in Africa that are facing dangerous conflicts like in the Central African Republic. NATO has sent 3 peacekeeping missions in countries over the years, especially in the West Balkan region during the Yugoslav Wars. NATO missions have also allegedly been involved in sexual abuses and rapes of local populations. This abuse of power by peacekeepers due to their ability to manipulate local residents will be the topic examined in this study guide.

Since the establishment of the 1st UN peacekeeping force in the Sinai Peninsula between Israel and Egypt, the UN has completed another 55 missions around the world, including 21 in Africa, 16 in Asia, 10 in the Americas, and 8 in Europe. On the other hand, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, also referred to as NATO, has conducted 3 peacekeeping missions, all of them in the Western Balkan region. The extent to which each individual mission has succeeded in its initial purpose can definitely be debated. For example, the UN Peacekeeping missions in Sierra Leone and Croatia are seen as successful missions overall, by experts. However, the fact that some of these missions, including the Haiti, DR Congo, Central African Republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo missions have led to horrific consequences in the regions it was attempting to protect, is a major concern. The most serious of these consequences has been sexual abuse of children and widespread prostitution. The reaction of the UN on these allegations has been less than satisfactory; they have investigated few of the alleged cases and are showing unwillingness to tackle the issue as a whole.

The first important case study is that of the UN and NATO involvement in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1994. Political skeptics, and the general public have been alarmed by the involvement of UN peacekeepers in sex trafficking during the Yugoslav Wars. Investigators found soldiers were customers in brothels run in both Bosnia and Kosovo which relied on women sold into forced prostitution. One recent estimate



² "The United Nations came into being in 1945, following the devastation of the Second World War, with one central mission: the maintenance of international peace and security." From <http://www.un.org/en/sections/what-we-do/maintain-international-peace-and-security/>

suggested up to 2,000 women have been coerced into sex slavery in Kosovo. NATO Peacekeeping forces in Kosovo were also allegedly involved in prostitution.

Another important and more recent case study is that of the UN Peacekeeping force in The Democratic Republic of the Congo. The DRC has faced brutal conflicts from its independence and faces an authoritarian government. The UN has sent a very large peacekeeping force in the country, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) that has been alleged to have taken part in multiple illegal activities, primarily concerning sexual abuse. Sexual exploitation and abuse mostly involve the exchange of sex for money (on average \$1-\$3 per encounter, according to Express.co.uk), for food (for immediate consumption or to barter later) or for jobs. This also helps the spread of HIV which is still a serious issue in many countries in Central Africa, including the DRC. These kinds of illegal activities can easily create a retaliation movement and mistrust against the UN and insight more violence and uprising in the country.



The most recent allegations are coming from the UN Peacekeeping mission in Haiti, also known as the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti, which was sent in the country in 2017. The allegations refer to the peacekeepers participating in a child sex ring where women from the ages of 12 to 18 participated in forced prostitution for as little as 75 cents. One victim told UN investigators that over the three years of her life between 12 and 15, she was forced to have sex with nearly 50 peacekeepers, including a “Commandant” who gave her as a tip 75 cents. The situation is dire, and a solution has definitely not been found. Justice for victims like the one described above is rare. An Associated Press investigation³ of UN missions during the past 12 years found nearly 2,000 allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation by peacekeepers and the personnel around the world — signaling the crisis is much larger than previously known. More than 300 of the allegations involved children, the AP found, but only a fraction of the alleged perpetrators served jail time. It is also important to understand that the UN has no jurisdiction over



peacekeepers, leaving punishment to the countries that contribute the troops. Looking at the minimal cases that have actually been brought to trial, it is fair to conclude that the status quo cannot continue as peacekeepers to a very large extent are not being punished for their crimes.

³ Investigation report can be found here: <https://apnews.com/e6ebc331460345c5abd4f57d77f535c1>



CAUSES

The issue of misbehavior and abuse of power on the part of peacekeeping forces against local populations has been seen in too many cases around the world to be considered a one-time event. There are a series of causes that have caused these instances to occur. The first idea is that of the nature of humans to create power hierarchies. UN peacekeepers are helping out people around the world without any large return in terms of recognition or money, which would be considered a source of power. Therefore, they are tempted to exercise and establish their power over other people, which are the people living in the country in conflict unfortunately. Many of these peacekeepers come from very poor countries; for reference, according to the UN, the top 5 contributors to UN peacekeeping missions are Ethiopia, Bangladesh, India, Rwanda, and Pakistan on that respective order. They are offered little money to no money for these missions and feel desperate. They are also away from their sexual partners and desire sexual interactions. All this leads to them exercising their power over young, helpless girls that are also struggling from extreme poverty. This concept of power hierarchy has been expressed by several psychologists of our time and is known as the fundamental theory of hierarchy. Although it has gained a lot of support, there are several scholars that disagree with the idea of even human nature's existence, so it is important to note that the theory of hierarchy is just one theory that could potentially explain the situation in a better manner.

On the practical aspect, the UN personnel have been known to be put to relaxed background checks, even though their mission is not only very important for the maintenance of peace in an area but is prone to misbehaviors and abuses of power. This creates the opportunity for unqualified people to join these missions that could potentially act in illegal ways. The second practical problem that leads to assaults in peacekeeping missions is the weak stance the UN has taken against sexual abuse allegations from UN personnel. The UN itself has never prosecuted any of the UN personnel that were alleged for sexual abuse, prostitution of children, and rape in all of the missions mentioned. Only a handful of cases have been investigated by national courts due to their priorities being on other cases and their financial capabilities.



POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The only way that this issue can begin to be solved is by addressing the practical causes of it. The theoretical cause, which is highly controversial, can only be solved indirectly if these crucial measures mentioned below are implemented. The first important measure is for trials to occur for previous illegal activities and crimes committed from UN peacekeepers in the countries mentioned above. This would be just enforcing the basic human right to not be sexually violated. These trials would occur either in the national courts under the auspices and supervision of the UN, or in an international court similar to the International Criminal Court but that would be part of the UN Tribunal system and would adjudicate UN Peacekeeping mission cases only. This would not only serve justice to the victims of these horrific crimes but would also incentivize other UN Peacekeepers to keep away from attempting similar actions.

The second measure would be to have much stricter background checks on UN personnel, especially concerning their mental health and criminal and even school record. Peacekeeping missions are such an important job and determine a country's fate after a usually brutal conflict. The UN has to make sure it will not be causing further harm to a country that has already suffered so much.

The third measure is having better surveillance of UN Peacekeeping Forces members' actions and behavior on the ground, in post-conflict states. Up to now, UN Peacekeepers are able to roam freely around the city they are located in and this creates a lack of accountability which some personnel take advantage of and commit horrific crimes. In Haiti, Sri Lankan Peacekeepers are left for most of the day and night unattended to do whatever they are pleased to do without any surveillance, which definitely is not a desirable situation when wanting to reduce assaults committed by Peacekeepers.



MAJOR COUNTRIES & ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

Organizations

United Nations

The United Nations is the most important organization involved in the issue. Although it is not the only organization with peacekeeping missions that have allegedly assaulted local populations, UN Peacekeeping is involved in an overwhelming amount of cases. Unfortunately, the UN has a very passive stance on the issue for two important reasons. Before analyzing the reasons, it is important to mention that the UN Peacekeeping forces are made up of patches of forces that are sent by individual countries (e.g. The French section of the UN Peacekeeping force). Keeping that in mind, the first and most important reason for the UN's passiveness, the United Nations does not have jurisdiction over the peacekeeping forces it sends; the country that have sent the forces has. Therefore, the UN cannot arrest, trial, or jail, peacekeepers that have committed crimes, rather the country that sent has to. The second reason is the fact that these cases by nature do not have a lot of evidence to prove their actual existence, so it is very hard for an official investigation to begin.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NATO has sent peacekeeping forces in the past, most importantly to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo during the last phase of the Yugoslav Wars. That peacekeeping force had allegedly participated in prostitution of young girls near peacekeeping settlements. However, no official investigation into individual cases has been prompted and is unlikely to occur given that these events occurred almost 20 years ago. NATO has since to send any peacekeeping force.

Countries

Haiti

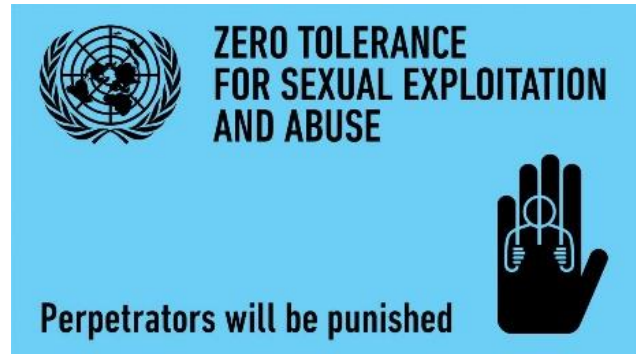
Haiti has been a country that has received 6 UN Peacekeeping missions since 1993, the most of any other country in the world, and its situation has improved in a very limited way and may have even worsened in some cases. One of the ways it has worsened is through these "child sex ring"⁴ mentioned above, where little girls, as young as 12 years old, fell into prostitution for as little as 1\$. Haiti is facing an enormous humanitarian crisis, where most of its population is on the verge of starvation and a large portion is homeless. It is, therefore, almost impossible for the government to attempt to deal with such cases, so Haitian's authorities have not really intervened. It is the responsibility of the UN to establish better checks on its peacekeepers, and the countries of origin for the peacekeepers to take pre-cautionary measures.

⁴ Reported by Independent.co.uk, ApNews.com, globalnews.ca, express.co.uk

UN INVOLVEMENT: Relevant Resolutions & Treaties

As mentioned before, UN involvement is limited due to their inability to trial alleged criminals. However, since the number of allegations increased dramatically over the past couple of years (mostly 2014-2016), the UN has begun a Zero Tolerance Policy, as seen from their new poster on their official website.

The Secretary General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres has taken a lot of initiatives in the past 2 years to try to reduce the problem. Some of his actions include high level meetings with UN personnel at UN Headquarters in Geneva and New York, but also at UN Peacekeeping settlements, like his visit to UN Peacekeeping settlements in the Central African Republic in October 2017. Also, other initiatives taken are the creation of a trust fund to help support increased background checks and surveillance and the establishment and strengthening of a legal framework for deployed contingents. One final but very important measure the UN has created is a reporting system where civilians of countries can report incidents of misconduct of UN personnel that they experienced or are aware of. This can be found on their website⁵.



⁵ <https://conduct.unmissions.org/report-now>



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