

Policing the Peacekeepers; Eliminating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by the United Nations.

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In 1997 I was in the middle of a 25 year police career in a medium size U.S. police department. An opportunity arose to serve with the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina; little information was available about the work other than monitoring and training the police force of the new nation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I was 14 years into my career, infighting and small scale corruption had dampened my enthusiasm and idealism for my department and the police profession. Now, I had hoped, I would be serving with the best of the best police, not only from the United States but from around the world. I was anxious to share my skills and enthusiasm for police work and honored to serve with the United Nations. My initial assignment was training Bosnian Police in democratic police principles in the use of force at the newly formed Vraca Academy. I led a team of instructors from the USA, Netherlands, Portugal and Bosnia. The success and reputation of our team reached the UN Headquarters and I was interviewed to be the assistant to the Deputy Commissioner, Mark Kroeker. Despite having a lack of administrative experience I was chosen to assist the Deputy Commissioner, overseeing 2400 International Police Task Force Officers, ensuring contract compliance of the various cantons, meeting with foreign ambassadors, strategy planning with NATO officials, overseeing training, and quality control. Mark Kroeker had recently retired from Los Angeles Police Department as Deputy Chief, recognized for a long distinguished career. He was raised by missionary parents in Africa and had high ideals and aspirations for our role in the International Police Task Force, amongst these the 3 S's of Leadership-Serve, Support and Set an Example. I was proud to be part of this team and worked hard and long hours to keep up with my workload. Few matters of discipline crossed our desk, including a Moslem peacekeeper who had shoplifted a pornographic magazine at a NATO military store, a western peacekeeper who had purchased a Mercedes Benz (likely stolen) and was driving around Sarajevo with his hand made license plate (intended to project immunity from traffic laws) and a group of peacekeepers who had waited all day for their paycheck and when the UN finance officers decided to quit for the day had "opened the door with their feet", causing fear, dismay and an official complaint by the finance officers. Overall, I had believed the conduct of the International Police Task Force was very good and few cases were brought to our attention. There were rumors of Serb run brothels in the country but no clue that UN Peacekeepers had been involved in the sexual exploitation and abuse, including human trafficking of women and girls in the mission area. Later, I was to learn that UN Peacekeepers had been involved in the trafficking of women and girls into the mission area for prostitution, right under the noses of those of us at UN Headquarters. The abuses against human rights committed by peacekeepers were a dark stain on the accomplishments and hard work to creating a democratic police force in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The trafficking of women and girls came to the attention of the United Nations by IPTF mentor Kathryn Bolkovac in 1999. UN Peacekeepers were not only customers of prostitutes but were involved in the trafficking of humans and protection of organizations involved in the sex trade. Her story is portrayed in the film, "The Whistle Blower" she was relieved of her duties and no prosecutions were ever made. The International Organization for Migration reported 6000 to

10,000 women and girls were coerced into prostitution in Bosnia. Most were promised waitress or nanny jobs and some kidnapped such as a 13 year old Romanian girl who was walking to school. Two thirds of these females had never worked in the sex trade before.

Unfortunately this was not the first and not the last of United Nations misconduct and crimes. Gerald Kaplan in his report, "Peacekeepers Gone Wild: How Much More Abuse will the UN Ignore in the Congo (2012) that UN abuse of women and children are all too common.

Documented cases of girls being victimized by UN forces – or, more precisely, the troops from the many countries who serve in UN missions – have a long and squalid history. The landmark 1996 UNICEF study *The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children* reported that "In 6 out of 12 country studies, the arrival of peacekeeping troops has been associated with a rapid rise in child prostitution." A review eight years later concluded that prostitution and sexual abuse followed most UN interventions. "Even the guardians have to be guarded," it concluded.

The search for an effective response.

Is the current United Nations response to peacekeeper human rights violations sufficient? The United Nations has a three-pronged strategy to eliminate sexual exploitation and abuse: prevention of misconduct, enforcement of UN standards of conduct and remedial action. Is this strategy working? Is this strategy sufficient to protect the most vulnerable populations the UN is pledged to protect? Will training, education and the threat of zero tolerance overcome a patriarchal military system and view that women are part of the spoils of war, "boys will be boys"? Nothing short of the empowerment of women and children including accessibility to justice by vulnerable persons, economic relief and increasing female representation in UN Military, Police and Civilian forces will effectively combat these human rights violations and give credibility to the United Nations.

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, as defined by the United Nations:

The United Nations 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. Sexual abuse is defined as the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

The Scope of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in UN Missions:

United Nations Peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse was not limited to the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 2004 more than 150 allegations of sexual misconduct by UN Peacekeepers were brought forth including rape, prostitution and pedophilia. Pakistan, Uruguay, Morocco, Tunisia, South Africa and Nepal were implicated. Witnesses reportedly were threatened by peacekeepers to prevent them from coming forward with reports.

The following excerpts were recorded by Save the Children study made in 2008, "No One to Turn To, the Under-reporting of Child Sexual Exploitation by the United Nations,

"Although the peacekeepers are not based here, they have abused girls here. They come here a few days at a time where they stay in a local compound. This compound is near to the water pump where everyone collects water. In the evening hours the peacekeepers come out and stand near to the water pump. Some of the girls from the village will come and collect water. The men call to the girls and they go with them into the compound. One of them became pregnant and then disappeared. We still do not know where she is."

(Young boy, Southern Sudan)

"There is a place not far from here where I go to visit. The men call to me in the streets and they ask me to go with them. But I don't go. They do this with all of us young girls. I have a few friends that have gone with them. Some of them are asked to give them a lesbian show, and they are paid for that."

(Young girl, Haiti)

"We all work at the peacekeeping camp. We have worked there every day since they arrived in 2003... we sell them sculpture and jewelry. I go there so that I can earn money to contribute to the family income in order to cover all that I need."

"If there are other things that they want and they can't talk about in front of other people, they invite us to their rooms to tell us what they want us to do for them. They various types of favours."

They ask us to find them girls. They especially ask us for girls of our age. Often it will be between eight and ten men who will share two or three girls. When I suggest an older girl, they say that they want a young girl, the same age as us."

I know which girls have done it before and I go and ask them. When I ask the girls to come they are often keen because of the gifts that are promised, such as mobile phones and food rations..."

"The peacekeepers hide it from their supervisors and their friends who are not in their immediate group. Because when this kind of thing happens you have to keep it confidential. Otherwise, if others hear about the

activities, then the men will be punished. ”

“For us, we said to ourselves that even if it is bad, we are gaining something from it too. So we continue because we then get the benefits, such as money, new t-shirts, souvenirs, watches and tennis shoes. ”

“They also used their mobile phones to film the girls. ”

(Three boys aged 14 from Côte d’Ivoire)

More crimes were committed by UN Peacekeepers in the Congo, and continue to be committed,

In February, 2011, two orphans, Gisèle, then 14, and her sister Espérance, 15, were attacked by five soldiers, three from MONUSCO and two from the Congo’s notoriously undisciplined and brutal army. While the Congolese were beating Gisèle, Espérance was gang raped and beaten by the three white MONUSCO soldiers. She was both badly injured and pregnant. Last October, Espérance gave birth by cesarean section. Her son died two days later.

Joaki and Chantal were both 14 years old in 2005 when they encountered two Uruguayan peacekeepers in Uvira, eastern Congo; the men’s names are widely known. Even though sex with a minor constitutes rape under Congolese (and most other) law, the two girls got pregnant and both became children having children. Both men returned to Uruguay leaving no support and, soon, no trace.

Eventually the entire Uruguayan contingent would be expelled from the Congo, only to return and commit more criminal acts in Haiti.

The outrage of the numerous sexual offenses led to a Zero Tolerance Policy for all United Nations personnel yet UN Peacekeeper misconduct continued in Liberia, Sudan, the Congo and Haiti. Some peacekeepers traded candy for sex with children. The typical amount paid by peacekeepers to children and women for sex was \$1 to \$3 US dollars. “Peace babies” were born to some of the rape victims after the peacekeeping offenders returned to their countries, with no intention of giving support. Cornell constitutional law scholar Muna Ndulo recounted cases of UN peacekeepers fathering and subsequently abandoning children at the end of their deployment. Ndulo quotes staggering numbers in his report: that UN peacekeepers have fathered an estimated 24,500 babies in Cambodia and 6,600 in Liberia. Vulnerable people, especially children and women of refugee camp were easy and available prey to these UN military and police personnel. Undoubtedly many rapes and sexual offenses were never reported. The women and children in refugee camps are vulnerable to sexual exploitation; many of them rely on prostitution for survival and will not jeopardize this income but reporting or cooperating with UN Investigators. Most experts are of the opinion that the sexual abuse and exploitation cases are vastly underreported.

Effects of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse:

Unknown is the psychological impact that continues to this day of the many victims, some who face disgrace and stigma from their families and communities. Unknown also is the frequency of these acts. Incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse are underreported for the following reasons: fear of losing material assistance (such as food and water), stigmatization (disgrace and being expelled from family), negative economic impact (daughters are no longer of value for dowry), retaliation from offender, gender inequalities (females not seen to be entitled to protection as males), feeling of powerlessness, lack of effective legal services and lack of faith in response. Despite the under reporting, many cases continued to be reported even after the Zero Tolerance Policy was announced and implemented into the United Nations.

Who are the offenders?

Most peacekeepers are very dedicated to peace, some giving the ultimate sacrifice, their lives. Such heinous sexual offenses tarnish the service of other peacekeepers and create a more difficult and even dangerous environment to work in as populations are turned against the United Nations. Only by studying the offenders, yes, even profiling and monitoring trends, and psychologically screening peacekeepers can we better prevent future abuse of power. The United Nations needs more transparency in identifying the offenders and offending nations.

There are many commonalities of vulnerable victims in the refugee camps and mission areas, populations of desperate and impoverished people are easy prey, but are there any common characteristics of the offending peacekeepers?

The United Nations Conduct and Discipline Unit reported the following allegations of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation since 2007. Overall, the number of allegations are declining yet still alarming for an organization mandated to protect and service the most vulnerable of populations in the world. Civilians in this study include UN staff members, UN volunteers and UN consultants.

2007-UN Civilian-32

UN Military-56

UN Police-24

2008 – UN Civilian -26

UN Military-49

UN Police-7

2009- UN Civilian-35

UN Military-55

UN Police-16

2010 –UN Civilian-31

UN Military-41

UN Police-11

2011- UN Civilian-24

UN Military-41

UN Police-6

2012- UN Civilian-29

UN Military-20

UN Police-2

The majority of the offenders have been United Nations Military of which 95% are male soldiers. Is the all too frequent sexual abuse by the United Nations Peacekeepers an extension of the age old male dominated military philosophy of rape and pillage?

Sarah Martin, in, "Must Boys be Boys?" writes the following:

Since the bulk of personnel in peacekeeping missions are men, a hyper-masculine culture that encourages sexual exploitation and abuse and a tradition of silence have evolved within them. This culture has produced a tolerance for extreme behaviors such as sexual exploitation and abuse. "What do you think is going to happen when you have thousands of men away from home?" is the common response to the behavior. This "boys will be boys" attitude will continue to taint the debate until approaches to sexual exploitation are changed to reflect the fact that sexual exploitation and abuse are primarily problems of abuse of power that merit disciplinary action, and only secondarily problems of sexual behavior.

Gloria Steinem refers to the military "Cult of Masculinity" that includes the control and dehumanizing women, often encouraged by military leaders.

The focus in the past regarding military rape has been on the victims and their plight. Male dominated military leaders have placed little importance and an air of acceptance for the mistreatment of women has prevailed. The prevalence of sexual harassment in the military, begets a culture of rape. Women in the military are seen as invading a male career and are subject to discrimination and harassment. (Reason for Rape)

Why do some men assume they are entitled to sex in any way they can get it - incest, date rape, marriage trafficking, buying it in prostitution, extorting it in exchange for food in refugee camps or sexually assaulting their fellow soldiers? For more than 100 years, activists worldwide have fought against the victimization of women through sexual violence (Why Do Soldiers Rape? Patricia Hynes). More recently, advocates have turned a floodlight on the perpetrators through programs and public policy focused on exposing, prosecuting and challenging the male demand

for sex. It is important to discover the reasons why these acts against women and children continue despite a Zero Tolerance Policy (Why do Soldiers Rape, Patricia Hynes).

Scholars and investigators who have studied military culture and attitudes toward women have found that hostility toward women pervades military training - often out of deep antipathy for the presence of women in traditionally male space, sometimes stemming from competition, always linking manliness with sexual dominance - and this hostility functions to solidify male bonding over women's status as sex objects

Along with the United Nations Military violations of sexual exploitation and abuse are the offenses committed by UN Civilian staff and volunteers. Since 2007 there have been 177 allegations against civilian staff, much more than UN Police (68) in this same time period. Clearly there are other root causes for these crimes as the civilian staff is non-military and does not share the same culture. Perhaps the availability of cheap sex and the lack of accountability create this environment. Andrew Ladley reported in "Peacekeeper Abuse, Immunity and Impunity",

What can one expect from the deployment of tens of thousands of predominantly male military and civilian personnel into vulnerable domestic populations? There should be no suggestion that the issues are limited to 'inadequately trained troops', as diverse examples show in Cambodia, East Timor, the former Yugoslavia, Somalia, Congo and Iraq.

Sara Sharratt discusses the rape and abuse of women in war in "Assault of the Soul, Women in the Former Yugoslavia",

We know that men have been raping and abusing women continuously over the past three thousand years. We know that the trauma suffered by war survivors is very similar to that experienced by women who have been battered or sexually abused by their partners. Finally, we know that an invisible war has been waged by men against women from the origins of civilization.

Instead of providing peace, hope and security, the sexual exploitation committed by United Nations personnel perpetuates this invisible war of men versus women.

What is the common thread between the male dominated military and the majority male civilian UN workers and volunteers? The obvious financial power over vulnerable groups? Supervision that accepts the use of women in war zones as part of the mission? An attitude that "anything goes" on a mission far from the laws and restrictions of the home countries? Similar attitudes of sex tourism, away from the restraints and mores of the home countries? Perhaps it is simply a feeling that they can get away with it, which men have for many years.

United Nations Strategy for Combatting Sexual Exploitation and Abuse:

To address the sexual exploitation and abuse problem, the United Nations has a three-pronged strategy to eliminate sexual exploitation and abuse: prevention of misconduct, enforcement of UN standards of conduct and remedial action. The United Nations announced a zero tolerance policy with respect to sexual exploitation and abuse after outcry against sex crimes committed in the mission in Congo in 2005.

This zero tolerance policy was part of a General Assembly resolution requesting “the implementation of an effective outreach programme to explain the policy of the United Nations against sexual exploitation and abuse and to inform the public on the outcome of all such cases involving peacekeeping personnel, including cases where allegations are ultimately found to be legally unproven” (UN Newscenter, January 2009).

UN rules forbid sexual relations with prostitutes and with any persons under 18, and strongly discourage relations with beneficiaries of assistance (those that are receiving assistance food, housing, aid, etc... as a result of a conflict, natural disaster or other humanitarian crisis, or in a development setting).

One difficulty in securing agreement on enforcement of UN personnel rules is that some actions prohibited for peacekeepers, such as soliciting prostitution and having intimate relations with anyone under age 18, are legal in parts of the world. With 103 troop contributing countries, each with widely differing laws and social mores and varying degrees of capacity in national criminal and military justice systems, it is extremely difficult to reach consensus on a one-size-fits-all code of conduct (Tough UN Line on Peacekeeper Abuses, Africa Renewal Online-Michael Fleshman, 2005).

This strategy is put into action through:

- Training: Conduct and discipline issues are an essential component of pre-deployment and in-mission induction training, mandatory for all civilian, military and police peacekeeping personnel. .
- Awareness-raising campaigns in the host country.
- Clear standards of conduct, such as ‘The Ten Rules: Code of Personal Conduct’ for Blue Helmets introduced in 1998.
- Investigations and disciplinary measures: The UN investigates its own staff. When allegations of misconduct involving military and police personnel are substantiated, the UN may repatriate the individuals concerned and ban them from future peacekeeping operations. The disciplinary sanctions and any other judicial actions remain the responsibility of the national jurisdiction of the individual involved.
- Assistance to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by UN personnel.

Prince Zeid, who completed a study for the UN regarding sexual exploitation, suggested to ban all sexual relations between UN military and local populations in high risk areas. This would safeguard the integrity of the United Nations and prevent misconduct and the appearance of misconduct with the local population.

In March of 2012 United Nations Police Chief Ann-Marie Orler urged the member states to see that justice is carried out for personnel found guilty of sexual exploitation and abuse and that the member states do all they can to prevent such crimes in the future. (UN Newscenter, March 2012).

Although United Nations command structure dictates strategy and operations, peacekeepers remain under the control and direct leadership of their home military force. The United Nations does not actually have that much power to enforce their behavior once they are in the mission area or have much control of discipline other than repatriating UN personnel. Much of UN investigations are limited to solely tracking of offenses. The transient nature of the UN assignments also complicate matters, personnel is constantly coming and going every 6-12 months.

Solutions to the Problem:

Limiting Immunity-

United Nations Peacekeepers are provided immunity during their services. The concept of immunity is based on the functionality of peacekeeping. With 17 United Nations Missions and over 100 nations represented such immunity is necessary, such as where the use of force becomes necessary to protect life. Immunities of UN officials are meant to be limited to those that are necessary for the operations of the United Nations. Clearly sexual exploitation and abuse offenses are not part of the functionality of the UN yet this immunity is used and peacekeeping offenders repatriated, often in a veil of secrecy. This immunity was not intended to protect from misconduct but allow for offenders to be returned and tried in their respective nations. The lack of transparency in the repatriation and judgment of these offending peacekeepers has led to mistrust from the local populations. This distrust makes peacekeeping operational success more difficult and may affect the safety of non-offending peacekeepers as well.

Cases are handled in the contributing nation, sometimes with little transparency, justice or accountability for the victims and vulnerable populations. Debbie Shussel reported on this lack of justice in "Muslim UN Peacekeepers Committed Rape, Dodge Discipline" 2010.

As the United Nations worked to restore peace and protect women and children in Africa's troubled Cote d'Ivoire three years ago, it announced it was investigating "serious allegations of wide-spread sexual exploitation and abuse." Shockingly, the alleged perpetrators were with the U.N.—Moroccan troops serving as peacekeepers.

A confidential probe by U.N. and Moroccan investigators turned up evidence that 14 soldiers were involved, according to a person familiar with the matter; DNA analysis showed some of them had fathered children with the victims. But the U.N. has never disclosed the results of the investigation or whether any of the soldiers were punished.

The Moroccan government has stated that no conclusive evidence of abuse was found and that it dropped all charges.

Years after the zero tolerance policy was adapted by the United Nations, there continues to be a wide disparity of how the cases are tried if they are at all, once the accused peacekeeper has been repatriated.

“It’s my biggest headache and heartache, this whole issue,” says Alain Le Roy, who has served as the U.N.’s under-secretary-general for peacekeeping operations since 2008.

Justice systems and the rights of children and women vary widely from nation to nation. In some countries prostitution is not illegal and women rights are virtually non-existent.

Debbie Shlussel writes about the lack of transparency and justice from the United Nations,

The U.N. has long been plagued by allegations that some of its peacekeepers around the world—who are supposed to protect local populations—committed rape, exploited children or trafficked in arms or minerals. . . .But interviews and U.N. documents show the problem continues. Sexually related allegations against U.N. military forces last year rose 12% to 55; some of the allegations involved minors. . . .Indeed, the investigative and disciplinary process for accused peacekeepers remains shrouded in secrecy, despite vows by U.N. officials to make it more open. Although the U.N. recently began publishing statistics on a Web site, it still doesn’t detail allegations, specify the number of alleged perpetrators or announce the results of investigations. . . . Nor does the U.N. publicly criticize countries that don’t cooperate in investigations or respond to requests for information.

The United Nations has attempted to follow up on sexual exploitation cases in the contributing countries after the suspects have been repatriated, with little success. There has been little cooperation and little justice for the vulnerable population victims.

2007	67 Follow ups attempted by UN	23 Responses by member nations
2008	69 Follow ups attempted by UN	8 Responses by member nations
2009	82 Follow ups attempted by UN	14 Responses by member nations
2010	74 Follow ups attempted by UN	29 Responses by member nations
2011	60 Follow ups attempted by UN	26 Responses by member nations
2012	46 Follow ups attempted by UN	26 Responses by member nations

Prince Zeid al-Hussein, the Jordanian Ambassador and the author of a study of sexual exploitation in peacekeeping in 2005, commented on the investigations that are turned over to the member states from the UN, "Member states are not reliable enough to do a good job on their own, especially in the early stages of a military investigation." There is little evidence of ambition towards prosecution once the peacekeeper is returned home. In some nations that are no laws to prosecute actions that occurred in other jurisdictions and the offender faces no legal accountability.

A recent case involved UN Military Peacekeepers from Pakistan found guilty of raping a 14 year old Haitian boy. The three Pakistanis were repatriated, found guilty and sentenced to one year in prison, a very short sentence for forcible rape of a child. Earlier 100 Sri Lankan Peacekeepers were repatriated for the sexual exploitation of young girls without one known case of prosecution after they returned home.

The New York Times quoted Prince Zeid al-Hussein further stating the problem,

"The U.N. is not even a player in the investigation, doesn't know the evidence and has no way to follow up with the way the military decides to deal with this issue," Prince Zeid said. "We, the member states, have by and large failed to do what I had hoped we would do."

Clearly the criminal prosecution, or lack thereof, does not act as a deterrent for other offending peacekeepers.

Sanctioning/Suspending

Perhaps sanctioning, fining or suspending contributing nations is the answer. Peacekeeping is a profitable business, especially for impoverished nations. There is a hesitancy to identify the offending nations and peacekeeping offenders. After 100 Sri Lankan peacekeepers were repatriated for sexual exploitation of young Haitian girls there was no indication of any punishment or justice given, yet more Sri Lankan peacekeepers are invited to the mission in Haiti. In patriarchal nations in a male dominated military court, there is very little chance that justice will be served for vulnerable women without legal resources in remote, impoverished nations. Even within the United Nations there is more value placed on peacekeeping contributing nations than the protection of vulnerable populations which the UN was created to serve.

Contributing Nations Senior officials defend the numbers as improving, and argue that publicly shaming member states would make finding peacekeeping troops more difficult. "Going into a blame and shame approach is counterproductive because this requires a

mind-set change,” said Susanna Malcorra, head of the logistics end of peacekeeping. (New York Times, September 7, 2011, Neil MacFarqhar

This is a tremendous loss of opportunity, not only to protect the vulnerable women and children of UN Missions but also to make contributing nations rethink their policies of gender rights.

“If the UN is serious about its endlessly recited “zero tolerance” policy toward sexual exploitation and abuse — and the evidence so far suggests it is not — the obvious step is to stop employing troops from member states that let their soldiers get away with rape. Is that too much to ask?” from the Rosett Report, January 11, 2012.

Fines kept from salaries

UN Offenders are repatriated and may or may not be forced to face justice for their actions. Most do not acknowledge or support the children they leave behind. “A Comprehensive Strategy to Eliminate Future Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in the United Peacekeeping Operations” called for more accountability; soldiers found guilty should have pay taken and be held financially accountable for fathering children in mission areas, including child support. This 2005 report also called for DNA tests for such determinations of paternity.

The United Nations does not track the “peace babies” but there are thought to be thousands. These children are often mixed race and ostracized in their culture because they look different and are fathered out of wedlock. Even in poverty stricken societies these children will experience discrimination and have very little chance to survive. There are many anecdotal stories of UN workers fathering and leaving children behind, one, an American, is said to have fathered children in three different UN Missions without supporting any of them (The United Nations Responses to the Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Women and Girls by Peacekeepers During Peacekeeping Missions, Mura Ndulo).

Vulnerable populations often have little access to the complaint process, although there is improvement made which ultimately may show an increase in sexual exploitation cases that in the past went underreported. Compensation for victims is important not only for paternity cases but also HIV infections, and instances when the women are expelled from their communities due to the rapes by UN Personnel. Clearly this money does not undue the harm of the crime but will help those affected go on with their lives. UN personnel should be held accountable for these compensation payments.

Empowering the victims

The United Nations has made efforts to educate and inform the local populations of the complaint process. There have been an improved and localized complaint mechanisms, telephone hotlines, in-person complaint as well as mandates to ensure that victims receive medical and psychological services. Support groups for victims are important to show victims

they are not alone or at fault which is the case in many cultures affected by UN sexual exploitation.

Ivo Martinach addresses the empowering of victims through holding the offenders accountable in "Addressing Misconduct by UN Personnel: How to Hold Offenders Accountable?" Nov 2012

Only when those who are found guilty of sexual abuse against women start being punished will the UN be able to eliminate this scourge. Consequently, accountability has to be a central component of the solution. First and foremost, the pursuit of justice is one of the most important aspects of victims' reparation. Justice for the victims, in turn, is only possible insofar as those who committed the crimes are penalized for their actions. Therefore, if the UN is committed to repair victims, it must explore ways to ensure that offenders are punished. Furthermore, impunity will further erode a mission's legitimacy and credibility. The non-prosecution of offenders is seen by the local community as a proof that peacekeepers can abuse their position of power without serious consequences.

Victims would be empowered if these military trials were held in the host nation. A speedy trial and the opportunity to see justice served first hand would be a power signal that human rights should be respected no matter how impoverished or vulnerable the people are. Along with this empowerment other benefits of on-site prosecution would be a greater success of prosecution with victims and witnesses able to testify and evidence more available, thus creating stronger cases.

Along with legal and justice remedies, there is a necessity for the international community to improve the economic condition of these vulnerable groups. The true root of the sexual exploitation problem is extreme poverty; by addressing the social and economic situation development, the human rights violations, including prostitution, trafficking, and rape of vulnerable populations would be reduced. Mura Ndulo writes, in "The United Nations Responses to the Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Woman and Girls by Peacekeepers during Peacekeeping Missions"

In almost all peacekeeping operational zones there is little or no economic opportunity for the local people to earn money to support themselves. A United Nations report sent to interview victims of sexual violence in Bunia found that most of the victims were destitute and had no education or training in employable skills. As Jasmine Whitebread, Chief Executive of Save the Children UK has observed, "organizations in the field need to make sure that selling her body is not the only way a young girl can feed herself or her family."

The economic disparity of UN Peacekeepers and vulnerable populations make these impoverished women and children an easy and readily available commodity to the UN "sex tourists". Obviously if ending poverty was a simple task the world would be poverty free by now. While a worth-while goal what can be done to protect the vulnerable populations now?

More Women represented in peacekeeping operations

Peacekeepers from 45 nations have been implicated in United Nations missions in the last 20 years. A multitude of cultures, education level and training were represented in this offender group, one common theme is the nearly exclusiveness of male perpetrators of these human rights violations.

The UN Study completed in 2005, "A Comprehensive Strategy to Eliminate Future Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations" stated, "An increase in the percentage of female peacekeeping personnel would help", the report observes. "The presence of more women in a mission, especially at senior levels, will help to promote an environment that discourages sexual exploitation and abuse.

An all-female United Nations formed police unit from Bangladesh has experienced success in Haiti reaching out to women. The specific focus of the 102 woman unit is building better relationships and accessibility for Haitian women, including matters concerning violence and domestic abuse. Sahely Ferdous, Superintendent in the Bangladesh Formed Police Unit was quoted in May, 2012;

"We noticed that the impact of women as peacekeepers is that it strengthens psychological support for victims, so that they feel more comfortable reporting sexual or physical violence. They feel more secure with them than a male officer. We noticed that with women, female victims receive more patience; females can understand harassment better. They can also counsel on different issues such as health, education, finance and household affairs."

Sexual violence has been reduced and access for reporting crimes against women has improved as well. Such all- women units are a power symbol of empowerment and inspiration to vulnerable women and give hope to rise socially and economically as well.

India also contributes an all- female unit in Liberia, a nation torn apart by widespread rape, part of an effort by the United Nations to recruit and deploy female peacekeepers. The theory is that women peacekeepers bring a certain skillset, including conflict resolution and service that is different than the traditional military macho culture of conquering and occupation.

"When female soldiers are present, the situation is closer to real life, and as a result the men tend to behave," said Gerard J. DeGroot, a history professor at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland who has written books about women in the military. "Any conflict where you have an all-male army, it's like a holiday from reality. If you inject women into that situation, they do have a civilizing effect." (Life of Pi, Jane Hahn)

Such all women UN units send a strong message to Liberian women who see them as a visible sign of change and hope to escape the horrific past of rape and domination by males.

Mrs. Sirleaf, is the first woman elected as an African head of state, in 2005 commented on the female peacekeepers,

“What a woman brings to the task is extra sensitivity, more caring,” Mrs. Sirleaf said in an interview. “I think that these are the characteristics that come from being a mother, taking care of a family, being concerned about children, managing the home.” (Life of Pi, Jane Hahn)

Different Feminism believes that women have different but equal qualities than men and should be given the opportunity to succeed. In areas victimized by male soldiers, women peacekeepers can gain the trust of women and children and be very effective peacekeepers,

During the Liberian civil war, “it was the men who inflicted harm on women, and most of the time the sufferers were women and children,” said Annie Abraham, 45, the commanding officer of the Indian unit that just finished its rotation and was replaced by new recruits. “When you have male peacekeepers, you get the feeling that the women are more intimidated. Women aren’t as aggressive as the men. Women don’t speak as loudly as the men.” (Life of Pi, Jane Hahn)

Improvement in the area of UN sexual abuse was seen from 2005, when 47 peacekeepers were accused of sexual abuse in Liberia, compared with 18 peacekeepers who were accused last next year, this reduction of sexual abuse cases was in correlation to additional women peacekeepers to the U.N. mission in Liberia, according to U.N. Officials. Statistics alone will not prove the success or failure of more women in UN Missions; women peacekeepers are seen as more accessible to women and children victims and therefor there is likely to be more confidence in reporting UN misconduct. An actual increase may correlate with the increase of women in the UN. What we do know, even with the limited information that is released of UN human rights violations is that there is little women involved in the sexual exploitation in UN missions. The prevailing belief, and admission of male peacekeepers, is the presence of more women on the UN Mission positively affects the behavior of male peacekeepers.

United Nation Peacekeepers are every evolving away from the military model as missions expand into nation building and are normal intra state conflicts. UN missions are no longer typical battlefields of the past but more diversified to include complex conflict resolution, humanitarian aid and capacity building of police and vital government infrastructures. The traditional masculine military is obsolete and may in fact, pose a threat to the safety and well-being of vulnerable groups as the lack of fighting and action could lead to this masculinity acting out in bad ways with the mistreatment of women and children. This new model is discussed in “Peacekeepers as New Men? Security and Masculinity in the United Nations Mission in Liberia” 2008-Gurchathen Sanghera, Marsha Henry, and Paul Higate,

“Thus, set against the canvas of broad social and cultural change there has emerged a form of peacekeeper masculinity that might be argued to resonate with a number of feminine qualities; somewhat ironically these inhere within a reassuring masculinized figure.

Female UN Peacekeepers are an important part of this evolving peacekeeping model. Female police officers serving in the U.N. missions have doubled in recent times from 833 to 12,867 (approximately 6 percent); this increase is important as emerging democracies are attempting to recruit women into their police forces. Much of the success to recruiting female Liberian police recruits is given to the prevalence of female UN Peacekeepers. The current Liberian police force is comprised of 15% females. The international goal has been set at 20 percent; in Liberia, women peacekeepers represent 14 percent of the UN Peacekeepers.

An increase in women peacekeepers will not only check the UN's male club mentality (and subsequent bad behavior) but are more approachable to victims such as the women and children in refugee camps. Numbers of female peacekeepers has risen from 1 percent to 5 percent in the last six years. This corresponds to a lower rate of allegations in this same period. Also of importance is the civilian UN positions that are also dominated by men (approximately 70%), although the focus has been on women peacekeepers, the disparity of men to women in UN Civilian jobs should be studied and understood as well. Ultimately the goal should be a 50% representation in United Nations Missions overall of women to men. Currently the UN is studying female peacekeeping units, their effectiveness and factors for recruiting such as shorter missions and more flexible scheduling to accommodate the women with children.

An increase in female peacekeepers also empowers these women when they return home where most are financially disadvantaged due to their gender. UN Peacekeepers receive a special allowance from the UN which sometimes equals or exceeds five times of their base pay. Unfortunately corrupt patriarchal leaders in these countries are involved in the embezzlement of these salaries, such as in Nigeria. Nigerian peacekeepers who had worked in Liberia, including three young women, protested against such embezzlement and were given life sentences, which were later commuted to seven-year prison sentences. The Nigerian officers accused of the \$68,541 embezzlement were simply demoted. In such cases it is not simply enough to have females represented in numbers in peacekeeping operations, but to be treated equally and fairly. The United Nations should not stand for such criminal treatment, if changes are not made in such corrupt practices these contributing countries should be suspended until which time remedies are made and fairness guaranteed.

Conclusion:

A UN spokesman, Nick Birnback, said that it was impossible to ensure "zero incidents" within an organization that has up to 200,000 personnel serving around the world. "What we can do is get across a message of zero tolerance, which for us means zero complacency when credible allegations are raised and zero impunity when we find that there has been malfeasance that's occurred." Clearly the transitional nature of peacekeeping, military and police rotating in and out of missions and large numbers involved requires vigilance and cooperation by the contributing

countries. Are largely patriarchal nations willing or interested in ending abuses against vulnerable groups in far- away places? These human rights violations are a problem for men and women and it is necessary for more cooperation and gender empowerment to take place to fight this situation.

Gloria Steinem was asked if it was necessary for men and women to work together to end such atrocities.

“Yes, we do. There is more responsibility where there’s more power. Though women have a responsibility to speak up for ourselves -- to reverse the Golden Rule and treat ourselves as well as we treat others -- men have more power and so are responsible not only for their own behavior, but for creating an atmosphere in which men are penalized for violence toward women and rewarded for treating women as equals.”

Improvement in providing transparent legal justice for United Nations peacekeeper offenders is important and may prove to deter some future violations but more importance should be placed on empowering the victims of this sexual exploitation. As long as there are impoverished women and children and economically advantaged military in these places there will be such misconduct and crimes. Improving the economic situation of these women as well as providing a network of support and reporting is a goal that should be worked towards. Meanwhile I believe that adding more women peacekeepers is the most immediate answer to this problem. In all fields of peacekeeping, women peacekeepers have proven that they can perform the same roles, to the same standards and under the same difficult conditions, as their male counterparts. It is vital to the future of the United Nations and the fight against sexual exploitation and abuse to recruit, train and deploy more women peacekeepers.

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