

Evaluation of the united nations security council resolution 2272



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Do you think United Nations Security Council Resolution 2272 (addressing sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations) will work? Why or why not?

More often than not, the United Nations (UN) implement armed peacekeeping operations to promote and provide assistance for the peace and security of countries. While the UN has done a commendable job in maintaining international peace and security under the UN Charter, they have failed to protect people from their own troops who administer sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) to the locals that are under the protection of the UN personnel. With there being 120 current state members of the UN, and approximately 100,000 troop members and uniformed personnel from all around the world, it is hard to monitor every personnel action and hold accountable every report of allegations towards troop members and their violation of sexual misconduct. This essay will analyse whether the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2272 (UNSCR 2272) will work/have worked to solve issues of sexual misconduct in peacekeeping missions.

SEA in peacekeeping missions:

Firstly, looking at SEA, there have been many reports of UN troops being affiliated to acts of SEA in peacekeeping missions in recent years. It is reported that at times, sexual favours were exchanged for things such as food and money. The UN 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", while sexual abuse is "

the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions” (Secretary-General’s Bulletin, 2003) As there have been many allegations of SEA in peacekeeping missions, some state members fail to hold their troops accountable for sex crimes committed against the local population, therefore why UNSCR 2272 was implemented. (Boom, 2016) Since the 1990s, SEA cases within peacekeeping missions have often been documented and exposed by the media and NGOs, for example in incidents in Bosnia, Herzegovina, Mozambique, Cambodia, East Timor, and Liberia.

As recalled by Westendorf & Searle (2017), the first time SEA majorly became a peacekeeping issue was during the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia in 1993. SEA became an issue in Cambodia because of the rapid increase of prostitutes in Cambodia, the number of prostitutes arose from 6,000 to 25,000 during the time of the peacekeeping mission. SEA continued to occur in peacekeeping missions over time as mentioned by Ward (2007, p. 37) “ In Iraq, Human Rights Watch reported in July 2003 that at least 400 women and girls as young as of the age of eight had been raped during or immediately after the war”. UNSCR 2272 was established to address the systematic failure represented by the ongoing allegations, hoping to reinstate the limitations and morals of peacekeepers, as the last 10 years have demonstrated that standards have lowered and ethics were often violated. (Schwalger, 2016)

UNSCR 2272:

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 2272 is a legally binding agreement between all member states to acknowledge and attempt to solve the issues of SEA. UNSCR 2272 was adopted on 11 March 2016 at the 7643rd meeting as a response to many reports of sexual misconducts in peacekeeping missions. The Resolution reinforces the proper ethical conduct, applied in the UN mandate for peacekeeping missions, to be followed by all personnel deployed to UN peacekeeping missions. The Resolution includes the objectives to expand the vetting of UN peacekeeping personnel to ensure that they do not have a history of SEA; to urge all member states to take concrete steps aimed to prevent and combat impunity for SEA by members of UN peacekeeping missions; to urge the efforts to strengthen pre-deployment training of troop and police contributors; to understand the critical importance of protecting civilians, in particular women and children, in internally-displaces persons and refugee sites most as they are often the most vulnerable; to ratify all state members to take responsibility for investigating allegations of SEA by their troops; to support the Secretary-General's continued efforts to implement and reinforce the UN zero tolerance policy on SEA; to appoint Jane Hall Lutes as the Secretary-General's special coordinator to improve UN precautionary responses towards issues of SEA, including the implementation of appropriate United Nations mechanisms, especially those related to Children and Armed Conflict, Women, Peace and Security and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; and to support the decision of the Secretary-General to expel a particular military unit or formed police unit of a contingent when there is evidence of SEA by that unit.

As seen, UNSCR 2272 works in three main ways; the first way is to establish pre-deployment training in which teaches troops of appropriate United Nations mechanisms, especially focusing on the interactions with related children and women; the second way is 'the punishment of many for the crimes of a few', which repatriates a whole unit if there is credible evidence on a unit's engagement in SEA unless the perpetrator(s) come forward to accept criminal proceedings according to the troop-contributing country; and the second way is excluding countries peacekeeping missions, this is when a country does not carry out sufficient criminal proceedings against perpetrators and thus giving the authority to the Secretary-General to repatriate a country's entire peacekeeping force from that mission. (Neudorfer, 2016)

Other precautions that are taken to prevent SEA:

Before the implementation of UNSCR 2272, there were many ways of which the UN attempted to minimise the effects and distribution of SEA. These ways included resolution 1325, the Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection, and the zero-tolerance policy of SEA and campaigns to raise awareness of the detriments of SEA such as the *Stop Rape in War* campaign (2007).

UNSCR 2272 can often be mistaken for Resolution 1325 as both documents explore the same category of issues. However, UNSCR 2272 greatly differs from Resolution 1325 as it focuses on SEA whereas Resolution 1325 focuses on the importance of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peacekeeping, humanitarian response, peace negotiations, peace-building,

and in post-conflict reconstruction. As stated by the Office of the Special Adviser of Women (OSAGI) (n. d.), the main objective of Resolution 1325 is to encourage the participation of women and to incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations peace and security efforts. While Resolution 1325 does look at issues of SEA, the document only focuses on taking extra precaution to protect women and girls from gender-based violence instead of establishing consequences and steps that should be taken when peacekeeping troops break sexual conducts. UNSCR 2272 incorporates most of the notions of Resolution 1325, the Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection, and the zero-tolerance policy regarding SEA; implementing the notions to deal with SEA in a legally binding document to ratify all member states to agree to holding their troops responsible if they show any signs of sexual misconduct. Through the implementations of UNSCR 1325, the increase of women in missions poses as an excellent approach to decrease the incidences of SEA in missions. As recalled by Hlatky (2017), the UN held a peacekeeping conference in 2017 to discuss the integration of gender perspective to understand the different conflicts that women, men, girls, and boys experience instead of generalising the issues for both genders. It is argued by Global Affairs Canada that increasing the presence of women in peacekeeping missions will aid in "post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building", is internationally recognized as a significant improvement in peace-building missions. (cited in Hlatky, 2017) The increased presence of women in peacekeeping missions is thought to decrease the occurrence of SEA as statistically the occurrences of SEA in peacekeeping missions are executed by male peacekeepers, targeted at vulnerable women and young girls.

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Is UNSCR 2272 successful?

While UNSCR 2272 greatly reiterates objectives that can completely stop circumstances of SEA in peacekeeping missions, such as the assigning of Conduct and Discipline Units to missions; the creation of posts for Gender Advisors (or gender focal points); starting awareness-raising campaigns to inform the local populace of their rights; organizing more extensive training concepts for incoming peacekeepers; and state members taking responsibility for the accounts of their troops, UNSCR 2272 has failed to be successful in the two years it has been implemented. Realistically it will take more than a UN resolution to stop circumstances of SEA, especially with there being a prevalence in the normalisation of rape culture and the previous incidents where the UN have hidden acts of SEA in peacekeeping missions. As mentioned by Ward (2017, p. 31) " Such impunity both reflects and reinforces the widespread cultural norms that acquiesce to the inevitability of violence against women and girls whether in times of peace or of war" which fear-mongers these victims into accepting their fate and staying silent.

Reported by the UN spokesperson (2018), SEA allegations have risen in the past two years that UNSCR 2272 has been implemented. In November 2017, there were 31 allegations reported, 12 of which were from UN troops; and 70 allegations reported in July 2018, in which 43 involving UN personnel. UNSCR 2272 fails to be successful because of the following points; it is simply impossible to keep track of every personnel deployed in peacekeeping missions; victims are afraid to report cases of SEA because of the fear of losing things like food, money, and protection; fellow troop members are <https://assignbuster.com/evaluation-of-the-united-nations-security-council-resolution-2272/>

afraid to report cases of SEA because of the fear of being punished as a whole unit for the consequence of a few; and the failure of past attempts at solving issues of SEA such Resolution 1325, the Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection which was regularly updated to condemn any SEA activities, the policy of ' zero-tolerance' towards SEA by UN staff, and the attempt to spread awareness of SEA through campaigns and education.

As mentioned prior, there are 120 member states in the UN and approximately 100, 000 uniformed personnel employed by the different member states. As it is impossible to monitor each individual troop member and their every move, the reporting of SEA incidents is heavily reliant on media exposure, and the moralities of fellow personnel and whether they will testify against their fellow personnel who present sexual misconduct. In most cases, many peacekeepers will shrug off incidents of SEA because of the normalisation of rape culture, as seen in the instance when The UN Special Representative Correspondent dismissed the 1993 Cambodian scandal, saying " boys will be boys". (Ward 2007, p. 79) UNSCR 2272 also deeply relies on the ratification of UN member states and their obligation to investigate, report and presents the perpetrator with the necessary reprimand for their violation of sexual misconduct.

Locals who are protected by UN troops who have been affected by SEA, particularly women and children, are often afraid to report incidents because of the fear of losing necessities such as food, shelter, money, and protection.

As reports revealed how some personnel would sexually exploit locals in exchange for food and money, causing the defilement of trust between <https://assignbuster.com/evaluation-of-the-united-nations-security-council-resolution-2272/>

locals and UN troops. Additionally, when incidents of SEA occur locals often are unable to report them because do not know where to go with the information. As, quite often, trust has been lost with the engagement of SEA in troops, there is a sense of fear for locals as if they tell other troop members about SEA incidents, they'll most likely be ignored or be punished even more. The perpetrators, in this case, the UN personnel, can frequently claim that they were coerced into committing rape, which discourages locals to report incidents. Moreover, the UN has spent approximately two decades incrementing reforms within the UN system to prevent the occurrence of SEA in peacekeeping missions through the establishment of management reforms at UN headquarters. These management reforms clarify policies, strengthening response protocols, creating new organisational architectures and responsibilities, and allocate resources accordingly. (Whalan, 2017) However, these reforms have yet to stop the occurrence of SEA by peacekeepers (both UN personnel and non-UN forces operating under a Security Council mandate).

Consequently, it is evident that the UN has done an excellent job in maintaining international peace and security under the UN Charter and through peacekeeping missions, the UN, however, has failed to protect local civilians from UN peacekeeping troops as they administer the sexual exploitation and abuse to the locals that are under the protection of the UN personnel. Although UNSCR 2272 presents great objectives that, when implemented correctly, can completely and successfully stop circumstances of SEA in peacekeeping missions; including the objectives of the assigning of Conduct and Discipline Units to missions, the creation of posts for Gender

Advisors (or gender focal points), starting awareness-raising campaigns to inform the local populace of their rights, organizing more extensive training concepts for incoming peacekeeper, and state members taking responsibility for the accounts of their troop. However, UNSCR 2272 has failed to be successful in the two years it has been established because realistically it will take more than a UN resolution to completely stop occurrences of SEA, especially with there being a prevalence in the normalisation of rape culture and the previous incidents where the UN have hidden acts of SEA in peacekeeping missions. The four main detriments to the resolution included the following points; it is simply impossible to keep track of every personnel deployed in peacekeeping missions; victims are afraid to report cases of SEA because of the fear of losing things like food, money, and protection; fellow troop members are afraid to report cases of SEA because of the fear of being punished as a whole unit for the consequence of a few; and the failure of past attempts at solving issues of SEA such Resolution 1325, the Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection which was regularly updated to condemn any SEA activities, the policy of 'zero-tolerance' towards SEA by UN staff, and the attempt to spread awareness of SEA through campaigns and education.

Resource list:

- Boom, R 2016, ' United Nations Security Council Resolution 2272 & Secretary-General Report on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse', *International Legal Materials* , vol. 55, no. 4, pp. 756-792.

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Landmark resolution on Women, Peace and Security, OSAGI, viewed 20 October 2018,
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- Schwalger, C 2016, ' UN Security Council adoption of resolution 2272 on sexual exploitation and abuse in UN peacekeeping operations' in *the United Nations 2016* , 11 March, viewed 21 October 2018,
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- United Nations 2018, Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse: Quarterly Updates, the United Nations, viewed 21 October 2018,
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- Westendorf, J. K & Searle, L 2017, ' Sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations: trends, policy responses and future directions', *International Affairs*, vol. 93, no. 2, pp. 365-387.

- Whalon, J 2017, *Dealing with Disgrace: Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in UN Peacekeeping* , International Peace Institute, viewed 24 October 2018,