

Conflict in Identity of UN Military Peacekeepers: A Probable Cause for the Persistence of SEA

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ABSTRACT

United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO) have been plagued by cases of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) since the 1990s. Despite the deep disgrace that these cases have brought to the international community, fresh allegations continue to be unearthed even in 2018. Such occurrences mar the recovery of the people from the trauma of conflict and create fresh problems in their wake. This paper examines perpetration of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) by UN military peacekeepers, as a result of their identity being limited to that of their nation and their inability to embrace an international identity due to a variety of systemic factors. The national identity of the military personnel proves to be an obstacle to their internalization of the standards of conduct of the UN, which leads to the persistence of SEA. This paper argues that since the troops identify with their national identity on an international mission in a foreign soil, they do not feel beholden to the values and ethics of the international organization that they represent. Not that the national identity propagates SEA, but the roles of a traditional army and a UN Peacekeeping mission, are often at odds with each other. While the former trains you for war and a paternalistic protection of the nation's citizens, the latter expects you to maintain peace among foreign communities. The paper also examines the idea of 'militarized masculinity' as proposed by feminists, as an integral element of a national military identity, which continues to inform a military official's actions even as a peacekeeper. The paper lays emphasis on the nature of pre-deployment training as a cause for the inadequate formation of an international and impartial identity. The punitive actions taken in case of a substantiated allegation of SEA and the presence of national authority even during decision making on ground, in a UNPKO, strengthen the national identity of a troop member. These factors then act as obstacles in the formation of an identity that is in accordance with the UN principles, and thereby contribute to the persistence of SEA even in 2018.

Keywords: Blue Helmets, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, National identity, Militarized Masculinity, Troop Contributing Countries

UN Peacekeeping plays a crucial role in the transition of member states from conflict to peace. While many organizations and institutions work towards establishing peace in conflict-ridden societies, what sets apart UN Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO), is the legitimacy that they possess. It is this legitimacy that not only makes it the responsibility but duty of the UNPKOs to protect the civilians in a conflict. The functions of UN peacekeepers as identified by the organization itself, include protecting and

promoting human rights and assisting in restoring the rule of law in the societies that they intervene in¹. The legitimacy of UN interventions has made the UNPKOs a symbol of hope and an ombudsman for future peace.

It is in this context of authority, legitimacy, and an image of the UN as a harbinger of peace that one has to look at the allegations of Sexual Exploitation and

¹UN Peacekeeping. What is peacekeeping?. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/what-is-peacekeeping> (September 25, 2018)

Abuse (SEA) that have been reported against the UN peacekeepers for nearly three decades now. Acts of SEA committed by UN peacekeepers not only undermines trust, but also creates ground for fresh conflict and trauma amongst the very people that it was meant to protect. It is also a breach of trust of the member states and the other peacekeepers who contribute to the Peacekeeping Operation by tarnishing their reputation.

The UN 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. This includes acts such as transactional sex, solicitation of transactional sex, and exploitative relationships.²

While Sexual Exploitation is the common form of intrusion by UN peacekeepers in cases of sexual violation in conflict- ridden societies, instances of Sexual Abuse are also not infrequent. The UN defines Sexual Abuse as ‘the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.’³ Sexual activity of any kind with a child (anyone below the age of 18) is considered to be sexual abuse.

The magnitude of the problem has reached staggering proportions today. The total number of allegations of SEA against UN Peacekeepers (including all types of personnel- military, civilian, police, unknown) from 2010 to 2018 stands at a shameful 612⁴. Out of these, the number of allegations against military personnel alone for the same time period stands at 342⁵, over half the total number of allegations. While allegations refer to uncorroborated instances that indicate that instances of SEA could have taken place in an area, the actual number of perpetrators who have been identified as having committed acts of SEA over the course of

investigating these allegations, has far exceeded the number of allegations themselves.

The fact that even in 2018 so far there have been 38⁶ allegations proves that this is a persistent problem, despite Kofi Annan announcing UN’s ‘Zero-tolerance policy’ towards SEA as early as 2003.

The UN has taken several measures over the years to increase accountability and raise the standard of conduct of the peacekeepers. There are various organizations, teams and units set up by the UN with the explicit purpose of monitoring, investigating, and preventing SEA. The Department of Field Support (DFS) and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) are responsible for enforcing standards of conduct in UNPKOs. Within the two departments, there exists the Conduct and Discipline Unit (CDU) in the former and the Conduct and Discipline Team (CDT) in the latter. Their function is to formulate policies, provide training, advise the Under-Secretary General of DFS and liaise with Member States in cases of allegations against their officers. Apart from these, there are other departments that have been set up to look into matters of misconduct, viz, Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) and the Office of Legal Affairs (OLA).

Despite these organizational additions, there are still systemic inadequacies that allow the perpetrators to enjoy anonymity and suffer minimum damages. While these procedural lapses are a definite cause for the impunity with which acts of SEA are repeatedly committed, this paper seeks to explore identity of UN peacekeepers as a factor in enabling or deterring them from violating UN Standards of Conduct.

The peacekeepers, being a part of an international organization, carry a multiplicity of identities within themselves. Their identity as an individual, replete with personal beliefs, biases, and prejudices; their national identity; and finally, their identity as belonging to an international organization. For them to function as a coherent and efficient unit in a conflict- ridden society, it is important for them

²Conduct in UN Field Missions. Glossary: <https://conduct.unmissions.org/glossary>

³Ibid

⁴Conduct in UN Field Missions. Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. <https://conduct.unmissions.org/sea-subjects>. (September 28, 2018)

⁵Ibid

⁶Ibid

to rise above their personal and national identities and prejudices. It is important for them to identify themselves as neutral and impartial members of an international body with peacekeeping responsibilities that have to be fulfilled in accordance with a particular standard of conduct. Moreover, it is not sufficient that this identity simply be formed amongst the peacekeepers, but also that it be the identity that mobilizes the peacekeepers on duty and not be subservient to other identities.

This paper postulates that often it is the identity of belonging to a superior force or organization that informs the actions of the peacekeepers, rather than their identity of being responsible peacekeepers. This feeling of superiority is twofold. One, as belonging to the UN which is a legitimate international body that is respected not only for its efforts but also for the legitimacy and importance that it confers upon a conflict. Second, the feeling of authority and impunity that comes with being accountable only to the national government, due to systemic provisions of the UN.

The paper focuses specifically on the identity of the military personnel who are deployed in the UNPKOs, as opposed to including civilian personnel and the administrative staff of the UN. The reason for this focus is that proportionally most cases of SEA are committed by military personnel, as noted earlier where more than half the allegations of SEA were against military personnel. Moreover, a conflict of identity between belonging to a national army and an international organization is likely to be more pronounced among the military personnel.

Another reason for focusing on the military personnel within UNPKOs is that it is among them that the concept of 'Militarized masculinity', as proposed by feminist thinkers like Cynthia Enloe, can be seen in sharp relief. For a section of the people, who have been trained and imbibed with the idea of militarized masculinity and have been taught to look at the enemy as a dehumanized 'other', peacekeeping responsibilities are a fresh responsibility. To maintain and ensure the sustenance of peace in a conflict-ridden society runs counter to their basic ethos and self-image.

This paper is based on the *hypothesis* that the identity of the troops as peacekeepers is trumped by their identity as belonging to a superior force and this contributes to the persistence of cases of SEA.

In order to examine this hypothesis, the paper examines a primary research question. What role does the TCC play in forging the identity of the troops deployed as international peacekeepers? As subdivisions of this question, the paper further explores two secondary questions:

- ⊙ What steps are taken in case of a substantiated instance of SEA by the UN and by the TCC?
- ⊙ what is the nature of relationship between UN and the Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs)?

These questions are explored in the paper in three sections.

The first section of the paper is focused on the training that the Blue Helmets undergo before being deployed on a mission. The training they are required to undergo is indicative of the level of consolidation and identity formation among the troops at the time of deployment, which then further informs their actions.

The second section examines the actions that the UN and the Member States are mandated to take against the perpetrators of SEA. The section also explores the actual actions that are taken in case of a substantiated allegation by the UN and the Member States. A comparison of the success rates of investigations conducted by the UN departments and the Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) is also undertaken.

The third section examines the relation between the UN and the TCCs and draws conclusions about how much leverage the UN actually has over the TCCs in compelling them to take action against the perpetrators.

The Conclusion of the paper discusses if the hypothesis stands validated or not based on the arguments discovered as answers to the research questions.

Section 1: Pre-Deployment Training

The UN prescribes a three- pronged strategy for

reducing the cases of SEA. The three measures are- prevention of misconduct, enforcement of the UN standards of conduct and remedial action.

An important element of prevention of SEA, as recognized by the UN is the appropriate training of the troops. Since the paper is primarily concerned with identity formation among the troops, it is this aspect of prevention that will be focused upon, although the UN undertakes several other measures for prevention SEA like vetting of the troops before deployment and the spread of awareness among the local populations.

A UNPKO is mandated by a UN Security Council resolution, that is passed only after an initial technical assessment has been undertaken in the conflict- zone. Based on the report of the technical assessment, the mandate of the Mission varies from one conflict to another. The mandate ranges from preventing the outbreak of conflict to assisting states towards a stable democratic government.

Once the decision to launch a mission in a conflicted society is undertaken and its mandate has been decided, the UN then raises troops for deployment by seeking contributions from the Member States. Countries which decide to contribute troops are governed by a Memorandum of Understanding with the UN. This MoU lists out the number of troops being contributed to the UN, the reimbursement that the country is entitled to, the self- service equipment that country contributes. Following a revised, model MoU that was drafted in 2007, the MoUs between TCCs and the UN also list out the training requirements for the troops and Commanding Officers, the investigation procedure that the TCC ought to follow in case of an allegation of SEA against a troop member and the actions that ought to be taken against the perpetrators⁷.

The MoU recognizes the Commanding Officer of a national troop as the nodal official responsible for maintaining discipline and enforcing compliance with the standards of conduct in nation's contingent. It also places emphasis on the pre-deployment

training of the Commanding Officers to ensure discipline of the troops, although training workshops are conducted post-deployment as well. This emphasis on pre-deployment training is indicative of the importance of this phase of training in shaping the conduct and identity of the personnel deployed in the Mission.

The training of military troops deployed in UN missions takes place in three phases- pre-deployment, mission- specific induction training and ongoing training⁸.

The pre- deployment training, most important for identity formation and consolidation, is the exclusive responsibility of the TCC. The UN's role in this phase of training is limited to providing course outlines and study materials, training the trainers, and conducting inspection visits.

Access to UN's peacekeeper training material is available to the public. The Core pre-deployment training materials specify a three- module course for training⁹. Module 1 is focused on an Introduction to United Nations Peacekeeping which includes a broad history of UN, its organs, other organizations that work in a conflict zone, and their functions. Module 2 deals with the mandated tasks of the UN, their jurisdiction, functions, and duties as peacekeepers towards different groups of people in the conflict- ridden society. The third module is focused on individual peacekeepers, their health, safety, the conduct that is expected from them and the discipline they are required to follow. It is in the third module as a responsibility of an individual peacekeeper that the prevention and mitigation of SEA is featured.

Within the total 10-day (indicative time period) pre-deployment training that is mandated by the UN, the number of days that are set aside for covering the aspects of conduct and discipline and SEA, is just one (indicative)¹⁰. In the context of the

⁷UN General Assembly. "Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and its Working Group on the 2007 resumed session." <https://conduct.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/keydoc8.pdf> (11 June, 2007).

⁸UN Peacekeeping Resource Hub. Peacekeeping training. <https://research.un.org/en/peacekeeping-community/training>

⁹UN Peacekeeping Resource Hub. DPKO-DFS Core Pre-deployment Training Materials (CPTM 2017) for United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. <http://research.un.org/revisedcptm2017/Introduction>

¹⁰Dag Hammarskjöld Library. "Operational Readiness Preparation for Troop Contributing Countries in peacekeepingmissions." <http://repository.un.org/bitstream/handle/11176/400690/20170106%20>

militarized masculinity, it is hard to imagine how much emphasis is given on gendered training within a limited time. For, such training has been considered non-essential, traditionally, in the military and the recent emphasis placed on it can be said to be the result of the debate that has been sparked in the international community about the rights and identity of women. Feminists like Cynthia Enloe have long argued that militaries are based on an ideology of manliness that encompasses violence, aggression, and adherence to a discipline¹¹. They also imbibe a culture of intolerance with non-conforming elements of society like homosexuality. Prejudices of racism and sexism are also found in the troops as a result of the 'masculine' training they receive¹².

In this context, Peacekeeping under the aegis of the UN is contrary to the military ethos that the personnel are used to within the nation's training. In fact, the activities of the UN peacekeepers are seen as actions of a 'soft' military, causing shame among them¹³. As a result of this conflict between the traditional and normative role that the troops are required to play in a UNPKO, acts of SEA could be seen as an attempt to reclaim power and the idea of lost masculinity.

Thus, there potentially exists a conflict within the identity of a military peacekeeper as an official of a masculine national identity and the identity as a responsible of an international force whose function is to ensure peacebuilding. One way to overcome this is to provide the troops with appropriate training before deployment to forge an identity that ameliorates the stated conflict identities. The Core pre-deployment training material (CPTM) of the UN cover all the issues that one would expect for such an occasion, but the manner of imparting the training is crucial. Whether the training has occurred in the manner mandated by the UN, is guaranteed by the 'Operational Readiness Assurance'¹⁴, that is

Operational%20Readiness%20Preparation%20signed%20version.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y

¹¹Sandra Whitworth. *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping: A Gendered Analysis* (Boulder: Lynne Reiner, 2007) 16.

¹²*Ibid*

¹³*Ibid*

¹⁴Dag Hammarskjöld Library. "Operational Readiness Preparation

given by the states themselves on behalf of their troops to assure UN that their troops are ready for deployment.

These trainings are therefore still conducted within the bounds of a national identity and can be said to reinforce the same identity in the minds of the troops. The superiority bias that an official has towards his national army only gets strengthened when the training he receives for peacekeeping functions by the home nation itself. So, an integrated, international identity that would be considered ideal for peacekeeping functions in a conflict-ridden society cannot be said to be established effectively.

The link between appropriate training and the acts of SEA can be illustrated through the example of UN Peacekeeping Forces deployed in the Central African Republic (CAR). The UN peacekeeping troops that were deployed in the country were later found to be the same troops that were sent in 2013 as part of an African Union mission. They were later simply rehatted and renamed as UN Blue Helmets. A change in uniform is not likely to inculcate the standards that the international community has come to expect from the UN Peacekeepers. This is probably reflected in the fact that the UN Mission in CAR (MINUSCA) is one among the top five UNPKOs that have received the highest level of allegations of SEA. As yet, 106 investigations have been carried out against the troops that were deployed in the country¹⁵. It is safe to assume that the actual number of allegations were higher.

'The peacekeeping soldier is mostly depicted as benign, compassionate, and altruistic and they are believed to bring feelings of security to the areas they seek to protect.'¹⁶ The formation of this identity among the peacekeepers, requires overcoming two obstacles. The first is that of militarized masculinity

for Troop Contributing Countries in peacekeepingmissions."<http://repository.un.org/bitstream/handle/11176/400690/20170106%20Operational%20Readiness%20Preparation%20signed%20version.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>

¹³*Conduct in UN Field Missions. Sexual Abuse and Exploitation.* <https://conduct.unmissions.org/sea-investigations>

¹⁶Hayley Lopes. "Militarized Masculinity in Peacekeeping Operations: An obstacle to gender mainstreaming." <https://peacebuild.ca/Lopes%20website%20ready.pdf> (2011).

where peacekeeping is seen essentially as a function that undermines the masculinity of the soldier. The second obstacle that is to be overcome, is that of a national identity that prevents a soldier from identifying as an international actor working towards securing societies, people, and territories outside of his nation. Overcoming these hurdles can only be achieved through appropriate training of the troops before their deployment in a turbulent society. It is doubtful if this can be achieved through a single day's training by the troop's home country itself. In the absence of this identity, cases of SEA on duty are likely to persist in the future as well. Especially, since the actions taken against the perpetrator are minimal as explored in the next section.

Section 2: Action taken against a perpetrator of SEA

The second strategy that UN proposes to reduce the cases of SEA is enforcement. This measure includes the steps of receiving and recording complaints appropriately, conducting investigations into allegations of SEA, initiating disciplinary processes against the perpetrators, and striving for accountability. This concept of enforcement in cases of SEA by the UN, has received flak from the international civil society for being ineffective and for being merely a façade. The failure of enforcement has given rise to impunity among the Blue Helmets which is cited most commonly as the primary cause for persistence of SEA.

In keeping with examining identity formation of the Blue Helmets, this section seeks to examine to what extent the perpetrators are held to account as international peacekeepers who have breached the trust of a troubled community and tarnished the legitimacy of an international organization. Whether or not this holds true, will depend on how far the UN takes action against the perpetrators as a transnational body. The crime committed, and the punishment meted out, should both be based on the same level of identity, ideally. If the offence is committed as an international peacekeeper, then the action taken against him should also be

by the mandated international organization- the UN. But the last section cast sufficient doubts on the formation of identity among the troops as international peacekeepers. This section aims to show how the current state of enforcement against cases of SEA only serves to reinforce the national identity of the Blue Helmets, as opposed to a consolidated transnational identity.

Action against a military officer who has been identified as a perpetrator, can only be taken by the home country. All UN personnel are trained to register complaints regarding SEA committed by peacekeepers of the mission, in an appropriate format. The complaint can be issued by the victim, a witness, community complaint mechanisms, civil society, or other UN members of the mission. The complaint is then forwarded to the CDT which records the complaint and the details of the person against whom the complaint is lodged, in the Misconduct Tracking System (MTS), which is a confidential database maintained by the CDU¹⁷. A complaint could also be directly lodged with the OIOS.

The OIOS categorizes different types of misconduct into Category 1 and Category 2 based on the seriousness of the offence. Instances of SEA are included under Category 1¹⁸. The UN has established several departments to carry out investigations, viz., OIOS, Special Investigation Unit (SIU), Military Police, UN Police. Sometimes, ad-hoc panels are also set up. But the jurisdiction of all these authorities does not include military personnel of the mission. The UN military troops are also immune from the criminal legal system of the host country in which they are deployed. Investigation into the allegations of SEA against a military official is undertaken by the official's home country. The country can choose to conduct the investigation in collaboration with the OIOS, but the number of such instances in practice are very limited. To ensure that the investigation starts in a timely manner, since 2016, TCCs have been asked

¹⁷Conduct in UN Field Missions. Complaints. <https://conduct.unmissions.org/enforcement-complaints>

¹⁸Ibid

to send a National Investigation Officer (NIO) with their troops¹⁹.

Within 10 days of being notified of the allegation against a troop member of their country, the SEA is required to notify to the UN if it will conduct an investigation or not. If the member state declines to investigate, then the departments responsible for investigation as mentioned above, will conduct an inquiry into the issue. As an interim measure, while an investigation is being carried out against the official (either by the TCC or the UN), the UN can suspend the payments of the official in question. Once an investigation is completed, the UN presents a report of the investigation to the TCC, or vice versa, depending on who conducted the investigation. In either case, the actions that the UN can take against the official against whom a substantiated allegation is levelled, is to repatriate him, prohibit him from participating in any further peacekeeping missions and withhold the suspended payments and use it for victim assistance programmes.

Specific disciplinary or judicial actions and sanctions against the perpetrator can only be taken by the Member State. Thus, the discretionary power still remains with the TCC, which could potentially take very minimal actions against the official. The only requirement from the TCC for the UN, is a report of the specific actions that is taken against the perpetrator by the TCC. This, it can be safely said is hardly sufficient incentive for the TCCs to take serious action against their troop member. In fact, the number of communications received by the UN from Member States on information regarding the action they have taken in cases of alleged SEA by their troop members, has always been less than the communications that have been sent by the UN to the Member States. 40. 36 is the average difference between communications sent and received by the UN from the years 2007- 2018, a 12- year time period²⁰. The only year not considered in this figure is that of 2015, when the number of communications

received by the UN were greater than the number of communications sent by it²¹.

The total number of substantiated allegations against military personnel in the period from 2010-2018 is 99²². The 'Conduct in UN Field Missions' website provides information on the actions that were taken by the Member states against officials in these cases of substantiated allegations. Although, a fact to be noted here is that the website does not provide information a clear account of what actions were taken in which cases. Some of the numbers are duplicated, in the sense that a military official who was jailed could also have been dismissed. In that sense, the data often talks of the same official and does not provide an unambiguous account of the cases in which the Member States took disciplinary action against the perpetrator. Also unclear is the exact nature of action taken in categories like 'Administrative action'.

Action taken	Number of cases
Jail	37
Administrative action	16
Financial sanction	2
Forcible retirement	1
Dismissal	16
Demotion	3
Case dismissed, pending or no action was taken	36

Source: <https://conduct.unmissions.org/sea-actions>.

Actions that one would expect the UN to take against the perpetrators are taken at the discretion of the national governments. In such a situation the accountability that is experienced and the shame that is attributed to the official are both at the national identity. The official does not feel responsible towards the victim or to the organisation he represents, but rather the national government that metes out punishment to him. The training and the identity imparted to the troops by the national government is only reinforced by this system of punishment, which serves to bolster the

¹⁹Conduct in UN Field Missions. Investigations. <https://conduct.unmissions.org/enforcement-investigations>

²⁰Conduct in UN Field Missions. Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. <https://conduct.unmissions.org/sea-overview>

²¹Ibid

²²Conduct in UN Field Missions. Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. <https://conduct.unmissions.org/sea-actions>

image of the national government as a safe haven of sorts with minimum damage. Thus, it is the argument of the paper that the identity of the troops is further inhibited from assuming an impartial and international character.

Section 3: Nature of relationship between the UN and the TCCs

This section seeks to examine the relations between the UN and the TCCs, and the leverage that the former has over the latter or lack thereof. The absence of this leverage is examined in the context of being unable to force TCCs to take action against perpetrators of their country and also in the context of effective control on the field in an UNPKO lying with the TCC.

It is not only in training and punitive action that the troops find themselves more accountable to the nations they belong to than the UN, but rather even in the actual act of peacekeeping in the mission, troops often act upon the directives of their national government rather than the on-ground UN command. It has been recorded that the effective control and command of troops in mission lies with the TCCs themselves. While this severely undermines the effectiveness of the peacekeeping mission, this paper is more concerned with understanding how this phenomenon bolsters the national identity and accountability of the troops.

The military troops contributed by the TCCs are placed under a Force Commander. The Force Commander only has 'operational control' over the troops, as no country hands over the complete control of their army to a foreign power. TCCs and the UN agree upon certain caveats over the use of the troops before deployment itself. These include the location, duration, and purpose of deployment of the troops²³. Some general caveats are decided upon and included in the MoU signed between the UN and the TCC before deployment²⁴. But apart

²³Christopher Leck. "International Responsibility in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Command and control arrangements and the attribution of conduct." https://law.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1686123/Leck.pdf

²⁴Alexandra Novossellof. No caveats, please?: Breaking a myth in UN Peace

from these, there also exist certain hidden caveats, that result from miscommunication between the TCC and the UN or unwillingness to comply with the orders of the UN military command on the ground, based on orders from the national headquarters²⁵.

An example of this can be found in the fall of Goma in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2012, which is considered to be one of the biggest failures of UN Peacekeeping. UN troops were unable to hold ground in the town of Goma and gave up without a fight, when members of the rebel group M23 advanced on the town and occupied it. The reason that was given by the UN leadership at the time was that the UN troops could not do much when the army of the country itself stood aside²⁶. The UN cannot be expected to perform the functions of the national army and government. But this incident called into question the purpose of the UN peacekeeping troops.

However, the failure to act can also be pinned down to the parallel chains of command that existed between the TCC and the UN Force Commander. The Indian commander who presided over a significant chunk of troops in Goma, did not listen to the orders of the Force Commander, and called New Delhi to ask if he should resist the rebel advance or not²⁷. When New Delhi refused, he too refused to order his troops to take action or hold positions²⁸. It appears from this that the troops even when deployed are under significant influence of their national identity and command.

When attempts were made by the then UN Secretary General, Ban Ki moon to remove the Indian commander Major General Vijay Jetley, New Delhi threatened to pull out all its troops from the mission²⁹. Even earlier, when Kofi Annan, tried to taken action against Major General Jetley for his

Operations. <https://peaceoperationsreview.org/thematic-essays/no-caveats-please-breaking-a-myth-in-un-peace-operations/> (September 12, 2016).

²⁵Ibid

²⁶Barbara Plett. UN under fire over fall of Goma in DR Congo. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-20422340> (November 21, 2012)

²⁷Chris McGreal. What's the point of peacekeepers when they don't keep the peace?. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/17/un-united-nations-peacekeepers-rwanda-bosnia> (September 17, 2015).

²⁸Ibid

²⁹Ibid

inaction in Sierra Leone, the same threat was issued by New Delhi³⁰. From this, it can be inferred that these developing countries that put the greatest number of boots on the ground in UN PKOs hold significant leverage over the UN, due to the latter's dependence on them for troops.

The uneasy relation between the UN and the TCCs, only sharpens the distinction in the identification with the nation and the UN. The absence of an ameliorated identity that bridges the gap between the national and the international means that the troops do not have a consolidated identity that makes them beholden to a certain standard of conduct.

CONCLUSION

The importance of social identity in determining behaviour and conduct has long been recognized. Identifying with a group is crucial in following its codes of conduct and ethics. When an identity is not internalized sufficiently, and is accepted only formally or superficially, following its standards of behaviour is difficult. In the case of the UN, the troops from national armies, trained for war, needed to rise above their national identity and their militarized masculinity, to embrace an impartial and international identity that would enable them to protect all civilians, men, women, or children.

This paper sought to argue for the position that the reason peacekeepers are still committing acts of SEA even in 2018, despite widespread international outrage, is that they have not yet shed their national identity and the identity of militarized masculinity imbibed through training. This has prevented them from developing a borderless, neutral, and global identity that would be in sync with the values and ethics of the UN.

The causes for why the national identity still assumes precedence over an international identity were explored in the three sections of this paper. The pre-deployment training that are conducted by the nations itself, as opposed to the UN, with a minimal emphasis on SEA, was identified as a primary cause for the persistence of a national identity. It is rather

ironical that the standards of international conduct and ethic are imparted to the troops by the national government itself, among other troops of the same nationality and within a national- military setting that the troops are familiar with. This setting is not conducive to the development of a cross- cultural and impartial understanding that would be needed to undertake peacekeeping duties in a foreign conflict- ridden society.

The second reason that the paper explored as a cause for the persistence of a national identity is that the punishment that is meted out in case of a substantiated allegation of SEA is decided by the home country of the perpetrator. Thus, the accountability and the responsibility that the peacekeeper feels is towards his nation and not towards the international community or the victims of SEA. When a sense of responsibility flows from the identity of belonging to a specific country, it is not possible to feel accountable as an international worker.

Thirdly, the gap that exists between the chain of command of the national headquarters and the onsite UN command during the field mission, further creates a distinction between the national and international identity of a troop member. The discretion that the TCC holds over the UN ensures the superiority of the national identity over the international identity.

The national identity of a troop member, in this paper, has been equated with the concept of militarized masculinity and a tendency to view the world in categories of 'us' and 'them', and to always identify an enemy in a crisis situation. These elements of a national identity prevent the troop member from realizing his identity as a UN peacekeeper.

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³⁰*Ibid*

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