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Gendered Peacekeeping in the Democratic Republic of Congo

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Literature Review

The integration of women into the peacekeeping mission has caused a divide in those who believe gendered integration is absolutely necessary and those who are not so sure of its impact. In her research “Are Women ‘Really’ Making a Unique Contribution to Peacekeeping?”, Heinecken examines the stark difference in the rhetoric and reality of the integration of women into the peacekeeping mission. Factors, such as authority, coercion, and violence, which stem from the military and operational context of the peacekeeping mission in the DRC affect the proper performance of women.¹ In fact, feminist scholars see masculinity as an inherent part of militarism that not only serves militarism but also “seeks and needs militarization and war for its fulfilment”.² Therefore, in these militaristic positions where peacekeepers are referred to as “troops”, “military”, and “police”, women must adhere to masculine values of authority and coercion in order to be “good” soldiers.³ This undermines the most important factor for greater integration of women into the mission, which is a more gendered approach to peacekeeping.⁴ If the women are forced into the “masculine” dynamics of gendered peacekeeping, the gendered perspective of peacekeeping remains the same, regardless of how many women are integrated into the mission.

¹ Heinecken, Lindy. "Are Women ‘Really’ Making a Unique Contribution to Peacekeeping?" *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 19, no. 3-4 (2015): 227-48.

² Kronsell, Annica, and Erika Svedberg. *Making Gender, Making War: Violence, Military and Peacekeeping Practices*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

³ Heinecken, Lindy. (2015) 227.

⁴ Heinecken, Lindy. (2015) 228.

However, the argument that gender frameworks matter in peacekeeping gained traction and continues to be acknowledged widely over recent years. The RAND Corporation's study on 'women and nation building' found that including women in the peace process improved state stability.⁵ This is not to say that women make "better" peacekeepers, but that women have unique qualities that run counter to militarism which leads to improving relations with the local community.⁶ The importance of integrating women into the peacekeeping mission is further supported by evidence that even the presence of a few women has a "calming impact in hostile situations".⁷ Another argument is the claim that women are also able to identify more closely with the problems that the host society faces.⁸ Women are able to better understand the challenges that other women in the host society may face, such as gender-based violence.⁹ The connection between the presence of an all-male peacekeeping force and sexual exploitation in post-conflict situations further molds the argument that the presence of women is vital to their operations in order to ultimately eradicate sexual exploitation.¹⁰ The presence of more women in the peacekeeping mission may also send a message to the local communities about gender

⁵ Benard, Cheryl, Seth G. Jones, Olga Olikier, Cathryn Quantic Thurston, Brooke Stearns Lawson, and Kristen Cordell. (2008) *Women and Nation-Building*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

⁶ Heinecken, Lindy. (2013). 'Building Capacity from Above and Below: Why Gender Matters in Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding Contexts', in Theo Neethling and Heidi Hudson (eds.), *Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development in Africa*, pp. 147–163.

⁷ Olsson, Louise. (2000). Mainstreaming gender in multidimensional peacekeeping: A field perspective. *International Peacekeeping*, 7 (3):1-16.

⁸ Davis, K & Mckee, B. (2004). *Women in the military: facing a warrior framework, Challenge and change in the military: gender and diversity issues*. Ottawa, Canada.

⁹ Heinecken, Lindy (2013). "Building Capacity from Above and Below..."

¹⁰ Crawford, Kerry F., James H. Lebovic, and Julia M. Macdonald. (2014) "Explaining the Variation in Gender Composition of Personnel Contributions to UN Peacekeeping Operations." *Armed Forces & Society* 41, no. 2 257-81.

equality and inspire the local women and girls.¹¹ It was found that where peace missions have a large number of female peacekeepers, the local women appear to be more willing to join peace committees.¹²

Although the argument that integrating women into the peacekeeping mission has gained much attention over the years, the effort to integrate women into the peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has fallen short. The United Nations Organization Mission in the DRC, originally MONUC and now MONUSCO, as of February 2018 has only 4.4% women in the overall peacekeeping operation.¹³ Out of 16,392 military and police personnel, only 747 are females.¹⁴ This is only a small improvement in the integration of women since the 2000 Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. In a country so plagued by gender-based sexual violence, where rape is used as a weapon of war, it is even more imperative that women can be placed into positions where they have a voice. Not only is the local society plagued by sexual violence, the peacekeeping mission in the DRC itself has been the center for scandal in regard to sexual exploitation. In 2004, an article released titled ‘Sex and Death in the Heart of Africa’ unveiled the sexual violence and exploitation of peacekeepers serving in the DRC.¹⁵ More than thirty girls in a camp for internally displaced persons in Bunia were interviewed and half of them admitted to having sexual relations with

¹¹ Heinecken, Lindy (2013). “Building Capacity from Above and Below...”

¹² Heinecken, Lindy (2013). “Building Capacity from Above and Below...”

¹³ "Facts and figures." MONUSCO. September 15, 2017.

¹⁴ "Facts and figures." MONUSCO. September 15, 2017.

¹⁵ Kronsell, Annica, and Erika Svedberg. *Making Gender, Making War: Violence, Military and Peacekeeping Practices*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

peacekeepers in exchange for food.¹⁶ An article released shortly after also unveiled other abuses within the peacekeeping mission in the DRC, such as the operation of a child prostitution ring, the rape of minors, and child pornography and sex shows organized by Moroccan soldiers in Kinsangani.¹⁷ Even with these released scandals and the Security Council Resolutions on the importance of gendered frameworks, little progress has been made on the integration front in the DRC.

This paper will first examine four key resolutions on Women, Peace and Security that address gender and the integration of women into the peacekeeping mission. It will then go through key resolutions that mark the progress that MONUSCO has made in incorporating gender and gender-perspective into the mandates of their mission. Third, the paper will focus on two progress reviews of MONUSCO's implementation of Women, Peace and Security's recommendations. These progress reviews were reported by The Latin American Security and Defence Network (RESDAL) and UN Women. The reports highlight the successes and shortcomings of the progression that MONUSCO has made in implementing gender recommendations. To conclude, the paper will compare MONUSCO's progress to the progress of all peacekeeping missions and provide recommendations for future action in relation to the framework of the MONUSCO peacekeeping mission.

Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security

The first effort to integrate women into the peacekeeping mission through Women, Peace and Security came with Resolution 1325 in 2000. This Resolution "reaffirmed the important role

¹⁶ Kronsell, Annica, and Erika Svedberg. *Making Gender, Making War*.

¹⁷ Kronsell, Annica, and Erika Svedberg. *Making Gender, Making War: Violence, Military and Peacekeeping Practices*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building”.¹⁸ It also recognized the need to create a framework that included a gender perspective into the peacekeeping mission.¹⁹ It called for the Secretary-General to include more leadership and inclusionary roles for women as special representatives and envoys.²⁰ In relation to dealing with gender on the ground, it requests that the Secretary-General provides Member States with appropriate training guidelines for protecting women.²¹ With this comes an invitation to the Secretary-General to carry out a study on the “impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution”.²² The key thematic issues that thus became prominent in this Resolution to the overarching peacekeeping mission were the important role of women in prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, adapting a gender perspective into the peacekeeping mission, increasing participation of women at all levels, and providing training guidelines on the protection of women while the integration of more women into the processes occurs.

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1888 on Women, Peace and Security, adopted September 30th, 2009, details the importance of the integration of women into the peacekeeping mission. It states that the Security Council welcomes,

¹⁸ UNSC (United Nations Security Council) (2000). Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Available from http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf.

¹⁹ UNSC (United Nations Security Council) (2000). Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

²⁰ UNSC (United Nations Security Council) (2000). Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

²¹ UNSC (United Nations Security Council) (2000). Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

²² UNSC (United Nations Security Council) (2000). Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

the inclusion of women in peacekeeping missions in civil, military, and police functions, and [recognizes] that women and children affected by armed conflict may feel more secure working with and reporting abuse to women in peacekeeping missions, and that the presence of women peacekeepers may encourage local women to participate in the national armed and security forces, thereby helping to build a security sector that is accessible and responsive to all, especially women.²³

Although there had been many resolutions since resolution 1325 that called on greater attention to gender perspectives such as resolutions 1327 (2000)²⁴ and 1366 (2001)²⁵, this resolution 1888 (2009) was the first to detail why the integration of women into the peacekeeping mission is vital. The two main reasons it highlights are comfortability of women in conflict reporting their abuses to women officers and local women being encouraged to participate in the security forces themselves.²⁶ Therefore, the peacekeeping mission is called upon to create gendered perspectives and integrate women with these goals in mind for the local communities they serve.

Resolutions 1960 (2010) and 2242 (2015) reiterate the important role that women can play in the peacekeeping mission while also welcoming the appointment of more women protection advisers (WPAs) to facilitate the implementation of the resolutions on Women, Peace and Security.²⁷ Resolution 2242 (2015) also calls upon the Secretary-General to initiate “a revised strategy [...] to double the numbers of women in military and police contingents of UN

²³ UNSC (United Nations Security Council) (2009). Resolution 1888 on Women, Peace and Security. Available from <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org>.

²⁴ UNSC (United Nations Security Council) (2000) Resolution 1327 on Women, Peace and Security. Available from <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org>.

²⁵ UNSC (United Nations Security Council) (2001) Resolution 1366 on Women, Peace and Security. Available from <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org>

²⁶ UNSC (United Nations Security Council) (2009). Resolution 1888 on Women, Peace and Security.

²⁷ UNSC (United Nations Security Council) (2010). Resolution 1960 on Women, Peace and Security. Available from <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org>.

peacekeeping operations over the next five years.”²⁸ In examining the timeline of Security Council Resolutions on the peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it does not seem likely that this call from Women, Peace and Security will be met.

Security Council Resolutions on the UN Organization Mission in the DRC

The United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, first established as “MONUC” was created after the signing of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in July 1999.²⁹ The establishment of MONUC in Resolution 1279 which was adopted by the Security Council on November 30th, 1999, does not include any gendered language that is specific to women in the peacekeeping mission or women in conflict.³⁰ The first mention of women was in Resolution 1291 adopted on February 24th, 2000. It referred to women as a vulnerable group along with children and demobilized child soldiers, recommending a facilitation of humanitarian assistance particularly attending to these groups.³¹ It is not until July 28th, 2003 that the Security Council adopted resolution 1493 which reaffirmed the statements made through Women, Peace, and Security in resolution 1325 (2000).³² This resolution “reaffirms the importance of a gender perspective in peacekeeping operations in accordance with

²⁸ UNSC (United Nations Security Council) (2015). Resolution 2242 on Women, Peace and Security. Available from <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org>.

²⁹ MONUC (United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo). Available from <https://peacekeeping.un.org/mission/past/monuc/>

³⁰ UNSC (United Nations Security Council) (1999). Resolution 1279 on Establishment of MONUC. Available from <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org>

³¹ UNSC (United Nations Security Council) (2000). Resolution 1291 on Expansion of MONUC. Available from <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org>.

³² UNSC (United Nations Security Council) (2003). Resolution 1493 on MONUC. Available from <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org>.

resolution 1325 [...] and calls on MONUC to increase the deployment of women as military observers as well as in other capacities.”³³ The next acknowledgement of women’s role in MONUC was in resolution 1820 (2008) which reaffirmed the important role of women in peacebuilding and stressed the “importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.”³⁴

The Security Council resolution 1925 renamed the peacekeeping mission in the DRC from “MONUC” to “MONUSCO”, or the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission, to reflect the new phase reached in the country.³⁵ The next two resolutions that make significant progress in acknowledging women’s role after the mission’s shift to MONUSCO are resolutions 2147 (2014) and 2348 (2017). Resolution 2147 refers to the establishment of the Women’s Platform for the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) framework and requests that MONUSCO takes gender considerations into account as a fluid issue throughout its mandate, as opposed to letting gender considerations just act as a side issue to the rest of the framework.³⁶ The Women’s Platform for the PSC framework was signed in February 2013 in an attempt to “stop cycles of conflict by resolving their root causes”.³⁷ The platform brings together women’s groups in the DRC to discuss and work on issues such as peace-building, awareness of the peace

³³ UNSC (United Nations Security Council) (2003). Resolution 1493 on MONUC.

³⁴ UNSC (United Nations Security Council) (2008). Resolution 1820 on MONUC. Available from <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org>.

³⁵ MONUC (United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo). Available from <https://peacekeeping.un.org/mission/past/monuc/>

³⁶ UNSC (United Nations Security Council) (2014). Resolution 2147 on MONUSCO. Available from <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org>.

³⁷ "Women's Platform for Peace." Global Fund for Women. <https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/>.

process, and justice for rape survivors.³⁸ Resolution 2348 (2017) also requests the same as resolution 2147 from MONUSCO in relation to gender considerations.³⁹ However, it goes further to acknowledge the crucial role of United Nations Women Protection Advisers in their commitment to address sexual violence in conflict.⁴⁰ Women's Protection Advisers are deployed in peacekeeping operations in order to "collect timely, objective, accurate and reliable information as a basis for prevention and response programming [to] preserve the safety and dignity of sexual violence survivors".⁴¹

Progress Reviews on the Integration of Women in MONUSCO

In the Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security, as well as the resolutions on MONUSCO, it is evident that there has been progress made on acknowledging the importance of gendered perspectives and integrating women into the framework of the peacekeeping mission. The Latin American Security and Defence Network (RESDAL)'s review of integrating resolution 1325 into three peacekeeping missions including MONUSCO acknowledges the progress and shortcomings of the integration of women.⁴² The report says, "the low contribution of female personnel by [...] MONUSCO is striking: bearing in mind the significance of the sexual violence problem [...], one would expect a higher presence of women

³⁸ "Women's Platform for Peace." Global Fund for Women. <https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/>.

³⁹ UNSC (United Nations Security Council) (2017). Resolution 2348 on MONUSCO. Available from <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org>.

⁴⁰ UNSC (United Nations Security Council) (2017). Resolution 2348 on MONUSCO.

⁴¹ "U.N. Deploys Women Protection Advisers to Curb Sexual Violence." U.N. Deploys Women Protection Advisers to Curb Sexual Violence.

⁴² Donadio, Marcela, and Juan Rial. (2015). "The Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the Year of Its Review: Integrating Resolution 1325 into the Military and Police." *RESDAL Latin American Security and Defence Network*.

among the troops.”⁴³ The report details how there is training on the ideas presented in resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, but there is difficulty implementing this training with the local population because of language barriers.⁴⁴ Also, there is a predominant culture of patriarchal tradition within the DRC that makes it difficult for the full implementation of the establishments set out by the Women, Peace and Security resolutions.⁴⁵ Integrating women into the peacekeeping mission in hopes of inspiring local women to become involved with the peace mission is difficult with a culture used to traditional patriarchy. With this being said, there are many women’s groups within the DRC that have been formed in response to sexual violence. An example of this is the Police Special Protection of Children and Women Unit which was established by UNDP in order to receive, investigate and transfer cases of sexual and gender-based violence in the judicial system.⁴⁶ Groups like this one seek to tackle impunity by providing better access to justice, security and information for the victims.⁴⁷ This is important for women and girls who have been victims of sexual and gender-based violence and are unaware of how to document and receive justice for the crimes.

Another review of MONUSCO’s framework in relation to gender, reported by UN Women, recognizes the progress that MONUSCO has made in implementing the recommendations set out in resolution 1325. Two units exist within the DRC peacekeeping mission that are gender-based. The first is the Gender Unit that was created in 2002 after the

⁴³ Donadio, Marcela, and Juan Rial. (2015).

⁴⁴ Donadio, Marcela, and Juan Rial. (2015).

⁴⁵ Donadio, Marcela, and Juan Rial. (2015).

⁴⁶ "Fighting Sexual Violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo." UNDP.

⁴⁷ "Fighting Sexual Violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo." UNDP.

release of resolution 1325.⁴⁸ The goal of this unit is to “guarantee the incorporation of a gender perspective into the Mission rules and operations” and “to work with the civil society and Government in ensuring the active participation of women in the peace process and post conflict reconstruction.”⁴⁹ This unit supports women’s career development, the mobilization of women in missions and the nomination of women to management development programs.⁵⁰ There are introductory trainings on gender capacity building for civilians and the military staff, however, these trainings were found to be insufficient in having long-term effects.⁵¹ The UN Women report’s survey on the effectiveness of the introductory trainings found that 75% of the 125 Mission staff said that training around gender issues had been “somewhat effective”.⁵² This is because the gender work is considered as supplementary to the overall mission work.⁵³ Also, there is a lack of accountability in implementing the gender targets effectively.⁵⁴ With this being said, the gendered perspective of the framework is helpful but not vital to the mission.

The second unit that is apart of the DRC peacekeeping mission is the Sexual Violence Unit that was created in 2009, when the mission was still MONUC, after sexual violence became a top priority and political issue in the DRC.⁵⁵ In fact, MONUC was the first peacekeeping

⁴⁸ UN Women. UN Women Evaluation Office. *Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming in United Nations Peacekeeping Activities (MONUC / MONUSCO) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*. 2012.

⁴⁹ UN Women. UN Women Evaluation Office. 2012.

⁵⁰ UN Women. UN Women Evaluation Office. 2012.

⁵¹ UN Women. UN Women Evaluation Office. 2012.

⁵² UN Women. UN Women Evaluation Office. 2012.

⁵³ UN Women. UN Women Evaluation Office. 2012.

⁵⁴ UN Women. UN Women Evaluation Office. 2012.

⁵⁵ UN Women. UN Women Evaluation Office. 2012.

mission to put a unit in place that addressed the issue of sexual and gender-based violence.⁵⁶ In the mandate on the Sexual Violence Unit, the mission faces capacity constraints.⁵⁷ The roles of the unit have been filtered through other UN agencies and MONUSCO sections that complicate the responsibilities of the unit in relation to sexual and gender-based violence response.⁵⁸ While the creation of this unit was a success in the direction of gender mainstreaming, the framework of the unit itself again treats gender as a side-note rather than an integral piece of the overall structure of the mission.

The UN Women report acknowledges the slow progress that has been made in improving the gender balance in the staff. However, since 2004, the percentage of women in military positions has remained at 2% and 3%.⁵⁹ Noting that, as recently as 28 February 2018, the number of women in the MONUSCO peacekeeping mission has risen to about 4.4% out of the total military and police troops.⁶⁰ This progress is still slow considering that SCR 1325 was adopted eighteen years ago.

Figure 1 below shows the total number of female and male troop contributions to all peacekeeping missions and MONUSCO. While it is evident that little progress has been made in the integration of women in MONUSCO, it is also clear that this lack of progress extends to all peacekeeping missions. Female troops make up 4.7% of the total contributions to all UN peacekeeping operations.⁶¹ It is also important to note that the MONUSCO mission is the largest

⁵⁶ UN Women. UN Women Evaluation Office. 2012.

⁵⁷ UN Women. UN Women Evaluation Office. 2012.

⁵⁸ UN Women. UN Women Evaluation Office. 2012.

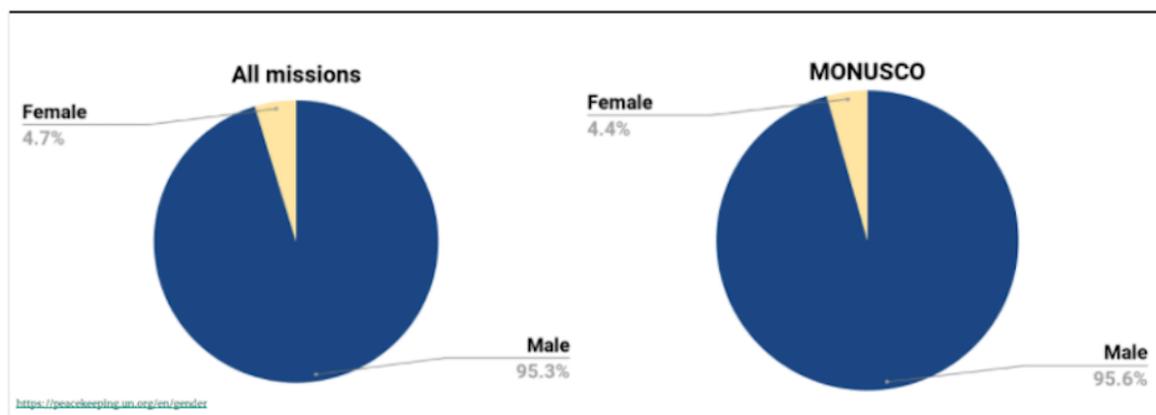
⁵⁹ UN Women. UN Women Evaluation Office. 2012.

⁶⁰ “Gender Peacekeeping.” *United Nations*, United Nations, peacekeeping.un.org/gender.

⁶¹ “Gender Peacekeeping.” *United Nations*, United Nations, peacekeeping.un.org/gender.

of the UN peacekeeping missions with a total of 17,139 military and police troops.⁶² In order for the peacekeeping missions to work toward gender equality, the largest peacekeeping mission needs to take the recommendations of WPS as the priority.

Figure 1: Pie Charts of Troop Contributions to UN Peacekeeping Operations by Gender As of 28 February 2018



Source: “Gender Peacekeeping.” *United Nations*, United Nations, peacekeeping.un.org/gender.

Conclusion

The integration of women into the peacekeeping mission is an issue that has become increasingly relevant as countries struggle with prevention of sexual and gender-based violence. MONUSCO’s progress in implementing the recommendations first made by Resolution 1325 has been slow and used as a “side priority” to conflict resolution. If the peacekeeping mission wants to be most effective in combating sexual violence through the peacekeeping mission, it should assess the relationships between local women and women in the mission. A wider-range study should be taken over a longer period of time with more participants than have previously been used. The study should assess whether or not women in the peacekeeping mission have an

⁶² “Gender Peacekeeping.” *United Nations*, United Nations, peacekeeping.un.org/gender.

impact on more sexual violence and gender-based violence victims seeking help and justice. It should also seek to examine the successes of those cases. Not only that, it should aim to assess the relationship between women's presence in the peacekeeping mission and the impact of women becoming involved in leadership positions in peace processes. If the connection between a wide range of participants shows a successful relationship between women in the mission and local women then MONUSCO should make gender and the gender-perspective the main priority in peace processes in order to speed up the progress of the integration of women. Since MONUSCO is the largest peacekeeping mission, it is imperative that it also assures the mission to prioritize gender equality and gender-perspective to inspire other peacekeeping missions to follow suit.

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