

Blue on Blue: Investigating Sexual Abuse of Peacekeepers

PHOEBE DONNELLY, DYAN MAZURANA, AND EVYN PAPWORTH



Cover Photo: Helmet and flack jackets of the members of the 1 parachute battalion of the South African contingent of the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). (UN Photo/Marie Frechon.)

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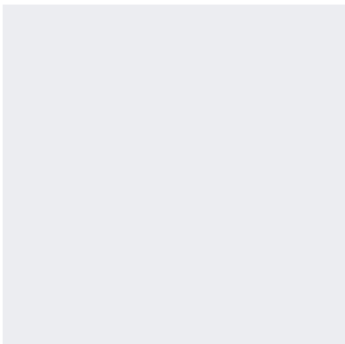
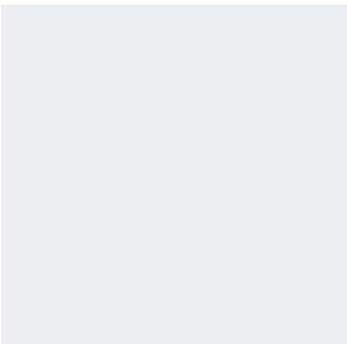
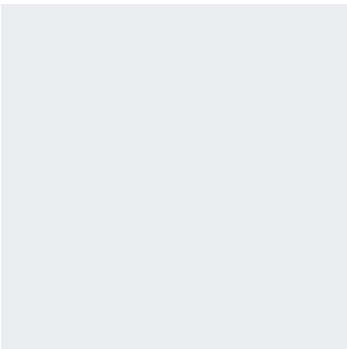
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ABBREVIATIONS

A4P+	Action for Peacekeeping Plus
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AU	African Union
CEDAW	UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
DPO	UN Department of Peace Operations
FPU	Formed police unit
IPO	Individual police officer
MINUSCA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
OVRA	UN Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate
PCC	Police-contributing country
TCC	Troop-contributing country
UNMISS	UN Mission in South Sudan

Executive Summary

It is commonly assumed that the main threats to uniformed peacekeepers originate from outside of peacekeeping missions. In reality, however, many women (and some men) deployed as military or police peacekeepers are subjected to sexual abuse by other members of the organizations they serve. Until now, there has been little research specifically focused on this sexual abuse by uniformed peacekeepers against their peacekeeping colleagues. This paper helps fill that gap, drawing on a survey of peacekeepers as well as data from interviews and a closed-door workshop.

This research reveals that sexual abuse is a major threat to uniformed peacekeepers, especially women. Among all survey participants, approximately one in ten said they personally experienced sexual abuse while serving in a peacekeeping mission, while a similar proportion witnessed sexual abuse against another peacekeeper. The proportion was significantly higher for women (28 percent experienced and 26 percent witnessed) than for men (2 percent experienced and 4 percent witnessed). A large share of the incidents of abuse were perpetrated by higher-ranking men within the mission. The main factor enabling this abuse was the internal organizational cultures of the police and military forces of troop- and police-contributing countries (T/PCCs).

Despite the prevalence of sexual abuse within peacekeeping missions, the UN and T/PCCs have not put in place adequate policies to effectively respond to the issue. This lack of attention is in contrast to the relatively robust architecture for reporting on and investigating sexual exploitation and abuse of host communities. Policies and attention to the sexual abuse of peacekeepers and sexual exploitation and abuse of host communities have been artificially separated, but these forms of abuse are fueled by similar dynamics of militarism and inequality. The responsibility for addressing sexual abuse within peacekeeping operations lies both with T/PCCs and with the UN, which should require the highest standards for behavior within peacekeeping missions.

Existing systems for addressing sexual exploitation and abuse of host communities are generally not designed for or used to address sexual abuse of

peacekeepers. As a result, peacekeepers have little confidence in mechanisms for reporting sexual abuse that they experience or witness against their colleagues. Moreover, when incidents are reported, the prevailing sentiment is that perpetrators are not held accountable due to a culture of impunity within peacekeeping missions. Because current systems are insufficient and ineffective, women peacekeepers often have to protect themselves and respond to sexual abuse on their own.

If the UN and T/PCCs do not prevent and respond to sexual abuse and dismantle the patriarchal cultures that enable it, their initiatives to increase women's meaningful participation in peacekeeping operations will fail. The UN needs to take the sexual abuse of peacekeepers as seriously as it takes peacekeepers' sexual exploitation and abuse of host communities, especially considering the interconnected systemic causes of both types of abuse. Toward this end, the UN and T/PCCs could consider the following recommendations:

1. **Transform the organizational cultures that enable sexual abuse of peacekeepers:** Because they have a particularly important role to play in changing the organizational culture, mission leaders should be evaluated, in part, on the basis of whether they create and maintain a diverse, tolerant, inclusive, safe, secure, and respectful workplace.
2. **Mandate robust training to prevent sexual abuse of peacekeepers:** The UN should ensure that all peacekeepers receive thorough training specifically focused on all forms of sexual abuse within militarized organizations.
3. **Require T/PCCs to address sexual abuse of peacekeepers within their contingents:** Among other steps, the UN should update memoranda of understanding with T/PCCs to include explicit language on preventing and addressing the sexual abuse of peacekeepers.
4. **Create a robust, confidential, and victim-centric reporting and investigation infrastructure:** The UN should build the capacity of existing mechanisms for addressing sexual abuse of host communities to also address sexual abuse of peacekeepers. This system must be outside of the peacekeeping mission and T/PCCs' chain of command.

Introduction

As members of militarized organizations operating in militarized environments, men and women uniformed peacekeepers face numerous risks. The dominant perception among the public and within peacekeeping organizations is that these risks come only from local armed actors.¹ That perception is wrong. Peacekeeping environments are militarized not only because peacekeepers operate in geographic settings marked by armed conflict but also because of the institutional settings of the national militaries and police forces that deploy them. These institutions are characterized by patriarchal norms, narrow understandings of masculinities, and practices of domination, which together can lead to sexual abuse.²

As a result, many women (and some men) deployed as military and police peacekeepers are subjected to sexual abuse inside the very organizations in which they serve.³ A recent study found that “sexism, racism, and sexual harassment and assault” are among the biggest challenges that women military peacekeepers face and that “discriminatory and sexualized behaviors are among the main reasons why they do not deploy to UN peace operations.”⁴ Another study found that sexual and gender-based harassment was the second most common barrier women cited to their participation in peacekeeping operations.⁵

This uncomfortable reality is rarely mentioned by

UN member-state officials, senior staff in the UN Secretariat, or leaders in UN peacekeeping, with a few recent exceptions. For instance, UN Security Council Resolution 2538 (2020), which aims to increase women’s meaningful participation in peacekeeping, raised the subject of sexual harassment within peacekeeping operations.⁶ In addition, the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C34) issued a report in 2021 on the need to train all peacekeeping mission leaders on sexual harassment policies, how to support survivors of sexual harassment, and mechanisms to hold perpetrators of sexual harassment accountable.⁷ Despite these exceptions, the UN is largely inattentive and unresponsive to sexual abuse inside militarized peacekeeping operations. That silence bodes ill for the prospect of effective action to create environments that enable the meaningful participation of women peacekeepers and ensure the safety of peacekeepers of all genders.

This lack of response to intra-mission sexual abuse is surprising given how much public and institutional attention has been devoted to sexual exploitation and abuse of host populations by peacekeepers, especially since 2000.⁸ Sexual exploitation and abuse of local civilians in peacekeeping environments has been a focus for the last three UN secretaries-general. That attention has resulted in numerous guidelines, codes of conduct, policies, reporting mechanisms, investigation units, and trainings on preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse of

1 See, for example: Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, William R. Phillips, and Salvatore Cusimano, “We Need to Change the Way We Are Doing Business,” United Nations, December 19, 2017.

2 See, for example: Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women’s Lives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardsley, “Explaining Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Peacekeeping Missions: The Role of Female Peacekeepers and Gender Equality in Contributing Countries,” *Journal of Peace Research* 53, no. 1 (January 2016); and Megan MacKenzie, *Beyond the Band of Brothers: The US Military and the Myth that Women Can’t Fight* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

3 The broad term “police peacekeepers” is used throughout this report to refer to both formed police units (FPUs) and individual police officers (IPOs). Although there are key differences in the roles and backgrounds of these police officers, there was interest in seeking input from all uniformed police. For more on the differences between FPUs and IPOs, see: Liezelle Kumalo, “Perceptions and Lived Realities of Women Police Officers in UN Peace Operations,” International Peace Institute, June 2021.

4 Lotte Vermeij, “Woman First, Soldier Second: Taboos and Stigmas Facing Military Women in UN Peace Operations,” International Peace Institute, October 2020, p. 12.

5 The first barrier cited was family considerations. Marta Ghittoni, Léa Lehouck, and Callum Watson, “Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations: Baseline Study,” Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF), July 2018.

6 Specifically, language in the resolution’s operative paragraphs focuses on sexual harassment: “Expresses concern regarding allegations of sexual harassment in peacekeeping operations, affirms its support for the Secretary-General’s zero-tolerance policy on all forms of sexual harassment, and requests the Secretary-General to strengthen efforts to prevent and address sexual harassment within peacekeeping operations, in close cooperation and consultation with Member States.” UN Security Council Resolution 2538 (August 28, 2020), UN Doc. S/RES/2538 (2020), para. 7.

7 UN General Assembly, *Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations: 2021 Substantive Session*, UN Doc. A/75/19, February 15–March 12, 2021.

8 An opinion article titled “UN Peacekeeping Has a Sexual Abuse Problem” failed even to ask whether peacekeepers themselves were victims. Skye Wheeler, “UN Peacekeeping Has a Sexual Abuse Problem,” *The Hill*, January 11, 2020.

9 These materials can be found on the UN website on preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse. See: United Nations, “Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse,” available at www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/. The Code Blue campaign also lists key resolutions, reports, and other relevant documents. See: Code Blue, “UN Documents,” Aids-Free World, available at www.codebluecampaign.com/un-docs.

host communities by UN peacekeepers.⁹ While the system for combating sexual exploitation and abuse is not perfect, its enforcement mechanisms and consequences for nonadherence are a step in the right direction.¹⁰

There is no comparable system for intra-mission sexual abuse. To address this gap, this report focuses on sexual abuse of military and police peacekeepers inside UN peacekeeping operations (see Box 1 on terminology). It seeks to prompt accountability and action to stop sexual abuse of uniformed peacekeepers and to encourage transparent dialogue among peacekeeping stakeholders and decision makers about the causes of, and responses to, sexual abuse and the cultures that enable it. This dialogue will only be useful if all participants are willing to look more honestly at the unequal gender dynamics inside peacekeeping military and police organizations. Ultimately, initiatives to increase women's meaningful participation in peace operations will only be effective if action is taken to address the masculine norms and practices of domination inside UN missions and the national militaries and police forces of troop- and police-contributing countries (T/PCCs).

This report is based on a review of published literature; a closed-door workshop with twenty-four experts from T/PCCs, UN agencies, and international NGOs; semi-structured interviews with men and women peacekeepers and subject-matter experts;¹¹ and an anonymous, international survey completed by 457 military and police peacekeepers deployed to UN and AU missions. Based on this

The dominant perception among the public and within peacekeeping organizations is that risks to peacekeepers come only from local armed actors. That perception is wrong.

research, the report shares findings related to the extent, frequency, and type of abuse peacekeepers have experienced and witnessed; the perpetrators of this abuse; the organizational cultures that enable it; and peacekeepers' perceptions of the UN's response. The report is relevant for both UN and AU peacekeeping missions, and both UN and AU peacekeepers completed the survey. However, interviews were only conducted with UN peacekeepers.¹²

The report also focuses primarily on sexual abuse of uniformed women. This is because it is overwhelmingly women who reported experiencing these sexualized harms. Nonetheless, individuals of all genders can experience sexual abuse within militarized contexts. Studies on national militaries have revealed the ways in which men are sexually abused by other men through hazing or other displays of male domination, though they report this abuse at much lower rates than military women.¹³ Regardless of the gender of the abused, the majority of the perpetrators of sexual abuse from this data are men.

While the report focuses on sexual abuse of peacekeepers, investigating and analyzing this under-studied topic can also strengthen efforts to expose and address peacekeepers' sexual abuse and harassment of civilians in host countries. In other words, addressing sexual abuse of peacekeepers by their colleagues and sexual abuse of members of host communities are not competing efforts. Quite the opposite: analyzing one should sharpen analysis of, and responses to, the other.

10 See, for example, the requirements for troop-contributing countries (TCC) outlined by the UN Office of Conduct and Discipline: "Investigations," UN Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, available at <https://conduct.unmissions.org/enforcement-investigations>.

11 It is worth noting that it was challenging to find peacekeepers (through a variety of channels) who would speak about sexual abuse in comprehensive, one-on-one interviews, even with the caveat that they would not be asked about their personal experiences. Member states who wanted to support the research also were hesitant about supporting interviews.

12 Attempts were made to interview AU officials, but the researchers were not granted permission despite multiple inquiries.

13 C. Todd Lopez, "Male Hazing Most Common Type of Sexual Assault, Expert Reveals," US Army, April 18, 2016; Anne G. Sadler et al., "Servicemen's Perceptions of Male Sexual Assault and Barriers to Reporting During Active Component and Reserve/National Guard Military Service," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 36, no. 7–8 (April 2021); Insook Kwon, Dong-Ok Lee, Elli Kim, and Hyun-Young Kim, "Sexual Violence Among Men in the Military in South Korea," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 22, no. 8 (August 2007).

Box 1. Sexual abuse terminology

This paper focuses on sexual discrimination, harassment, and assault against police and military peacekeepers. Because these are all forms of abuse, the paper refers to them collectively with the term “sexual abuse.” The goal in examining these three forms of abuse that are usually seen as distinct is to demonstrate the spectrum of abuse peacekeepers experience.

Sexual discrimination refers to “any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on the basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.”¹⁴

Sexual harassment can refer to:

- Unwanted general sexualized comments, discussions, gossip, or rumors;
- Unwanted receipt of sexual content, including, but not limited to, verbal, photo, or video content;
- Unwanted romantic or sexual advances;
- Displays of jealousy, revenge, or retaliation for unreturned advances, including blackmail; or
- Actions intended to create pressure to submit to romantic or sexual advances.

Sexual assault can refer to:

- Threats of physical aggression or emotional abuse;
- Unwanted physical or sexual touch; or
- Rape.

Cultural Dynamics within Militarized Institutions and Policy Responses to Sexual Abuse within the UN

To address sexual abuse of peacekeepers, it is necessary to understand the environment and culture in which it occurs. This section provides an overview of existing evidence on the level of sexual abuse within national police forces and militaries followed by a summary on some of the steps the UN has taken to address sexual abuse within the organization.

Sexual Abuse and Gender Dynamics in Militarized Institutions

There is little published research on sexual abuse by uniformed peacekeepers against their peacekeeping colleagues.¹⁵ This is in part because it can be

challenging to study sexual abuse within militarized organizations. Many survivors or witnesses do not want to discuss their experiences due to feelings of shame, trauma, and stigma. In addition, many survivors and witnesses reasonably fear that speaking out about abusive behavior could lead to retribution from the organization and harm their careers. In hierarchical military organizations, providing negative reports about the behavior of colleagues (especially when they have a higher rank) can be seen as particularly taboo. Most importantly, peacekeeping missions themselves do not systematically record data on sexual abuse of any kind against military and police peacekeepers. This lack of data from within peacekeeping missions, along with the absence of this problem from discussions around peacekeeping, can lead policymakers and experts to ignore this issue. However, given the prevalence of sexual abuse within similar contexts, it should not be surprising that sexual abuse is an issue among uniformed peacekeepers.

¹⁴ United Nations, “Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women” (CEDAW), December 18, 1979, article 1.

¹⁵ The most notable report to date is Lotte Vermeij’s “Woman First, Soldier Second: Taboos and Stigmas Facing Military Women in UN Peace Operations,” published by IPI.

Evidence from the national militaries and police forces that constitute peacekeeping missions suggests that such abuse is widespread. Researchers have documented extreme patterns of sexual abuse of men and women within the militaries of the United States, Norway, Canada, Australia, Ireland, South Korea, the United Kingdom, and South Africa.¹⁶ This abuse has been linked to social dynamics among soldiers, including informal socialization processes such as hazing, the trivializing of sexual harassment and assault, the perception that assault is an appropriate form of punishment, and retaliation against those who report sexual abuse.¹⁷ For example, studies have found that military men may sexually abuse and degrade other men as part of hazing and bonding rituals or target those they deem weaker and more feminine.¹⁸ Another study identified male-on-male sexual violence in the South Korean military as a tool to exert control through military hierarchies and perpetuate masculinities.¹⁹

Evidence from the national militaries and police forces that constitute peacekeeping missions suggests that sexual abuse is widespread.

Because exaggerated heterosexual masculinity is the norm inside most police and military institutional cultures, men who experience sexual abuse often do not report incidents due to feelings of shame.²⁰ For instance, a study on male victims of male-perpetrated sexual violence in the South Korean military found that “there was a tendency to want to interpret sexual violence as intimacy or playfulness because identification as a victim of sexual violence would imply one’s fragility and vulnerability.”²¹

Furthermore, homosexuality is still forbidden in many of the world’s police and military forces, and victims may fear being persecuted if they report male-on-male sexual violence.

Rates of sexual assault tend to be higher for women than for men. In the US military, it has been estimated that women face sexual assault at a rate seven times that of men. Additionally, research on the US military has shown that female veterans who have experienced military sexual trauma are at a heightened risk for suicide.²² To understand the ways in which sexual abuse is perpetrated against individuals of different genders and sexualities, it is

helpful to recognize that there are many more men than women in US military ranks (which have a similar gender ratio as UN peacekeeping operations). As a result, the total number of men and

women who are victims of sexual assault is similar.²³ Rates of sexual assault are also often higher among those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ+). In the US military, for example, service members who identify as LGBTQ+ represent approximately 13 percent of the force but account for 45 percent of all reported sexual assaults.²⁴

Researchers have found similar patterns of sexual abuse in police forces.²⁵ For example, 46 percent of women police who participated in one study in Australia reported experiencing work-related sexual harassment in the last five years—a rate “substan-

16 See, for instance: Joie D. Acosta, Matthew Chinman, and Amy L. Shearer, “Countering Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment in the US Military: Lessons from RAND Research,” RAND Corporation, 2021; Robin-Ivan Capar, “Almost Half of the Women in the Norwegian Armed Forces Have Experienced Sexual Harassment,” *Norway Today*, February 22, 2021; Ian Austen, “A Top Woman in Canada’s Military Issues a Stinging Rebuke of Its Culture,” *New York Times*, March 19, 2021; Susan Wyndham, “Taking Aim at Military Sexual Violence,” University of Sydney Social Sciences and Humanities Advanced Research Centre, July 27, 2020; *RTÉ News*, “Call for Inquiry into Defence Forces Allegations,” September 11, 2021; Kwon, Lee, E. Kim, and H. Kim, “Sexual Violence Among Men in the Military in South Korea,” Mark Townsend, “Two-Thirds of Women in UK Military Report Bullying and Sexual Abuse,” *The Guardian*, July 24, 2021; South Africa Department of Defence, “Ministerial Task Team Report on Sexual Harassment, Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse and Sexual Offences within the Department of Defence,” December 2020.

17 Elisabeth Jean Wood and Nathaniel Toppelberg, “The Persistence of Sexual Assault within the US Military,” *Journal of Peace Research* 54, no. 5 (September 2017), p. 621.

18 Paul Higate, “Drinking Vodka from the ‘Butt-Crack’: Men, Masculinities and Fratriarchy in the Private Militarized Security Company,” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 14, no. 4 (2012); Lopez, “Male Hazing Most Common Type of Sexual Assault, Expert Reveals.”

19 Kwon, Lee, E. Kim, and H. Kim, “Sexual Violence Among Men in the Military in South Korea.”

20 Lopez, “Male Hazing Most Common Type of Sexual Assault.”

21 Kwon, Lee, E. Kim, and H. Kim, “Sexual Violence Among Men in the Military in South Korea.”

22 Rebecca K. Blais and Lindsey L. Monteith, “Suicide Ideation in Female Survivors of Military Sexual Trauma: The Trauma Source Matters,” *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior* 49, no. 3 (June 2019).

23 Dave Philipps, “Six Men Tell Their Stories of Sexual Assault in the Military,” *New York Times*, September 10, 2019.

24 Acosta, Chinman, and Shearer, “Countering Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment in the US Military,” p. 13.

25 Nick Bonyhady, “Australian Federal Police Settle Sexual Harassment Claim for \$1.25m,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, August 2, 2021; Amanda Coletta, “The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, A Beloved National Icon, Rocked by Sexual Abuse and Harassment,” *Washington Post*, October 17, 2019.

tially higher than the experience of women in the general Australian workforce.”²⁶ A 2022 report on the London Metropolitan Police Service found a culture of unchecked misogyny, racism, and discrimination.²⁷ These reports indicate that militarized environments, including militarized police forces, create and perpetuate cultures of sexual abuse.

The UN’s Response to Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is not limited to militarized environments. In 2018, during a period of increased reports of and activism around sexual abuse in humanitarian and development agencies,²⁸ the UN Secretariat hired a consulting firm to conduct a confidential survey of personnel across the UN system to learn about the prevalence and patterns of sexual harassment.²⁹ The study did not survey peacekeepers because the vast majority of them are not UN employees but are employees of their national militaries and police forces. The survey revealed widespread patterns of sexual harassment. Among the respondents, 33 percent reported experiencing at least one incident of sexual harassment in the last two years. Respondents who identified as women, transgender, or gender non-conforming were significantly more likely than those who identified as men to be the targets of workplace sexual harassment. Similarly, those who identified as LGBTQ+ reported higher rates of harassment than their heterosexual and bisexual colleagues. Of the perpetrators, 68 percent were men. Fifty-eight percent of the incidents occurred in the office environment and 17 percent at work-related social events. Only one in three victims took action as a result of experiencing sexual harassment and of these, almost one in four said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the outcome.

Since these findings were released, the UN has stepped up its rhetorical commitment to respond to sexual harassment of its employees by their colleagues. In 2019, a bulletin from the secretary-general underscored the UN’s previous commitment to combat sexual harassment and set the goal of “maintaining a workplace free from any form of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority” for “all staff members and non-staff personnel of the Secretariat.”³⁰ However, it is unclear what actions the Secretariat has subsequently taken to address sexual harassment across the UN system. Notably, the secretary-general “has not appointed a single high-level official to lead on internal sexual harassment work.”³¹

Beyond the Secretariat, UN Women has also taken steps to focus on sexual harassment across the UN system. In April 2018, the executive director of UN Women appointed Purna Sen as executive coordinator and spokesperson on addressing sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination in the UN system. Sen authored a report on sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment, published in September 2020, which connected the issues of sexual harassment of UN staff and sexual exploitation and abuse of host communities.³² Yet when Sen left the organization in 2020 after being told that the post would be phased out sometime in the near future, UN Women did not appoint a successor and ultimately closed the office.³³ Sen later told a journalist,

The organization provided a lot of hope to people experiencing sexual harassment when they created this role and said that the task is to put victims and survivors at the heart of the work. To close it without explanation or

26 Elizabeth Broderick, “Cultural Change: Gender Diversity and Inclusion in the Australian Federal Police,” Elizabeth Broderick & Co., 2016, p. 45.

27 Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), “Operation Hotton: Learning Report,” January 2022, p. 5.

28 Dyan Mazurana and Phoebe Donnelly, “STOP the Sexual Assault against Humanitarian and Development Aid Workers,” Tufts University Feinstein International Center, May 2017.

29 Deloitte, Touche, Tohmatsu, LLC, “Safe Space Survey Report—January 2019” (“the Deloitte study”), 2019. The Deloitte study defines sexual harassment as “any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or perceived to cause offense or humiliation when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.” A total of 30,364 staff from thirty-one UN entities (or 17 percent of all UN staff) completed the survey. Nearly an equal number of men and women responded, with a small percentage of other gender identities represented. Among UN staff, the survey was distributed to military experts on missions (e.g., military observers and military liaison officers) and police. Notably, the Deloitte survey was not distributed to members of national military contingents that constitute the majority of uniformed personnel in peacekeeping missions.

30 UN Secretariat, *Secretary-General’s Bulletin—Addressing Discrimination, Harassment, Including Sexual Harassment, and Abuse of Authority*, UN Doc. ST/SGB/2019/8, September 10, 2019. Several previous bulletins had also addressed the prevention of sexual harassment, including UN Doc. ST/SGB/253 (1992), UN Doc. ST/SGB/2005/20 (2005), and UN Doc. ST/SGB/2008/5 (2008).

31 Amy Lieberman, “The UN Pledged to Tackle Sexual Harassment. The Work Remains Incomplete, Experts Say,” Devex, February 11, 2021.

32 Purna Sen, Rosario Grimà Algora, and Federica Lacava, “Bridging the Gap: Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH),” UN Women, September 2020.

33 Hannah Summers, “Tackling Sexual Harassment at UN ‘On the Back Burner,’ Says Former Executive,” *The Guardian*, December 22, 2020.

further engagement also sends a strong message.... Are you saying that this is no longer a priority? That would be a reasonable conclusion. Are they saying sexual harassment doesn't happen anymore?³⁴

Action has been even more limited when it comes to military and police peacekeepers in UN missions. It is not only UN staff who deserve a workplace free from sexual discrimination and harassment; so do all women, men, and gender-non-conforming people working with the United Nations, including uniformed peacekeepers. The majority of uniformed personnel in peace operations are seconded from member states' national militaries (as military contingents) or police forces (either as individual police officers or members of formed police units).³⁵ Of the more than 70,000 uniformed personnel currently deployed to peacekeeping missions, more than 60,000 are military troops who are "first and foremost members of their own national armies and then seconded to work under the command and control of the UN."³⁶

Policies to hold uniformed peacekeepers accountable are outlined in memoranda of understanding (MOU) between member states and the UN, which are based on a "model MOU."³⁷ Member states, as opposed to the UN, are explicitly given the responsibility to ensure that their military and police contingents comply with UN standards of conduct. The model MOU prohibits committing "any act that could result in physical, sexual or psychological harm to or the suffering of members of the local population, especially women and children." It also requires reporting on instances of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers of women, girls, boys, and men in host communities.

However, the model MOU does not explicitly mention sexual abuse of peacekeepers. It requires

peacekeepers to commit to respecting other members of the mission "regardless of status, rank, ethnic or national origin, race, gender, or creed" but does not specify what this entails. Likewise, the Code of Personal Conduct for Blue Helmets prohibits "sexual, physical or psychological abuse or exploitation of the local population or United Nations staff, especially women and children," but it does not mention uniformed police and military personnel.³⁸

Similarly, the UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO) has not focused extensively on sexual abuse within missions. One exception is the 2003 Directive on Sexual Harassment in UN Peacekeeping and Other Field Missions, which does focus on military members of national contingents, military observers, and civilian police officers.³⁹ This document outlines both informal approaches (e.g., counseling and mediation) and formal approaches (e.g., written complaints and investigations) to addressing instances of sexual harassment. It places responsibility on the head of mission to call for an investigation and decide on subsequent action, with the final report being transmitted to UN headquarters. It is worth noting that this directive did not come up in interviews with UN experts on sexual abuse of uniformed peacekeepers, indicating that it may be outdated or not widely used. DPO also mentions several initiatives to address sexual harassment in its Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018–2028, but it is unclear whether these have yet had concrete benefits for uniformed women.⁴⁰

In sharp contrast to the lack of attention to sexual abuse of peacekeepers, sexual exploitation and abuse of members of host communities has become a priority for the UN thanks to persistent external pressure and media revelations. For instance, in 2007, the General Assembly adopted a "Comprehensive Strategy on Assistance and Support to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Staff and Related Personnel."⁴¹

34 Lieberman, "The UN Pledged to Tackle Sexual Harassment."

35 For more details on IPOs versus FPU, see: Kumalo, "Perceptions and Lived Realities of Women Police Officers in UN Peace Operations."

36 See: UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO), "Our Peacekeepers: Military," available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/military>; and UN DPO, "Peacekeeping Operations Fact Sheet," November 30, 2021.

37 UN General Assembly, *Letter Dated 31 August 2020 from the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly*, UN Doc. A/75/121, August 31, 2020.

38 UN Department for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, "Ten Rules: Code of Personal Conduct for Blue Helmets," 1999.

39 UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO, now DPO), "Directive on Sexual Harassment in United Nations Peacekeeping and Other Field Missions," UN Doc. DPKO/MD/03/00995, 2003.

40 UN DPO, "Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018–2028," 2019. See: Vermeij, "Woman First, Soldier Second," p. 21.

41 UN General Assembly Resolution 62/214 (December 21, 2007), UN Doc. A/RES/62/214. The General Assembly passed additional resolutions on this topic in 2008 and 2017.

Each year, the secretary-general releases a report on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.⁴² The Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate (OVRA) provides support and redress for sexual exploitation and abuse committed by peacekeepers.⁴³ In recent years, the Security Council has also adopted several resolutions focused on sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers.⁴⁴ By contrast, sexual harassment within peacekeeping missions has been mentioned much less frequently in Security Council resolutions.⁴⁵

Among all survey participants, approximately one in ten said they personally experienced sexual abuse while serving in a peacekeeping mission.

military and police peacekeepers, this data reveals new findings on what a portion of military and police peacekeepers have to say on this issue. Data from interviews and the workshop were also used to supplement and triangulate the survey findings.

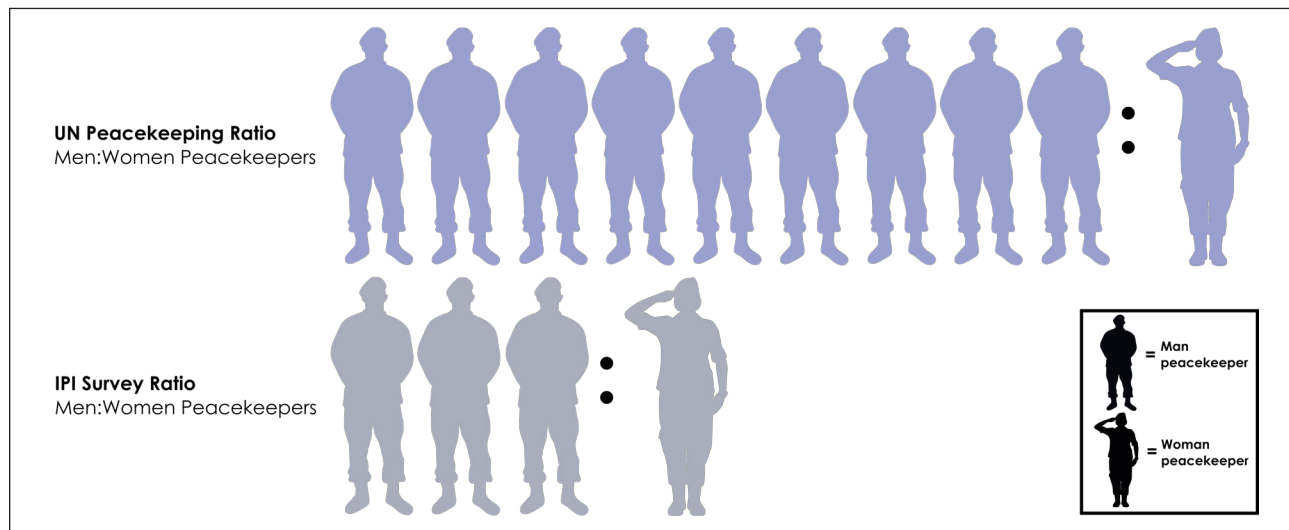
The survey was completed by 457 participants, of whom 66 percent identified as men and 22 percent as women, while less than 1 percent self-described their gender or identified as non-binary (11 percent did not reveal their gender). It is not surprising that most of the respondents

were men, as 92 percent of all troops currently deployed to peacekeeping missions are men (see Figure 1).⁴⁶ Thus, women are overrepresented in this survey. Approximately three-quarters of survey respondents were military and police personnel from Africa and the Asia-Pacific region, reflecting the geographic distribution of the top T/PCCs. One in three survey respondents was a police officer, compared to nearly one in nine among all peacekeepers, meaning that police are

Findings on Sexual Abuse of Peacekeepers

The lack of concrete, system-wide action to address sexual abuse of peacekeepers contrasts with the reality exposed by the interviews and survey conducted as part of this research. While the survey findings only apply to the people who participated in the survey and are not representative of all

Figure 1. Ratio of men to women peacekeepers in UN peacekeeping missions



42 United Nations, "Secretary-General's Reports," available at www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/secretary-generals-reports.

43 United Nations, "Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate," available at www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/office-victims-rights-advocate.

44 See, for instance: UN Security Council Resolution 2272 (March 11, 2016), UN Doc. S/RES/2272. For a selection of UN documents related to preventing sexual exploitation and abuse, see also: Code Blue, "UN Documents," available at www.codebluecampaign.com/un-docs.

45 This includes UN Security Council Resolutions 2538 and 2436. UN Doc. S/RES/2538, para. 7; UN Security Council Resolution 2436 (September 21, 2018), UN Doc. S/RES/2436, para. 17.

46 UN DPO, "Data: Gender," available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/gender>.

overrepresented in the survey.⁴⁷ The majority of both women and men police and military respondents served in security roles. More than two-thirds of respondents had one year or less of peacekeeping experience, whereas about 10 percent had four or more years of experience (see Annex for more detail on the demographics of survey respondents).

Extent, Frequency, and Type of Abuse

Overall, the 457 peacekeepers who completed the survey reported experiencing or witnessing eighty-two incidents of sexual abuse while on mission. These incidents occurred every year between 2010 and 2021, with the exception of 2012, with the highest number of incidents reported in 2010 and 2021. Of the twenty-two missions included in the survey, peacekeepers who served in fifteen of them reported experiencing or witnessing sexual abuse.⁴⁸

Among all survey participants, nearly one in ten (9.8 percent) said they personally experienced sexual abuse while serving in a peacekeeping mission. A slightly higher percentage of survey participants (10.8 percent) said they witnessed sexual abuse while on mission.

Women and men peacekeepers had very different rates of experiencing and witnessing sexual abuse while on mission. Of the women peacekeepers who completed the survey, 28 percent said they experienced sexual abuse, and nearly 26 percent said they witnessed it (see Figures 4 and 5).⁴⁹ Furthermore, women peacekeepers experienced all eight sexual assaults reported in the survey and thirty-one of the thirty-four incidents of sexual harassment (Table 1). Most of the women peacekeepers who experienced sexual abuse also witnessed sexual abuse (69 percent). This could suggest that some missions have more abusive environments and work cultures for women than others or that women who experience sexual abuse are more likely to be aware of it happening to others. For most women peacekeepers who experienced sexual abuse, they experienced multiple abuses from the same perpetrator. Women peacekeepers who were victims of sexual abuse reported a range of negative impacts, including on their mental health, career progression, and family. At least one decided to leave her peacekeeping career as a result of the abuse.

Compared to women peacekeepers, men peacekeepers were significantly less likely to report either experiencing (2 percent) or witnessing (4

Table 1. Experienced incidents of sexual abuse of peacekeepers on mission

	Gender	Discrimination	Harassment	Assault
Experienced	Men	4	3	0
	Women	11	31	8

Table 2. Witnessed incidents of sexual abuse of peacekeepers on mission

	Gender	Discrimination	Harassment	Assault
Witnessed	Men	4	8	2
	Women	10	12	1

⁴⁷ UN DPO, "Data: Military," available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/military>; UN DPO, "Data: Global Peacekeeping Data," January 31, 2022, available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/data>.

⁴⁸ These include the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA), the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the UN-AU Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), and the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO).

⁴⁹ No respondents who identified as gender non-conforming reported experiencing or witnessing sexual abuse on mission.

percent) sexual abuse (see Figures 4 and 5). This creates a risk that men peacekeepers who do not experience abuse or see it happen—or who do not recognize it—may overlook or misunderstand the abuse that many women peacekeepers experience. However, the number of men who reported sexual abuse may be lower than the actual number who experienced or witnessed it. As discussed above, previous research has found widespread evidence

of sexual harassment and assault of men in national militaries, but men often face challenges reporting or acknowledging these incidents.⁵⁰

Perpetrators of Abuse

Addressing sexual abuse of peacekeepers requires understanding the relationship between perpetrators and their victims. Of the reported instances of

Figure 2. Experienced incidents of sexual abuse of peacekeepers on mission

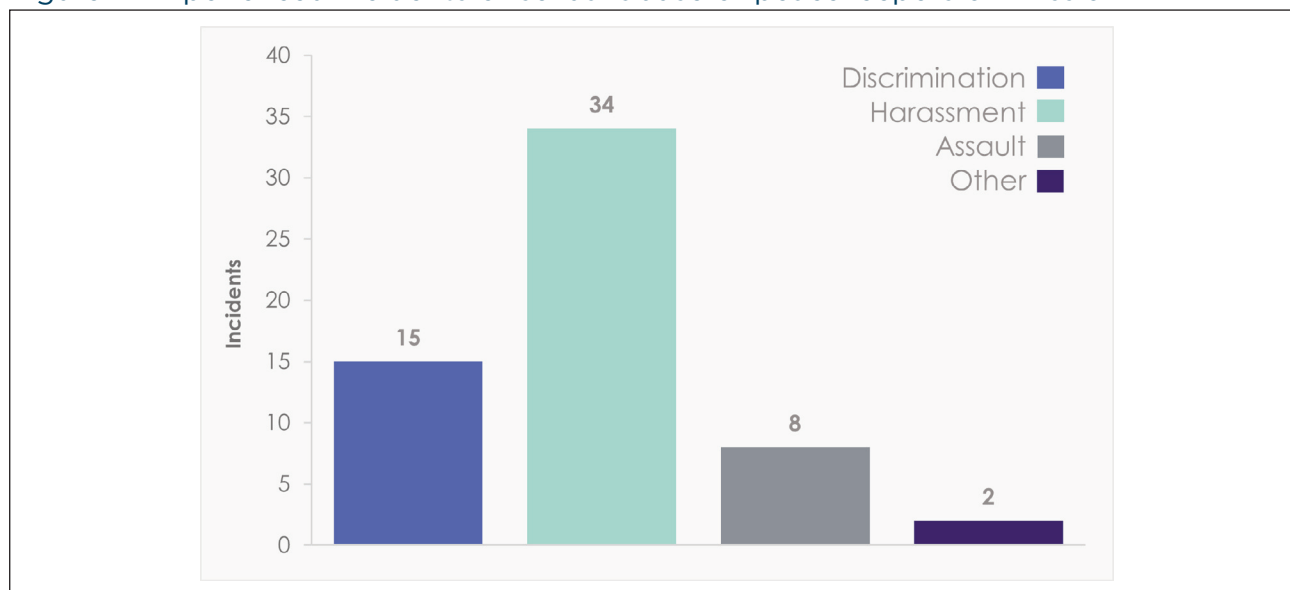
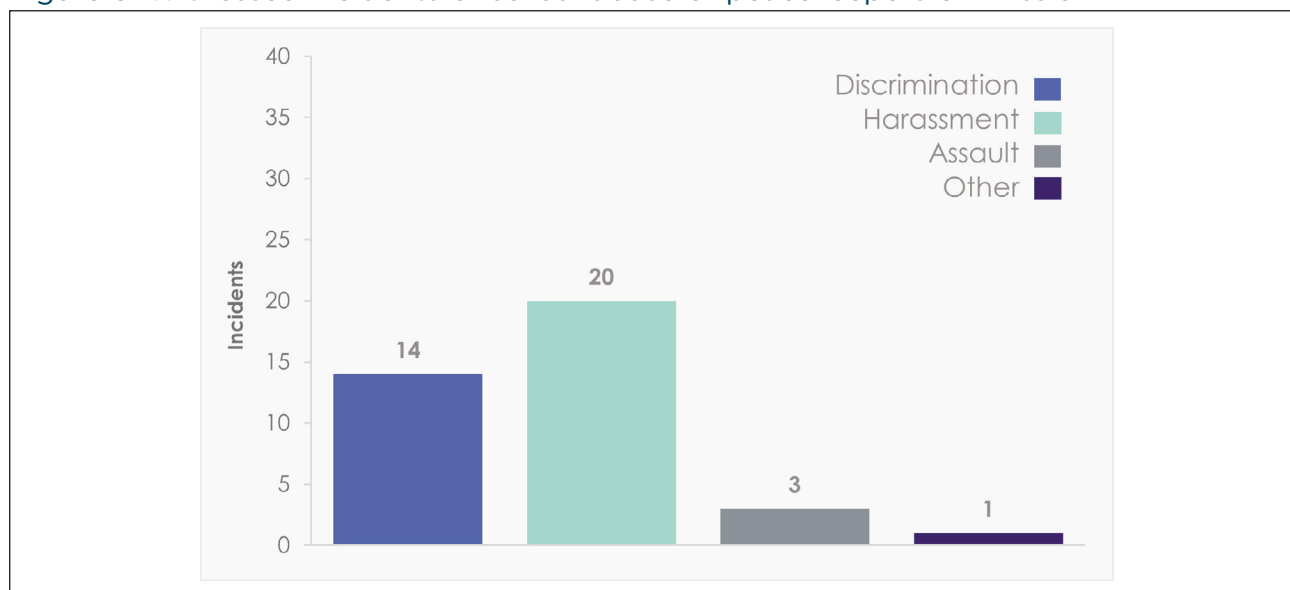


Figure 3. Witnessed incidents of sexual abuse of peacekeepers on mission



⁵⁰ Philipps, "Six Men Tell Their Stories of Sexual Assault in the Military"; Anne G. Sadler et al., "Servicemen's Perceptions of Male Sexual Assault and Barriers to Reporting During Active Component and Reserve/National Guard Military Service."

experienced sexual abuse where the gender of the perpetrator was identified, 94 percent were perpetrated by a man and 6 percent by a woman (Figure 7).⁵¹ Of the reported incidents where the rank of the perpetrator was identified, 54 percent were perpetrated by someone of a higher rank, 22 percent by someone of the same rank, 6 percent by someone of a lower rank, and 9 percent by a civilian working in the

The threat of sexual abuse to women peacekeepers comes mainly from men inside peacekeeping missions or their national military partners rather than from actors outside the mission.

peacekeeping mission. Only 4 percent were perpetrated by a local civilian actor, and 1 percent by a local conflict actor (Figure 6). This means that the threat of sexual abuse to women peacekeepers comes mainly from men inside peacekeeping missions or their national military partners rather than from actors outside the mission, as is commonly assumed.⁵²

These results are consistent

Figure 4. Percent of women and men peacekeepers who experienced sexual abuse on missions



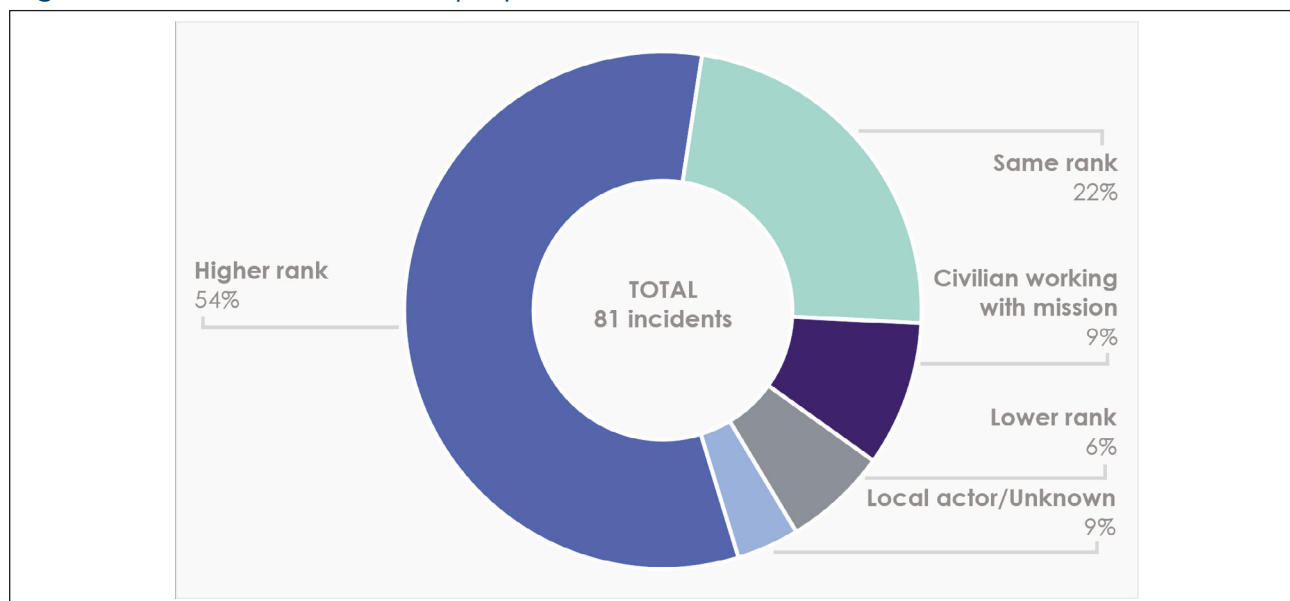
Figure 5. Percent of women and men peacekeepers who witnessed sexual abuse on missions



⁵¹ Thirty-six percent of respondents who answered this question did not identify the gender of the perpetrator.

⁵² See also: Vermeij, "Woman First, Soldier Second," p. 3. Interview participants said families were afraid of them going to foreign countries and said they would get raped.

Figure 6. Rank or affiliation of perpetrator in sexual abuse incidents



with research showing that perpetrators in higher positions often use power inequalities against their victims.⁵³ While workshop participants highlighted that “harassment also affects [women] in command positions, not only lower ranks,” women in lower ranks are more vulnerable.⁵⁴ Perpetrators can also use their higher rank to shield themselves from accountability. As one interviewee explained,

Cases I see are quite senior people and they feel they can get away with it. I am not sure if it’s against UN uniformed personnel, but I would suspect this is a trend, [with perpetrators] knowing they will only be transferred. [They’re] hiding in plain sight; many people know about it.⁵⁵

Another interviewee similarly noted that women would warn other women about men within the mission who were known perpetrators.⁵⁶ When asked why these men were not reported for their abusive behavior, the interviewee explained that there was no point reporting these abuses because

the perpetrators were protected by those higher up in missions. Beyond seniority, impunity can also be tied to power dynamics related to identity markers and social categories such as gender, sexual orientation, race, class, and nationality. As one interviewee noted, “Lower-level people may be scapegoated, and racism is involved as [to] who is actually brought to justice or called out; it is rarely senior white males in the organization.”⁵⁷

Organizational Cultures of Abuse

Both the survey and interviews revealed that the internal organizational cultures of T/PCCs’ police and military forces and peacekeeping missions are largely what enable or prevent sexual abuse.⁵⁸ A police officer explained, “It’s very important that [the] working environment is... safe, secure, and respectful. This influences [peacekeepers’] behavior and results because people are risking their lives in some cases to serve these communities.”⁵⁹ As a

⁵³ The pattern of male perpetrators holding more senior positions relative to their female victims aligns with the experiences of aid workers operating in similar environments to peacekeepers who have been subjected to similar types of sexual abuse. Mazurana and Donnelly, “STOP the Sexual Assault.”

⁵⁴ IPI workshop with policy experts, March 4, 2021.

⁵⁵ Interview with NGO specialist (woman), April 7, 2021.

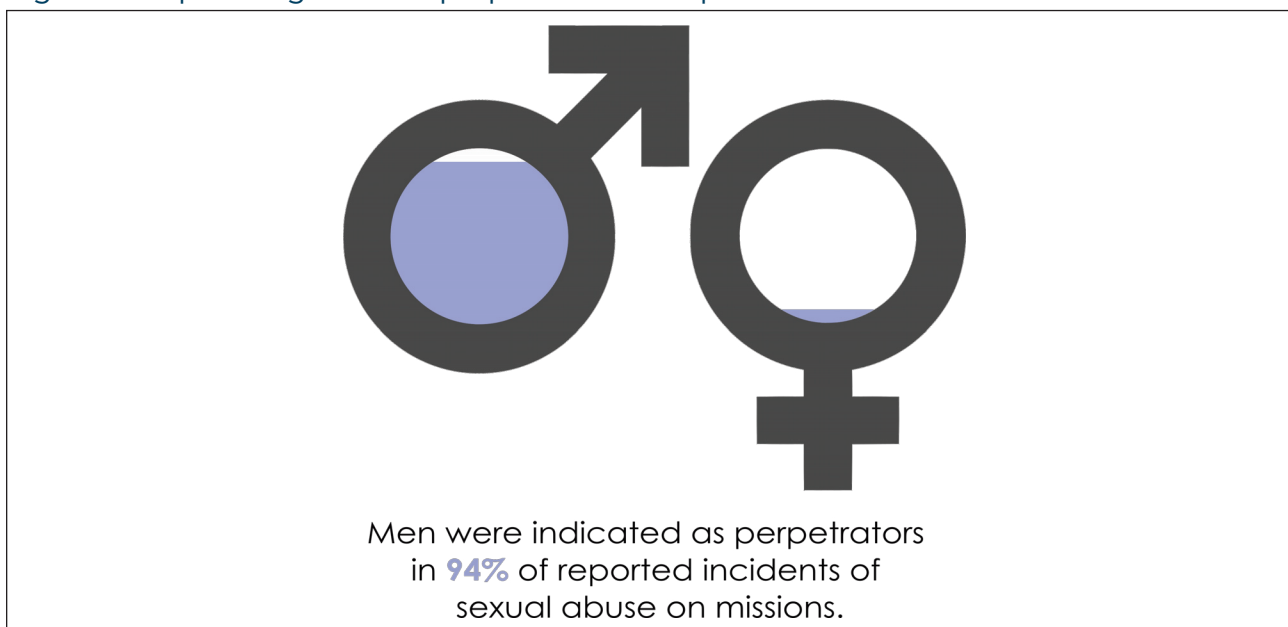
⁵⁶ IPI workshop with policy experts, March 4, 2021.

⁵⁷ Interview with NGO specialist (woman), April 7, 2021.

⁵⁸ The Deloitte study on sexual harassment within the UN focused on organizational culture and noted a link between workplace incivility, low levels of inclusion, and the increased incidence of sexual harassment.

⁵⁹ Interview with police peacekeeping adviser (man), July 13, 2021.

Figure 7. Reported gender of perpetrators in experiences of sexual abuse



result, some see cultural change as the most important way to address sexual abuse in peacekeeping missions. As one interviewee noted, while strategies and tools are also necessary, “culture eats strategy for breakfast.”⁶⁰

Organizational cultures can vary from mission to mission, and in the survey, certain missions had more reported incidences of sexual abuse. Of women and men peacekeepers who identified the mission where they experienced sexual abuse, 30 percent identified the mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) even though only 11 percent of survey participants had worked in that mission (see Figure 11). That UNMISS was the mission with the highest rate of reported sexual abuse against women peacekeepers is particularly relevant given the recent sexual exploitation and abuse of local women and girls perpetrated by a formed police unit at a protection of civilians site in South Sudan. Following allegations of abuse in

“It’s very important that [the] working environment is... safe, secure, and respectful. This influences [peacekeepers’] behavior and results because people are risking their lives in some cases to serve these communities.”

2018 and an investigation conducted by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, all forty-six members of the unit were withdrawn from the mission.⁶¹ It is worth exploring in future research whether the high number of reports of sexual abuse against peacekeepers has a relationship to the reported cases of sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated against civilians by UNMISS personnel.

Several workshop participants referred to the culture of peacekeeping missions as being a “zone of exception.”⁶² One interviewee stated that “a deployment is a false environment, it is fake—you go for a year.”⁶³ Another speculated that “lack of [rest and relaxation]..., boredom and apathy, and distance from family and normal networks that mitigate bad behavior create a vacuum... to be filled.”⁶⁴

According to interviewees and workshop participants, a culture of abuse of women peacekeepers by their men colleagues was especially common during

60 IPI workshop with policy experts, March 4, 2021.

61 UNMISS, “UNMISS Acts on Allegations of Sexual Exploitation against Formed Police Unit,” press release, February 24, 2018, available at <https://unmiss.unmissions.org/unmiss-acts-allegations-sexual-exploitation-against-formed-police-unit>.

62 IPI workshop with research experts, March 4, 2021.

63 Interview with former UN Women official (woman), May 5, 2021.

64 Interview with police adviser (woman), April 22, 2021.

off-duty hours. One interviewee shared the experience of a woman who was sexually assaulted by her supervisor after going out for drinks. The interviewee added, “This is the guy everyone thought was great because he gave great speeches on gender equality and on rights, and she used to write them for him and he abused her. She still hasn’t gotten justice.”⁶⁵ The interview participant shared that the victim had been warned to “be wary of going to UN parties. Don’t go out alone. Don’t get in an elevator alone with a guy.”⁶⁶ Such warnings and stories likely influence women’s sense of safety on missions, even when off duty. This may induce stress, require extra vigilance, and negatively influence their view of peacekeeping as a professional option.⁶⁷

Similarly, the culture of peacekeepers drinking alcohol to relax and release stress can breed sexual abuse.⁶⁸ One workshop participant highlighted that peacekeeping operations “end up being like a ‘frat party.’”⁶⁹ One woman interviewee explained, “Especially in Juba, every Friday there was a social event. Sometimes you saw some men misbehave against women. Sometimes we interfered when we saw it and the women didn’t interfere themselves directly.... There was misbehavior especially when people got drunk.”⁷⁰ Interviewees also referred to the role of alcohol in misconduct more generally. As noted by one interviewee, “The majority of [mis]behaviors occurred when alcohol and isolation were introduced.”⁷¹ The role of excessive alcohol consumption in incidents of sexual assault has also been highlighted in other studies on uniformed women’s experiences in peacekeeping missions.⁷²

The gender imbalance of peacekeeping operations exacerbates these challenges, including by fostering a culture of sexism. As one woman police peacekeeper described it, “It’s like you are in an

oasis and there is a whole bunch of thirsty camels. I felt like a matador just deflecting the advances or the suggestive comments.”⁷³ One expert noted, “Sexual harassment is part of the culture. Lewd comments, requests for sex are common.”⁷⁴ The police peacekeeper recounted, “There was one time where somebody made almost an overt comment.... I was talking in French, and my French wasn’t completely accurate. I mentioned something about entering at lunch time and someone said, ‘You want me to enter right now, I will.’”⁷⁵ Tolerance of even such “minor” forms of misconduct enables an environment where these and other abuses are more likely.

Such forms of sexual abuse are often seen as acceptable because they are so embedded in how male-dominated missions, militaries, and police forces operate. Moreover, there does not appear to be a universal understanding among T/PCCs on what constitutes sexual abuse. One woman peacekeeper explained,

The other women and men peacekeepers would not see it as harassment. The men I have worked with in police missions treat the police-women as subservient regardless of their rank. The male police would often literally throw their papers [for completing reports] at them and expect them to do clerical work for them.... The women police were therefore not able to do their real jobs as police. They didn’t grow in the ways they could because they were doing secretarial work for the men police peacekeepers.⁷⁶

Other interviewees reflected on how women peacekeepers had begun to internalize and normalize this male-dominated culture. As one noted, “So many women are socialized not to

65 Interview with former UN Women official (woman), May 5, 2021.

66 Ibid.

67 Kumalo, “Perceptions and Lived Realities of Women Police Officers in UN Peace Operations.”

68 Mazurana and Donnelly, “STOP the Sexual Assault.”

69 IPI workshop with research experts, March 4, 2021. The term “frat party” refers to parties given by college fraternities that generally have a reputation for being heavily masculinized and sexualized environments with high levels of alcohol use.

70 Interview with former military peacekeeper (man), April 27, 2021.

71 Interview with police adviser (woman), April 22, 2021.

72 Vermeij, “Woman First, Soldier Second,” p. 11.

73 Interview with police peacekeeper (woman), April 6, 2021.

74 Interview with NGO specialist (woman), April 7, 2021.

75 Interview with police peacekeeper (woman), April 6, 2021.

76 Interview with police peacekeeper (woman), June 2, 2021.

recognize the indignities against them”⁷⁷

Interviewees also brought up problems in the way their organizations informed them about sexual abuse. One woman interviewee said that experts, all of whom were men, were brought in to discuss safety with a group of women peacekeepers. During the presentation, one of the male presenters gave an example of appropriate physical contact between women and men peacekeepers at a social event. According to the interviewee, “He was touching [a colleague’s] shoulders and leaning in.”⁷⁸ The interviewee, along with other police-women, had to point out that this behavior would make them feel very uncomfortable, especially if done by a male supervisor.

Peacekeepers’ Experiences and Views of the UN Response to Sexual Abuse

Despite the prevalence of sexual abuse within peacekeeping missions, the UN and T/PCCs have not put in place adequate policies to effectively respond to the issue. As discussed above, this stands in sharp contrast to the momentum among member states and UN leaders to address sexual exploitation and abuse of host communities. However, some actors and organizations separate the normative frameworks for understanding peacekeepers’ behavior toward host communities and their behavior toward other peacekeepers, creating the perception that policy frameworks for addressing each issue are not connected even if they are fueled by similar behaviors and inequalities.

When a peacekeeper sexually abuses a member of a host community, there are standardized

mechanisms to support the victim and investigate the abuse.⁷⁹ UN staff and affiliated personnel are also mandated to report any peacekeeper or aid worker who perpetrates sexual exploitation and abuse of local populations, and the UN’s official website on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse includes an online reporting form.⁸⁰ The UN’s response to substantiated allegations “can range from a reprimand to dismissal,” and “if the acts may amount to criminal conduct, the UN can refer the matter for criminal prosecution by the staff member’s state of nationality.”⁸¹ There are also systems for supporting victims from the host community, including the UN Office of the Victims’ Rights Advocate (OVRA). Additionally, the UN has adopted measures for preventing sexual exploitation and abuse, including vetting prior to deployment and training of personnel on UN standards of conduct on sexual exploitation and abuse.⁸²

In contrast, when a peacekeeper is a victim of sexual abuse, there are no standardized mechanisms or requirements for how the allegations should be dealt with. As one UN official explained,

“It’s like you are in an oasis and there is a whole bunch of thirsty camels. I felt like a matador just deflecting the advances or the suggestive comments.”

Sexual exploitation and abuse is so associated with [the] host population. Even internally within the Secretariat, the idea of harassment and abuse of peacekeepers... is still a little bit of a blind spot... When [the Conduct and Discipline Service] hear[s] sexual harassment, they automatically think about [sexual exploitation and abuse of] host-country populations.⁸³

This section draws on the survey and interviews to analyze peacekeepers’ understanding of existing UN and T/PCC policies to address sexual abuse of peacekeepers, as well as the further policy changes that are required.

⁷⁷ IPI workshop with policy experts, March 4, 2021.

⁷⁸ Interview with police peacekeeper (woman), April 6, 2021.

⁷⁹ United Nations, “United Nations Protocol on the Provision of Assistance to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse,” December 12, 2019.

⁸⁰ United Nations, “How to Report,” available at www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/how-report.

⁸¹ United Nations, “Response,” available at www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/response.

⁸² United Nations, “Prevention,” available at www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/prevention.

⁸³ Interview with UN DPO expert (woman), July 16, 2021.

Deferring Responsibility for Addressing Abuse

Countries contributing police and military forces to UN peacekeeping missions have been given autonomy by the UN over how much or how little they address sexual abuse by and against peacekeepers within their ranks. As laid out in the model memorandum of understanding between T/PCCs and the UN, T/PCCs have “the primary responsibility for investigating any acts of misconduct or serious misconduct committed by a member of its national contingent” and for taking action to address it.⁸⁴

As a result, some UN officials explained that there might be diplomatic sensitivities with telling a national government how to train members of its own military or police forces and how to respond to such abuses. As one UN official put it, “We have our way of doing things based on our standards of conduct and the approach of the UN, but we need to respect that every country should do as they see fit.”⁸⁵ Nevertheless, another UN official stated that T/PCCs could be more responsive to abuses perpetrated against members of their own contingents. He explained,

We struggle to get member states to take action against perpetrators. You would hope if victims are [T/PCC] nationals and part of their own contingents [that T/PCCs] would at least take it seriously and offer support for those victims.... Raising awareness is certainly important. [There might be an impact] if member states take note that this is also an issue that is not just about [the] host population but their own peacekeepers.⁸⁶

However, the official still thought it was not the UN’s responsibility to dictate to member states what they should be doing with their own national forces. Despite these sensitivities and limits to what

the UN can currently advise member states to do, the UN has a role in setting standards for T/PCCs and formulating policies around the sexual abuse of its police and military.

Policies for preventing or responding to sexual abuse of peacekeepers vary across T/PCCs. They also often vary between military and police contingents from the same country. Nonetheless, 97 percent of survey respondents said they were aware of their national police force or military policies and rules on sexual misconduct and abuse.⁸⁷ A majority also graded their police and military colleagues as having moderate to complete knowledge of these policies and rules.⁸⁸

Lack of Confidence in Systems for Reporting Abuse

While survey respondents reported a high level of awareness of national policies, many interviewees were confused about whether certain mechanisms within the UN reporting architecture applied to peacekeepers, UN staff, or host communities. The UN’s system for reporting on sexual exploitation and abuse allegations against host communities is fairly robust and includes nearly real-time data on allegations disaggregated by the victim’s gender and age and the perpetrator’s personnel category.⁸⁹

However, many of the existing mechanisms are focused primarily on victims in host communities or among UN staff (as opposed to members of national militaries and police contingents). For example, conduct and discipline units can be a resource for reporting sexual harassment of UN staff and sexual exploitation and abuse more generally, but there is confusion across the UN system and among peacekeepers as to whether they can be used to report abuse of peacekeepers on loan from their national militaries and police forces. Similarly, the Office of Internal Oversight Services, which is responsible for investigating reports of

⁸⁴ UN Doc. A/75/121, Annex 1 (“Generic Model for Military Contingents”), para. 7.1.

⁸⁵ Interview with UN Conduct and Discipline experts (women), February 26, 2021.

⁸⁶ Interview with OVRA expert (man), March 25, 2021.

⁸⁷ Respondents were not asked, however, about the extent of their knowledge on the subject.

⁸⁸ A ten-point scale was used for this question. Among those who answered this question, 14 percent ranked their colleagues between 1 and 4, 60 percent between 5 and 7, and 26 percent between 8 and 10.

⁸⁹ UN Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, “Sexual Exploitation and Abuse,” available at <https://conduct.unmissions.org/SEA-data-introduction>; United Nations, “Data on Allegations: UN System-wide,” available at www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/data-allegations-un-system-wide.

sexual abuse, is mainly focused on abuses perpetrated against members of host communities.

Overall, confidence in current mechanisms for reporting sexual abuse of peacekeepers was low. Among those who experienced or witnessed sexual abuse, 36 percent said they did not report anything. The most indicated reasons for not reporting included that they addressed the issue themselves, distrusted the system's ability to meaningfully address the harm, and feared the consequences of reporting.⁹⁰

Reporting abuses within a police or military contingent often requires a victim or witness to report the incident to their contingent commander. For example, one interviewee spoke of a woman peacekeeper who was harassed by her supervisor and went to the conduct and discipline team, which told her that "it was up to the sending country to resolve the issue." The victim then went through her national chain of command.⁹¹ Another man peacekeeper raised a similar point:

"It is not appropriate, easy, or safe to report [sexual abuse] to your commanding officers."

It is so much up to your next supervisor.... You have to go through chain of command. Of course you could call the Office of Internal Oversight Services' hotline and make an anonymous report, but most people do not do that... [because OIOS is] too high up.... You won't jump over the chain of command.⁹²

Multiple interviewees spoke to the importance of having a reporting channel outside of the chain of command. According to one workshop participant, "It is not appropriate, easy, or safe to report [sexual abuse] to your commanding officers."⁹³ One woman interviewee said that the military chain of command is "fraught with danger," stating, "I certainly wouldn't report it."⁹⁴ A woman police peacekeeper

recalled that every three months members of her contingent would "receive some kind of report to identify whether we had witnessed or been involved in any kind of harassment or sexual allegations, and I would always just say no." When asked if she thought others were forthcoming in these reports, she responded, "I wasn't."⁹⁵

The need for external reporting systems has also been raised in other militarized contexts. For instance, after an independent review commission released damning findings on sexual abuse in 2021, the US military announced that commanders would no longer be responsible for prosecuting sexual assaults; instead, investigating officers from an outside brigade would be appointed.⁹⁶ The commission stressed the importance of having an

independent victim advocate who is "100 percent focused on the victim and reporting outside of the command structure."⁹⁷

Inadequate Responses to Allegations of Abuse

Even when incidents were reported, the prevailing sentiment was that perpetrators were not being held accountable for their actions. One former man senior police peacekeeper explained that he reported multiple cases of sexual abuse perpetrated against younger women police colleagues to his chief of section. However, to his knowledge, no action was taken; instead, the chief of section gave him negative comments in his performance review.⁹⁸

Of the fifteen cases of sexual abuse that survey respondents did report through official channels, nearly half (seven out of fifteen) did not lead to any action. In the majority of cases (eight) an investigation was carried out, but only three of these investigations resulted in a change to institutional policy

90 Several reasons were provided, and respondents could select as many as options as they preferred.

91 Interview with military adviser (man), April 20, 2021.

92 Interview with former peacekeeper (man), June 29, 2021.

93 IPI workshop with policy experts, March 4, 2021.

94 Interview (woman), February 11, 2021.

95 Interview with police peacekeeper (woman), April 6, 2021.

96 C. Todd Lopez, "Sexual Assaults Will No Longer be Prosecuted by Commanders," US Department of Defense, July 2, 2021; Michael X. Garrett, "Assignment of Investigating Officers for Formal Sexual Harassment Complaints," US Department of the Army, March 2021.

97 Lopez, "Sexual Assaults Will No Longer be Prosecuted by Commanders."

98 Interview with former peacekeeper (man), June 29, 2021.

or practice. In six cases, survey participants learned of a direct consequence for the alleged perpetrator, with the most common consequence being a reprimand. Among those who reported sexual abuse, half said their organization handled it in the worst possible way.⁹⁹ At the same time, more than a third of the respondents to this question gave their organization high marks for its response, indicating a disparity in perceptions across survey participants.¹⁰⁰

To address this shortcoming, several interviewees suggested that the Office of Internal Oversight Services could play some role in investigating sexual abuse of peacekeepers.¹⁰¹ The Office of Internal Oversight Services reports on investigations by missions and differentiates between different forms of sexual abuse perpetrated by staff and peacekeepers.¹⁰² Like conduct and discipline teams, it operates on the basis of the memoranda of understanding between T/PCCs and the UN, with the final say on disciplinary action falling to T/PCCs. There is still confusion on how the Office of Internal Oversight Services responds to reports of sexual abuse against peacekeepers. Currently, the Office of Internal Oversight Services conducts an investigation if it receives an allegation of a peacekeeper sexually abusing another personnel member who is not within their contingent (e.g., a UN staff member or contractor), but it has less capacity to investigate incidents within contingents.

OVRA could also play a more prominent role in supporting peacekeepers who are victims of sexual abuse. One OVRA official noted that while the OVRA mandate focuses primarily on sexual exploitation and abuse committed by UN peacekeepers against host communities, a sexual harassment case “would be treated like any other case and referred to internal oversight services for investigation.”¹⁰³ However, the official had not come across this in practice.

Lack of Attention to Preventing Sexual Abuse within Peacekeeping Missions

Many interviewees were also skeptical about the seriousness of efforts to raise awareness and prevent sexual abuse of peacekeepers. One former woman UN peacekeeper with several years of experience explained, “If you go to [the] operation, you will see a lot of posters hanging with more of an internal focus like ‘Say no to sexual harassment’ and stuff like that.... I cannot say I heard anything real or substantive about [sexual abuse of peacekeepers] during my years in operations.”¹⁰⁴

Sexual abuse of peacekeepers is also not a focus of training. One former military man peacekeeper stated, “I did not encounter any [training on preventing sexual abuse of other peacekeepers] at all. It was more about sexual exploitation and abuse of [the] local population. Nothing about sexual abuse of peacekeepers.”¹⁰⁵ A woman interviewee echoed this sentiment, highlighting that while sexual exploitation and abuse are “highly policed and talked about within the UN system,” there was an “acceptance” that sexual abuse of military personnel occurs.¹⁰⁶

Some interviewees mentioned the Clear Check Screening Tool as another preventive measure that could focus more on sexual abuse of peacekeepers. Clear Check is a secure online platform for sharing information across UN entities on individuals who have faced allegations of sexual harassment or sexual exploitation and abuse with the aim of preventing their future employment within the UN system.¹⁰⁷ The expansion of Clear Check to include sexual harassment in 2018 was a positive step toward recognizing internal forms of sexual abuse. However, given that this system was initially designed for tracking perpetrators of sexual exploitation and

99 They rated the response as 1 on a scale of 1–10, with 1 being the worst.

100 They rated the response as 8, 9, or 10 on a scale of 1–10, with 1 being the worst.

101 The UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), “Home,” available at <https://oios.un.org/>.

102 UN General Assembly, *Activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on Peace Operations for the Period from 1 January to 31 December 2019—Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services*, UN Doc. A/74/305, February 19, 2020.

103 Interview with OVRA expert (man), March 25, 2021.

104 Interview with panel of military peacekeepers and advisers (women), June 14, 2021.

105 Interview with former military peacekeeper (man), April 27, 2021.

106 IPI workshop with policy experts, March 4, 2021.

107 UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), “Screening Database ‘ClearCheck,’” available at <https://unsceb.org/screening-database-clearcheck>; UN CEB, “ClearCheck: The United Nations’ Efforts to Combat Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Sexual Harassment,” November 22, 2021.

abuse of host populations, it is not being used as a resource for sexual abuse of peacekeepers.

Self-Reliance in the Face of Limited Support

Because current systems for addressing sexual abuse within missions are insufficient and ineffective, women peacekeepers participating in both the survey and interviews indicated that they had to protect themselves and respond to sexual abuse on their own. Notably, 40 percent of survey respondents who did not report an incident of sexual abuse that they experienced or witnessed (eight out of twenty) indicated that one of their reasons for not reporting it was that they “addressed the issue [themselves].” A woman workshop participant underscored this point, stating, “Reluctance to report and not having faith in formal mechanisms... often means people develop informal responses and informal communities within the organization and try to find ways of managing and supporting themselves.”¹⁰⁸

“Reluctance to report and not having faith in formal mechanisms... often means people... try to find ways of managing and supporting themselves.”

This lack of support for addressing sexual abuse is particularly challenging for more junior women, who some described as being at greater risk.¹⁰⁹ Several women peacekeepers spoke about how they “deflected advances” from their male colleagues but were doubtful that their less experienced women colleagues would be able to do so as effectively.¹¹⁰ Similarly, a woman workshop participant noted, “I have personal techniques to ensure that doesn’t happen to myself, but that’s thirty years of developing those techniques. Also, I have been put in a position of power by my nation, but that’s not the norm [for a woman].”¹¹¹

As a result, some women in senior roles in military and police units said they felt responsible for protecting and warning more junior women. For

example, two women formerly in supervisory roles in peacekeeping missions debated whether leaders should allow their junior colleagues to date or have sexual relationships with each other. This illustrates the extra burden that uniformed women face in keeping both themselves and their women colleagues safe.¹¹² Relatedly, one woman military peacekeeper said that she felt responsible not only for responding to sexual abuse against herself but also for protecting the mission’s reputation. She stated that as an officer, she knew how to respond to sexual harassment “firmly and quietly so that you don’t embarrass yourself or whoever is in the mission with you.”¹¹³

Perceptions of Overall Progress and Further Steps Needed

Overall, most survey respondents felt that their organization had not gone far enough to address abuse of peacekeepers.¹¹⁴ Among those who answered the question about how their organization has changed in response to sexual abuse, 1 percent thought things had gotten worse, 42 percent that their organization had not changed at all, 10 percent that it had “done the bare minimum,” 9 percent that it had “made some progress but not gone far enough,” 21 percent that it had “made significant and meaningful progress,” and 7 percent that it was “doing so well that [it] did not need to change.” There were some sizable differences between men and women respondents. Most notably, men were much more likely than women to report that their organization had not changed at all (47 versus 10 percent) and less likely to indicate that there had been “some” or “significant” progress (27 versus 44 percent). As noted above, this could be because women, especially those who have experienced or witnessed sexual abuse, are paying more attention to changes in systems for reporting or investigating sexual abuse.

108 Interview panel with military peacekeepers and advisers (women), June 14, 2021.

109 Ibid.

110 Interview with police peacekeeper (woman), April 6, 2021.

111 IPI workshop with policy experts, March 4, 2021.

112 For more on the idea of the extra burden for women police peacekeepers, see: Kumalo, “Perceptions and Live Realities of Women Police Officers in UN Peace Operations.”

113 Interview panel with military peacekeepers and advisers (women), June 14, 2021.

114 The survey did not ask individuals to identify their “organization,” so it is unclear if survey participants were referring to their national militaries and police forces or to the UN or AU.

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to choose from a list of recommendations to prevent and address sexual abuse of peacekeepers on mission (see Annex for a full list of recommendations included in the survey). The top three recommendations were to:

1. Improve pre- and post-deployment training on zero tolerance for sexual abuse;
2. Improve knowledge and/or mechanisms for reporting sexual abuse of peacekeepers and others; and
3. Strengthen and improve sanctions against perpetrators, including being returned home, facing possible criminal and civil charges, and being banned from participating in future peacekeeping missions.

Approximately 80 percent of question respondents also supported ensuring that heads of peacekeeping missions publicly prioritize zero tolerance for sexual abuse of both host communities and peacekeepers, as well as strengthening and improving the ability of conduct and discipline teams to handle sexual abuse of peacekeepers.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study reveals pattern of sexual abuse in peacekeeping missions that have been unaddressed by the UN and its member states, primarily of women peacekeepers by higher-ranking men peacekeepers. This pattern emerges from the male-dominated, masculine organizational cultures of national police and military forces, which spill over into peacekeeping environments. These toxic cultures should be transformed into ones that are just, tolerant, respectful, safe, and inclusive. While police and military peacekeepers will inevitably face risks and threats while deployed, these should never come from other peacekeepers or mission personnel.

However, there is little evidence that the UN or most T/PCCs have created robust and effective mechanisms to prevent and address sexual abuse of peacekeepers. There is a widespread lack of confidence in existing systems for reporting sexual

abuse, and many peacekeepers fear that reporting could bring negative consequences. Many of the peacekeepers who do report abuse are dissatisfied with the response.

If the UN and T/PCCs do not prevent and respond to sexual abuse and dismantle the patriarchal cultures that enable it, their initiatives to increase women's meaningful participation in peacekeeping operations will fail. They need to take the sexual abuse of peacekeepers as seriously as they take peacekeepers' sexual exploitation and abuse of women, girls, boys, and men in host communities, especially considering that these two forms of abuse are linked. It is time that the UN and T/PCCs create robust systems to prevent and respond to the sexual abuse of uniformed peacekeeping personnel and provide substantial and substantive remedy for victims. Toward this end, they should consider the following recommendations.

1. Transform the organizational cultures that enable sexual abuse of peacekeepers.

Organizational cultures that enable or tolerate sexism, homophobia, and sexual discrimination, harassment, and assault, as well as excessive alcohol consumption, reflect poorly on missions and the UN as a whole. This includes tolerance for sexist jokes, sharing of pornography in the workplace, and other "minor" forms of misconduct that create a toxic environment that enables other abuses.

Leadership has a critical role to play in changing the organizational culture. Mission leaders should thus be evaluated, in part, on the basis of whether they create and maintain a diverse, tolerant, inclusive, safe, secure, and respectful workplace. Toward this end, DPO should devise ways to track organizational culture during a leader's tenure through existing systems for performance monitoring.¹¹⁵ To ensure that they understand what is expected of them in this regard, mission leaders at all levels should also receive training and have meetings with senior UN officials and should receive a code of conduct and code of expectations that they display and share with their contingent. In addition, the UN should recognize leaders and T/PCCs that take a proactive approach to promoting a positive organizational culture and prioritize preventing and

¹¹⁵ Namie Di Razza, "The Accountability System for the Protection of Civilians in UN Peacekeeping," International Peace Institute, December 2020.

responding to sexual abuse of peacekeepers.

A key component of improving organizational culture is creating an environment where women's participation in peacekeeping is respected, normalized, and accepted. The UN is striving to increase the number of women deployed on peacekeeping missions, including in leadership positions. However, data has shown that sexual abuse of peacekeepers is a barrier to recruiting and retaining women peacekeepers. Creating a receptive environment for women peacekeepers should thus be seen a key part of implementing the UN's Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy.¹¹⁶

2. Mandate robust training to prevent sexual abuse of peacekeepers.

Robust, high-quality training before and during deployment is an important step in preventing sexual abuse of uniformed personnel, including by changing institutional cultures. The UN should require that all uniformed peacekeepers complete training not only on sexual abuse of host populations but also on sexual abuse within militarized organizations. This training should be in-person and at least two hours long. Prohibition against sexual abuse of colleagues should also be explicitly stated in guidelines for peacekeepers, and these guidelines should be reviewed as part of the training.

The training should be designed and given by experts on sexual and gender-based violence. It should outline the interlinkages between sexual exploitation and abuse of host communities and sexual abuse of peacekeepers. Training should also use hypothetical situations to outline the full spectrum of sexual abuse (including behaviors that some individuals may assume are "harmless"), explain the predominant patterns of sexual abuse (i.e., by men peacekeepers against women peacekeepers), and address questions about intimate relationships within peacekeeping

If the UN and troop- and police-contributing countries do not prevent and respond to sexual abuse and dismantle the patriarchal cultures that enable it, their initiatives to increase women's meaningful participation in peacekeeping operations will fail.

missions. In addition, the training should explain systems for reporting sexual abuse, supporting survivors, and holding perpetrators to account.

3. Require T/PCCs to address sexual abuse of peacekeepers within their contingents.

The UN should review existing language in its memoranda of understanding with T/PCCs and update them with more explicit language on sexual abuse of peacekeepers. This should include a clear definition of the different forms of sexual abuse, a clear statement that these are prohibited by UN standards of conduct, and language on expectations with regards to training and discipline related to sexual abuse of peacekeepers. It should also reference T/PCCs' commitment to relevant resolu-

tions and conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Another step to hold member states accountable would be to expand the secretary-general's voluntary compact on preventing and addressing sexual exploitation and

abuse.¹¹⁷ The compact is meant to be a joint commitment by the UN and member states, and, as of December 2021, it has been signed by 105 member states.¹¹⁸ The compact could be expanded to address all forms of sexual abuse within UN peacekeeping.

Similarly, the UN could require countries that participate in peacekeeping operations to have a military code of justice that incorporates sexual and gender-based crimes. While this was initially suggested to address the lack of accountability for sexual exploitation and abuse of host communities, it could also apply to sexual and gender-based crimes against peacekeepers.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, the UN should withhold personnel reimbursements from T/PCCs that fail to adequately investigate and address allegations of sexual abuse by their peacekeepers.

Sexual abuse against peacekeepers could also be

¹¹⁶ Ghittoni, Lehouck, and Watson, "Elsie Initiative Baseline Study."

¹¹⁷ United Nations, "Voluntary Compact," available at www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/voluntary-compact.

¹¹⁸ UN Department of Management Strategy, Policy, and Compliance, "Member State Signatories to the Voluntary Compact with the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the Commitment to Eliminate Sexual Exploitation and Abuse," December 15, 2021.

¹¹⁹ Sarah Williamson, "The US WPS Agenda and UN Peacekeeping," US Civil Society Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security (CSWG), January 10, 2017.

prioritized through the secretary-general's Action for Peacekeeping initiative (A4P), which has been endorsed by more than 150 member states. Specifically, one of the A4P+ priorities is "accountability to peacekeepers," including ensuring the well-being of peacekeeping personnel.¹²⁰ The secretary-general should make preventing and responding to sexual abuse of peacekeepers a key part of this priority.

4. Create a robust, confidential, and victim-centric reporting and investigation infrastructure.

While there are avenues for reporting sexual harassment through DPO, many peacekeepers do not know how to report sexual abuse that they experienced or witnessed against other peacekeepers. Moreover, many peacekeepers feel that using existing reporting mechanisms comes with significant risk of retaliation or other negative consequences (e.g., lack of access to future career opportunities or physical and mental harm) or will not lead to any tangible outcome or support. The UN should therefore create a reporting infrastructure that is anonymous and outside of the chain of command.

This infrastructure could build upon the existing accountability system for sexual exploitation and abuse of host communities, which, while not perfect, has made progress in requiring commitments from the UN and accountability from T/PCCs. Under this system, if there is a report of sexual abuse of a peacekeeper, the relevant T/PCC would conduct its own investigation or have the Office of Internal Oversight Services conduct one. If there is a referral for criminal accountability, the case would be turned over to the T/PCC's national justice system; if not, the disciplinary process would be shared by the UN and member states. The UN Conduct and Discipline Service would then follow up on actions taken after the investigation. If a T/PCC is not properly investigating or holding perpetrators to account, the Secretariat could prevent it from contributing troops or police in the future. To enable these existing institutions to

receive and investigate reports of sexual abuse against peacekeepers regardless of the identity of the perpetrator, the capacity of Office of Internal Oversight Services and conduct and discipline teams should be expanded.

In addition, DPO should expand the use of Clear Check to prevent the redeployment of peacekeepers who sexually abuse other peacekeepers. The UN should also publish reports on allegations of sexual abuse, actions taken (if any), and outcomes, as it already does in the secretary-general's annual report on sexual exploitation and abuse of host communities.

In addition, DPO can draw on the approaches and expertise of the Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate. OVRA and its senior victims' rights officers are a resource for victims within host communities. This office and its team could be expanded to also receive reports of sexual abuse of peacekeepers and provide them physical, emotional, legal, and economic assistance.

The UN should also strengthen whistleblower protections for military and police peacekeepers reporting sexual abuse. While the UN has a policy on "Protection against Retaliation for Reporting Misconduct," it is weak and has come under heavy criticism in recent years for several high-profile cases of retaliation against whistleblowers who reported on sexual exploitation and sexual harassment.¹²¹

Finally, DPO and T/PCCs should work together to track incidences of sexual abuse within peacekeeping military and police contingents through exit surveys. These surveys should be conducted approximately two months after deployment and should be undertaken by an external, independent organization (as opposed to the UN or member states). DPO and member states should create systems for the secure handling of this data and ensure it is collected ethically. The data should be disaggregated by the gender of the victim and perpetrator, the mission the victim is deployed to, whether the perpetrator is a member of that mission, and the rank of the perpetrator.

¹²⁰ United Nations, "A4P+: Priorities for 2021-2023," 2021.

¹²¹ UN Secretariat, *Secretary-General's Bulletin: Protection against Retaliation for Reporting Misconduct and for Cooperating with Duly Authorized Audits or Investigations*, UN Doc. ST/SGB/2017/2/Rev.1, November 28, 2017. For critiques of this policy, see: Caitlin Maslen, "Whistleblower Protection at the United Nations," Transparency International, December 15, 2021; and Sophie Edwards, "The High Price of Being a UN Whistleblower," Devex, May 24, 2018.

Annex

Table 3. Gender of survey respondents

Gender	Number of survey respondents	Percent of survey respondents
Woman	100	22%
Man	300	66%
Transgender woman	0	0%
Transgender man	0	0%
Non-binary	0	0%
Self-describe	2	<1%
Other/Multiple answers*	7	2%
Did not answer	48	11%
Total	457	100%

*Includes two (2) respondents who identified as both a “man” and a “woman”; two (2) respondents who identified as both a “woman” and “self-describe”; two (2) respondents who self-described as “man”; and one (1) respondent who identified as both “man” and “non-binary.”

Figure 8. Citizenship of survey respondents by region

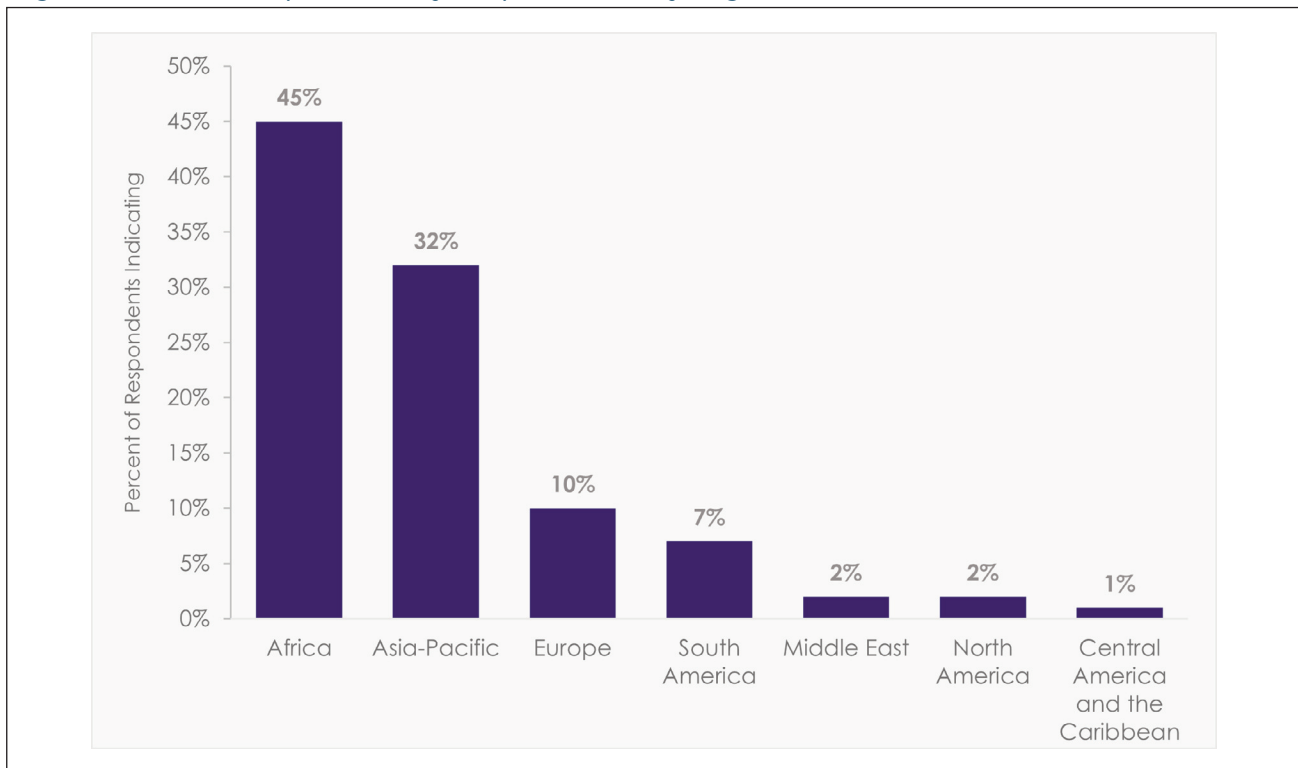


Figure 9. Duties performed on mission by survey respondents

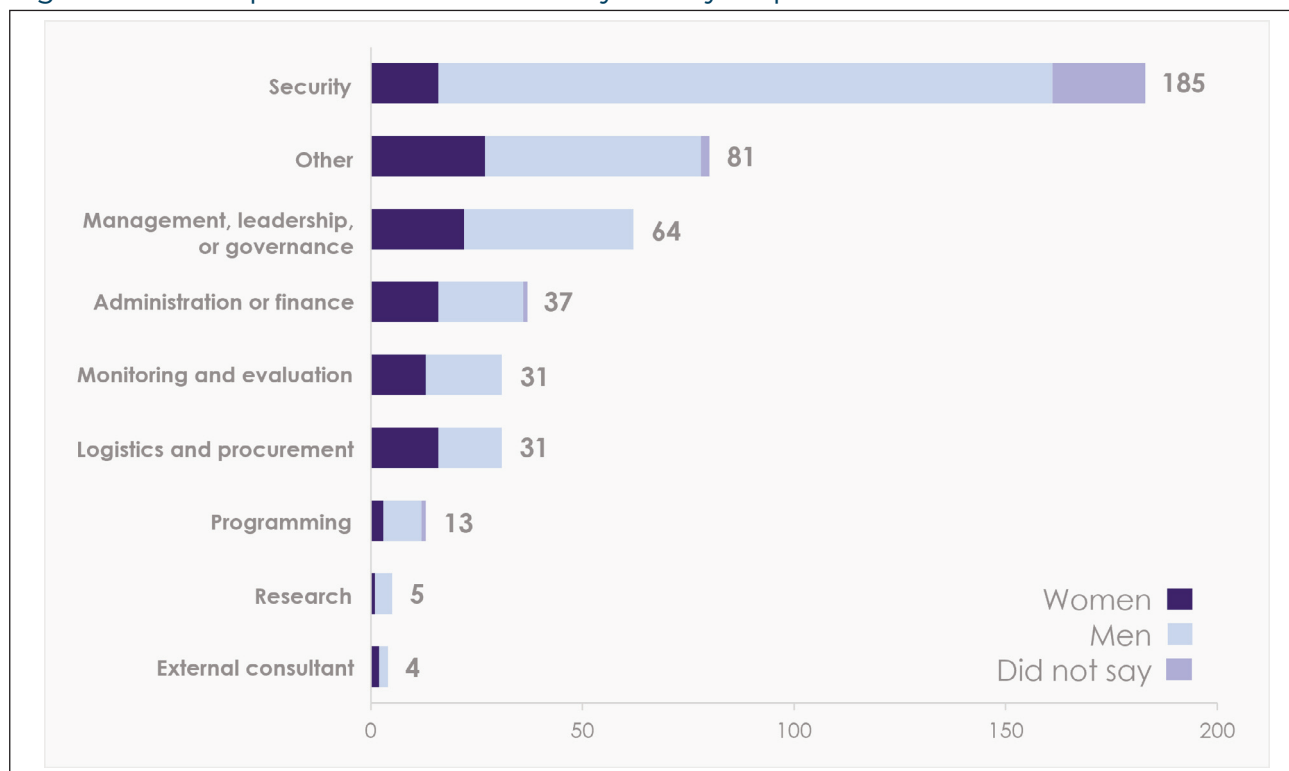


Figure 10. Years of experience on peacekeeping missions among survey respondents

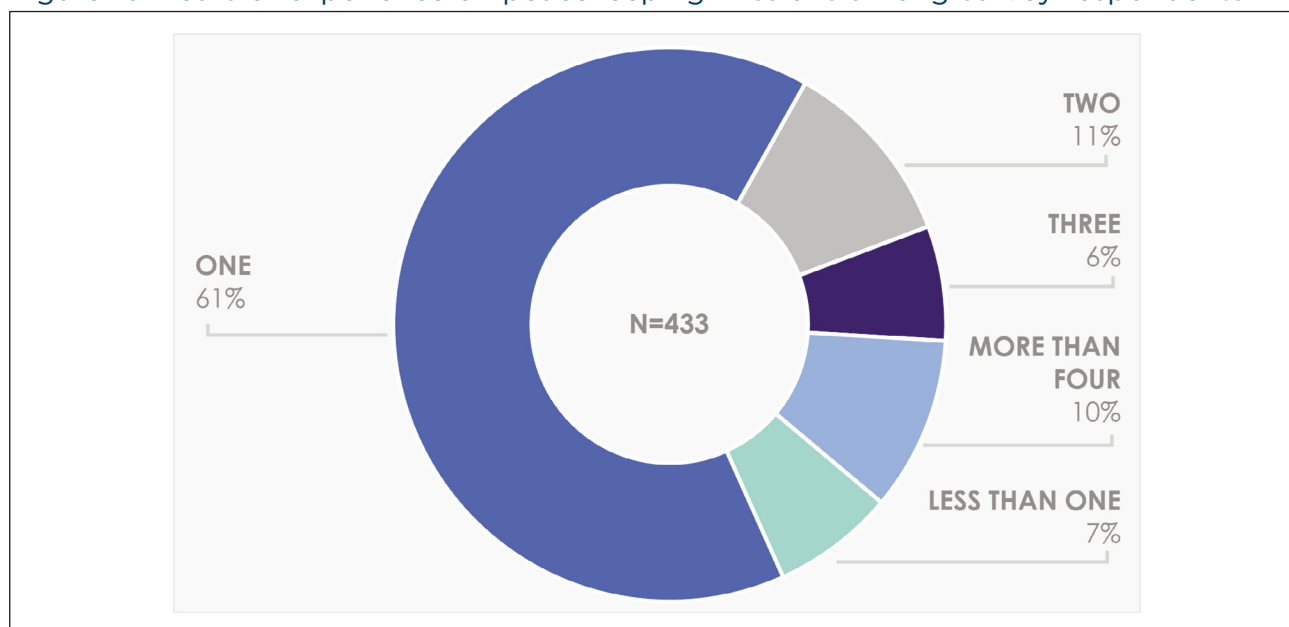
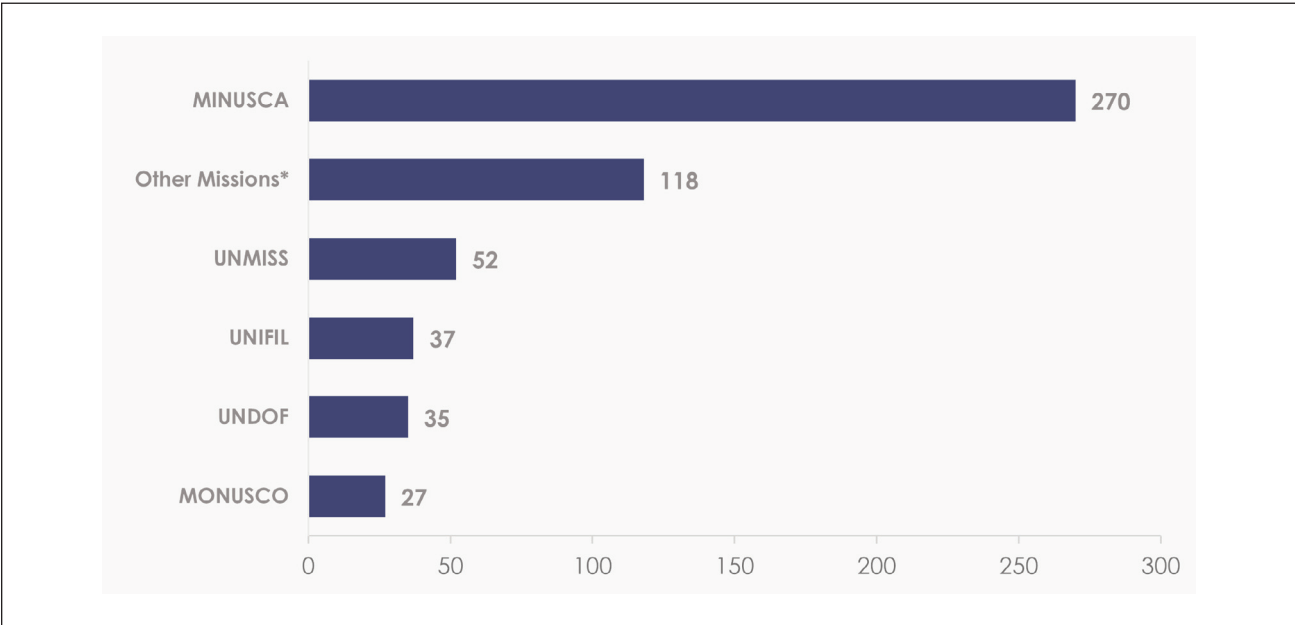


Figure 11. Missions that survey respondents served in



*Includes: AMISOM (11), the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJSTH) (1), MINURCAT (2), MINURSO (4), MINUSMA (17), MINUSTAH (17), MISCA (8), UNAMID (15), UNFICYP (10), UNSIFA (1), the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) (2), UNMIL (13), UNMIS (6), the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) (2), the UN Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI) (5), the UN Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) (1), and UNTSO (3).

Figure 12. Women and men peacekeepers who experienced or witnessed sexual abuse on mission by abuse type

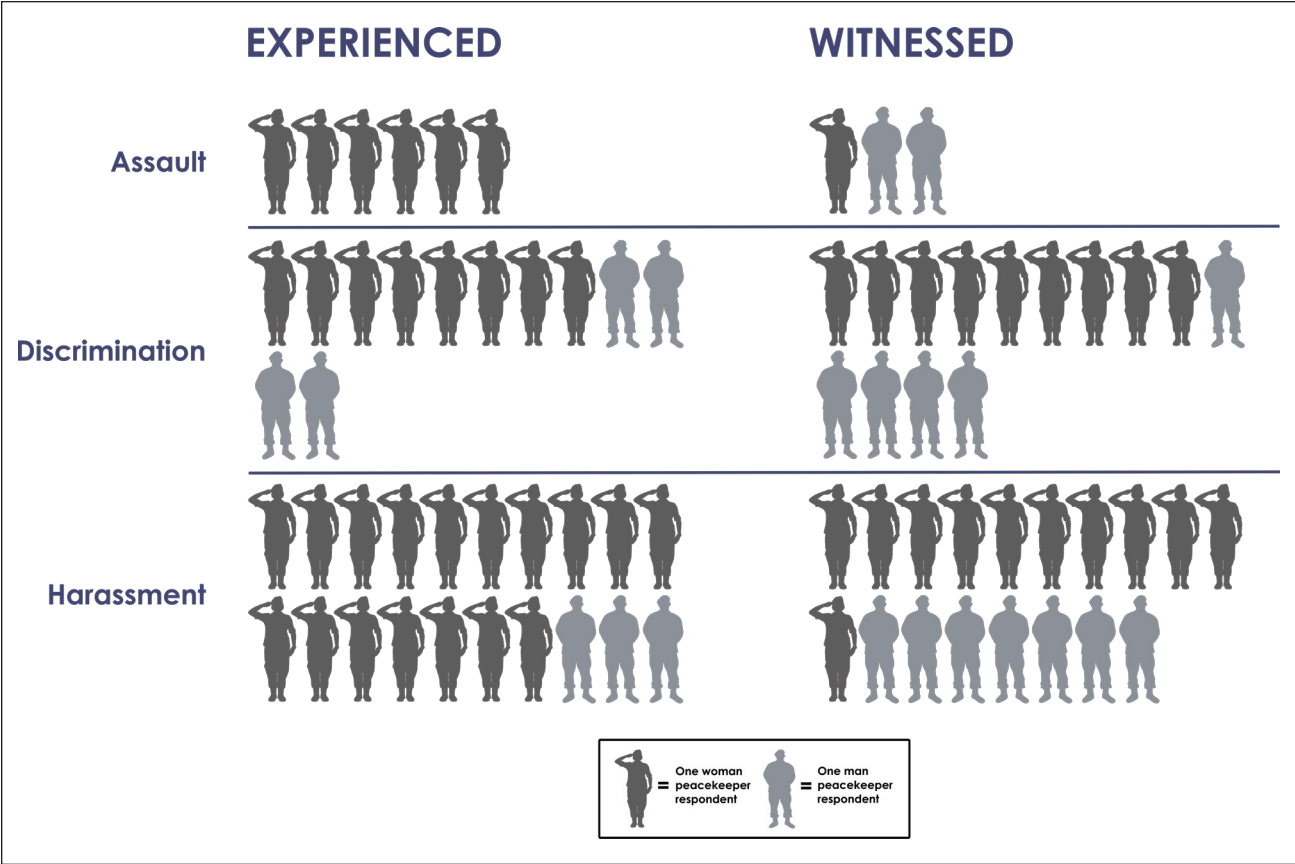
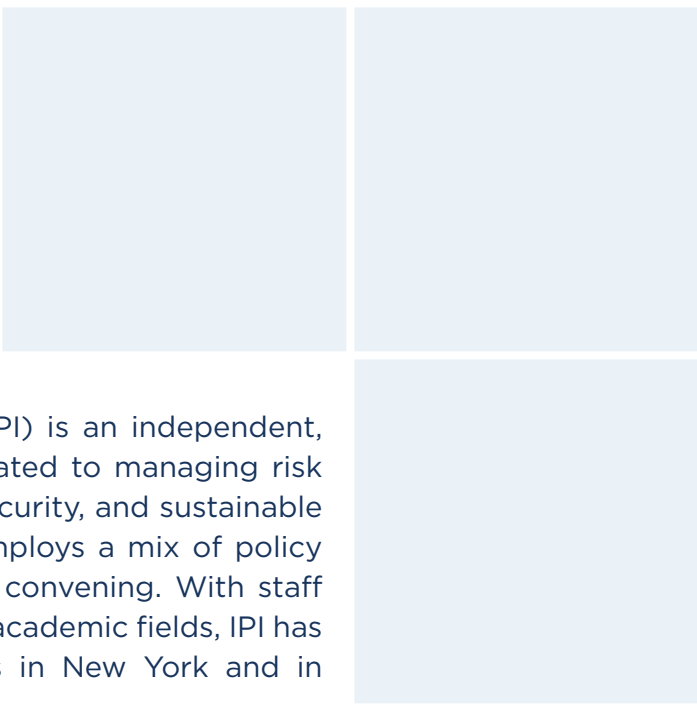


Table 4. Recommendations to address sexual abuse

Recommendation	Percent of Question Respondents Agreeing (N=285)
Improve pre- and post-deployment training on zero tolerance for sexual abuse.	87%
Improve knowledge and/or mechanisms for reporting sexual abuse.	87%
Strengthen and improve sanctions against perpetrators of sexual abuse (e.g., being returned home, facing possible criminal and civil charges, and/or being banned from participating in future peacekeeping missions)	84%
Ensure heads of peacekeeping missions publicly prioritize zero tolerance for SEA and sexual abuse of peacekeepers.	82%
Strengthen and improve the Conduct and Discipline Units to handle sexual abuse.	80%
Strengthen and improve capacity of gender focal points within peacekeeping missions to deliver trainings on zero tolerance and reporting mechanisms regarding sexual abuse.	78%
Ensure access to mental health care to fully recover from sexual abuse.	78%
Ensure access to sexual and reproductive health care and trained physical and mental health professionals regarding sexual abuse while in mission.	77%
Strengthen and improve capacity of the Field Office of the Victims' Rights Advocates to handle sexual abuse.	73%
Ensure separate housing and sanitation facilities for different genders while on mission.	73%
Nothing, things are working well as they are.	71%



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