

**Committee:** Legal Committee (GA6)

**Issue:** Criminal accountability of UN officials and experts on mission

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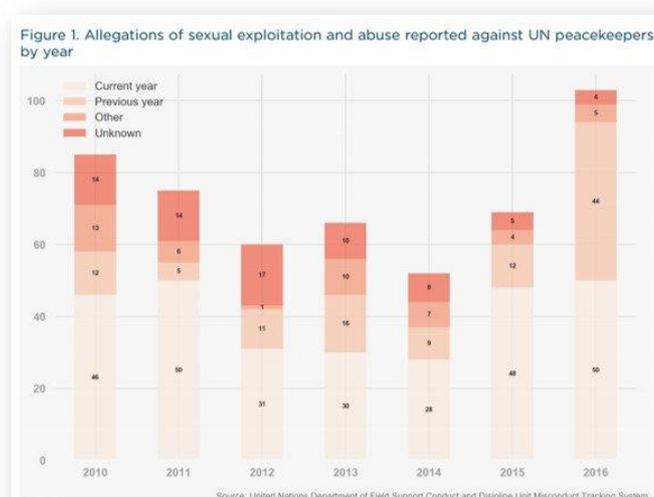
**Position:** Deputy Chair

## INTRODUCTION

Accusations concerning human rights abuse, financial fraud and generally corruption targeting United Nations officials and experts on mission by citizens of countries in which UN operations are present, are multiple; however, only a few have been prosecuted and resolved. Therefore,

the topic of Criminal Accountability of UN officials and experts on mission is of the utmost importance seeing that the promotion of justice, peace and respect of international law and human rights establish the fundamental principles of the UN, whose

services and effectiveness are currently being undermined. The unacceptable and completely unlawful impunity of UN officials having committed crimes should immediately be eliminated. 60,000 acts of rape, sexual assault and abuse<sup>1</sup>, as well as economic scandals involving governments and billions in the last 30 years have been reported to many organizations. Nevertheless a tremendously smaller number (above depicted diagram)<sup>2</sup> have reached the UN, been supported by evidence and been brought to trial. Countries like the



<sup>1</sup> Johnston, Lucy. "Now UN Peacekeepers Stand Accused after 612 Cases of Sex Abuse." *Express.co.uk*, Express.co.uk, 17 Feb. 2018, [www.express.co.uk/news/world/920390/Sexual-abuse-UN-peacekeeper-accused-612-cases](http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/920390/Sexual-abuse-UN-peacekeeper-accused-612-cases).

<sup>2</sup> "Peacekeepers and Sexual Abuse: A Persistent Stain on the United Nations' Image." *Africa Portal*, [www.africaportal.org/features/peacekeeping-and-sexual-assault-persistent-stain-united-nations-image/](http://www.africaportal.org/features/peacekeeping-and-sexual-assault-persistent-stain-united-nations-image/).

Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), India, Bangladesh, Haiti, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, South Sudan, Iraq and Somalia are the most affected ones by the atrocities conducted by UN personnel on mission. The role of the United Nations Organization is a subject of discussion in many member states, taking into consideration that people being dispatched to areas to protect the human rights of unarmed civilians are violating them. This dramatic contradiction has brought the UN to crisis point. An unbelievable number of employees of the UN, which is represented by 193 countries aiming to create a secure world, distribute fear, pain, death and are not held accountable for their actions. As a consequence, criminality escalates and the situation worsens. This issue should immediately be combatted with the collaboration of the international community or the UN organization will end up in an irreversible, unfair and very feeble position.

## **DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

### **United Nations officials and experts on mission**

UN personnel that has been deployed to a certain country in order to maintain peace and security. UN officials and experts on mission differ from civilian personnel belonging to peacekeeping forces (soldiers).

### **Impunity**

A situation in which someone (here: an UN official and expert on mission) commits a crime, but is not punished for their actions.

### **United Nations peacekeeping forces**

Soldiers that are dispatched to countries in order to protect unarmed civilians and supervise a Security Council's (SC) truce. Peacekeeping forces can only be sent by the SC, act impartially and avoid any use of force except in self-defence.

### **Criminal Accountability**

The legal prosecution of suspects (here of UN officials and experts under suspicion of having committed crimes while on mission) in order for them to be punished for the atrocities they have committed, should there be any criminal evidence, so as to end their possible impunity.

## **Sexual Assault and Abuse**

Sexual Assault and Abuse refer to any forced unwanted sexual contact.

## **Rome Statute**

The Rome Statute is the main International Criminal Court's (ICC) treaty that defines its jurisdiction and the four core international crimes, which must be legally dealt by this court. Since there is no jurisdiction over UN officials and experts by the UN, an expansion of it concerning egregious crimes could help in the escalation of criminal accountability of UN personnel. Nations, in which the ICC has jurisdiction, need to have signed the treaty and accepted its articles.

## **Extradition**

The process in which a convicted or apprehended criminal is transported to another country in order to be brought to trial there or to serve his/her sentenced time in a penitentiary institution.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

United Nations officials and experts have long before been dispatched to the four corners of the world by the Security Council in order to maintain peace and stability in certain regions. Specifically, the first operations date back to 1948 in the Middle East and escalated during the Cold War, in the UN's attempt to demand ceasefire in warzones. Since the 1990's, there have been multiple accusations in Western Africa, Cambodia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and other countries. Cases of sexual exploitation, rape and prostitution have been reported in refugees camps around the globe. Moreover, investigations conducted by UN integral offices and many other agencies have detected actions of financial fraud, corruption and generally of illegitimate exploitation of UN resources by its personnel. The creation of the Conduct and Discipline Unit (CDU) in 2005 and of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) in 1994 plays a cardinal role in the attempt to eliminate the above-mentioned cases. These disrupt and degrade the UN profile, its efficiency, impartiality and

trigger a thought of impeachment among the member states and citizens concerning its initial role in maintaining peace and stability, and promoting prosperity.

### **Financial Frauds and Corruption**

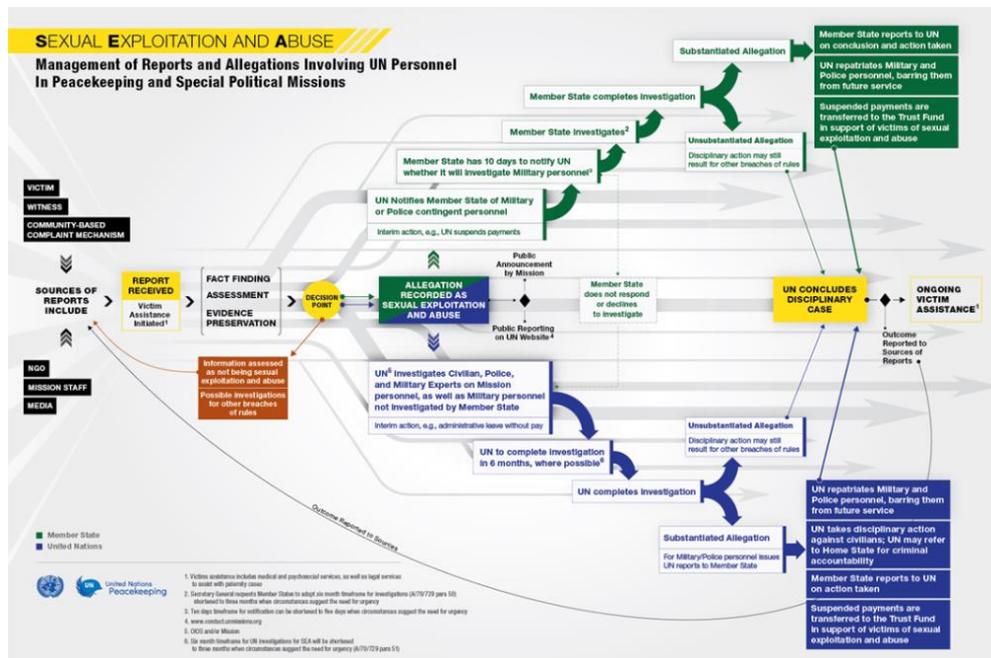
United Nations officials and experts are held accountable by many citizens and investigators for economic crimes. Specifically, the Office of Internal Oversight Services has compiled many reports from the time that it came into existence, regarding illegal actions during operations in various places. In 2005, UN personnel had at their disposal 1 billion dollars, 265 million of which were subject to fraud, abuse and waste. Even later on, 2 years after charges were brought, 40% of the 1.4 billion sent to the peacekeepers and experts was stigmatized by corruption. In the following years, other criminalizing evidence, concerning not only the future but also the past, was revealed, developing an image of no confidence and insufficiency towards the UN organization.

However, all these cases of tremendously enormous amounts of lost money not only prove the criminal actions during operations but also the lack of management. For instance in 2010, although resources amounting to \$256.000 were required, \$2,033,000 was allocated to UN personnel. This might seem like clear integral fraud, but when examining the bank accounts of UN officials involved in those missions and furthermore scrutinizing the goal of these allocations, one would reach the conclusion that the basic factor that contributed to the above-mentioned situation was the problematic organization and function of that specific sector. For instance, one shocking fact would be the complete lack of communication between the personnel dispatched to the Central African Republic and Chad and the ones responsible for the resources that led to the outcome of sending a lot of additional supplies that were never used, but cost a significant amount of money. This example helps us understand, that a major role in the escalation of financial corruption cases is played by the insufficiency and malfunction of some UN offices.

Moving on now to the explanation of how economic frauds take place and who suffers the most from their consequences, the *oil-for-food* case in Iraq is a subject for analysis. In 1996, the Islamic Republic of Iraq sealed a deal with the UN-Supervised Oil-for-Food Programme to be allowed to sell oil, only if the earnings were used for humanitarian aid to its citizens, following the embargo after the Gulf War. However, after some years, many reports came flooding in accusing the Iraqi government of exploiting this opportunity to maximize its fortune and not preventing a humanitarian crisis. 2,200 companies from 60

states were involved in this scandal. In the following years, some UN officials were tried (most of them in US courts) for receiving considerable amounts of money from the Iraqi government so as to not uncover the illicit operation. However, only a few were sentenced because of problems of the legislation system protecting UN officials and experts on mission, which should be combatted and will be explained afterwards. Referring to the victims of this case, millions of people did not receive the resources needed leading to a huge humanitarian crisis and the starvation of many Iraqi citizens. This outcome makes people around the globe rethink the UN's goals and its capability of achieving them.

### Sexual exploitation, abuse, rape cases and forced prostitution



The distribution of a citizen's report against a UN official or expert on mission to the UN organization in order to reach the judicial system of the wanted member state.<sup>3</sup>

UN officials and experts dispatched to areas in the world in order to control the compliance of two belligerents to ceasefires mandated by the Security Council and to provide the citizens affected with humanitarian aid are not sufficiently supervised - some of them commit crimes, harming the people they are sent to protect. Of the many cases

<sup>3</sup> Standards of Conduct Peacekeeping." United Nations, United Nations, [peacekeeping.un.org/en/standards-of-conduct](http://peacekeeping.un.org/en/standards-of-conduct).

reported by international agencies and organizations, only a few reach the UN and a tremendously small number of them are brought to trial. The first allegations of sexual assault and abuse targeting UN personnel came up in the 1990s in the former Republic of Yugoslavia. However, almost none of the criminals were held accountable for their actions. This constitutes the second kind of criminality conducted by the afore-mentioned that will concern us.

Some years later, the Secretary General Kofi Annan initiated the “zero-tolerance” policy against crimes committed by the above-mentioned people. The OIOS alongside the CDU was created. The UN, nevertheless, still faces problems and charges of sexual misconduct. Generally, a policy of silence prevails around the issue. In the areas where the crimes are committed, it is almost impossible for the victims to write a report as this procedure is intercepted by the perpetrators. Furthermore, amongst the troops or experts, witnesses do not stand up for the victims, because of the possible dangers that they might face afterwards. Therefore, reliable and adequate evidence never reaches the court so that those responsible are prosecuted. Moreover, living in inhumane conditions in warzones, young girls force themselves to sexually please the UN personnel so as to gain a small piece of bread, but end up being the most common victims of assault. They are known as the “one dollar UN girls”<sup>4</sup>. Most of these cases occurred in Congo between 1999 and 2010. Last but not least, another related problem is the fact that UN officials in order to earn some money abduct and pimp girls and women. Forced prostitution is seen in various places such as Haiti.<sup>5</sup> All these criminal acts have led to the expansion of many diseases like cholera, HIV and the proliferation of many unwanted pregnancies.

According to the Organization Hear Their Cries<sup>6</sup> in the last 12 years there have been 60,000 rapes in areas that UN personnel have been deployed to. Most of the times countries in Africa face the biggest problems of that nature. However, in Haiti one of the most traumatic crimes took place. Sri Lankan peacekeepers would sexually assault abandoned children and they also created the so-called “child sex ring”, in which soldiers would just

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<sup>4</sup> “Congo's Desperate 'One-Dollar U.N. Girls'.” *The Washington Post*, WP Company, [www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A52333-2005Mar20.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A52333-2005Mar20.html).

<sup>5</sup> “UN Rape, Pedophilia, Enforced Prostitution in Haiti.” *Haiti News*, 23 June 2015, [ezilidanto.com/2015/06/un-rape-pedophilia-enforced-prostitution-in-haiti/](http://ezilidanto.com/2015/06/un-rape-pedophilia-enforced-prostitution-in-haiti/).

<sup>6</sup> Johnston, Lucy. “Now UN Peacekeepers Stand Accused after 612 Cases of Sex Abuse.” *Express.co.uk*, Express.co.uk, 17 Feb. 2018, [www.express.co.uk/news/world/920390/Sexual-abuse-UN-peacekeeper-accused-612-cases](http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/920390/Sexual-abuse-UN-peacekeeper-accused-612-cases).

pass a child from one another.<sup>7</sup>Moreover, in countries like the Central African Republic, Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Morocco, Niger and Senegal, children and women are often being mistreated and nothing is done to stop those accountable.

### **Legal gaps and problems in the prosecution of UN officials and experts**

Criminal accountability for UN officials and experts on mission is one of the major problems that the UN has to face nowadays, despite many attempts in the past 20 years. Reading the aforementioned cases, it would be reasonable for somebody to think that suspects seldom are brought to trial. For instance, regarding what happened in Haiti, which is a typical example of UN personnel committing crimes, the 101 soldiers suspected and recognized by the victims were just sent back to their homelands and only 1 or 2 were legally prosecuted and sentenced to one year in prison, due to violation of privacy. This chaotic situation derives from many legal issues, which will be analyzed in the following paragraphs.

One of the biggest problems facing the UN is that it has no jurisdiction over those dispatched to the various countries during operations. This means that those responsible for illegal actions cannot be brought before the International Criminal Court (ICC). It is up to the regional judicial system of the areas that they are sent to, or to the judicial system of their homelands, in the case of extradition, as to what their punishment is going to be. Seeing the conditions of the countries in which they work, it is clear that they cannot be prosecuted by a nation which is currently taking part in a war. Moreover, their extradition cannot always take place, mainly because no member state in the UN has ratified an extradition treaty with all the others. This significant absence of collaboration leads to the conclusion that there is often going to be a case in which a criminal cannot be brought to trial. Given these two legal obstacles, a situation of total impunity has been created and the only drastic measure that can be taken is their return to their homeland.

Last but not least, the most serious problem is the fact that victims' reports never reach the Security Council, as elaborated before. Due to a lack of evidence because of an

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<sup>7</sup> Paisley Dodds Associated Press. "UN Peacekeepers Forced Children into Sex Ring in Haiti." *The Independent*, Independent Digital News and Media, 15 Apr. 2017, [www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/un-haiti-peacekeepers-child-sex-ring-sri-lankan-underage-girls-boys-teenage-a7681966.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/un-haiti-peacekeepers-child-sex-ring-sri-lankan-underage-girls-boys-teenage-a7681966.html).

absence of witnesses, the CDU and the OIOS most of the times cannot forward the allegations to the SC and, therefore, they are ignored. In extreme cases, investigators sent to the areas are trapped in the legality of prosecution and therefore cannot change the situation, either.

## **MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED**

### **OIOS**

The Office of Internal Oversight Services was created in 1994 following the first accusations of citizens against UN officials and experts on mission. It is an independent office responsible for investigating, evaluating, inspecting and reporting the UN personnel's work and UN resources. It reports directly to the General Assembly and the Secretary General.<sup>8</sup>

### **CDU**

The Conduct and Discipline Unit was established in 2005 aiming to also address any kind of misconduct by UN officials and experts on mission. It plays a cardinal role in communicating with member states when reports regarding sexual exploitation and abuse. It also dispatches Conduct and Discipline Teams (CDTs), which advise the heads of mission, or carries out inspections.<sup>9</sup>

### **Hear Their Cries**

The organization is recognized by the UN and aims to eliminate child sexual abuse, assault and prostitution. It collects and compiles reports of victims that cannot reach the Security Council, cooperates with NGOs and governments to detect criminals within organizations, and raises awareness in the global community. Furthermore, it supports law firms through providing them with sufficient evidence (mainly reports), so as for the prosecution to be facilitated and aims at the creation of an independent organization to protect civilians abused.

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<sup>8</sup> "United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)." *United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) | PreventionWeb.net*, [www.preventionweb.net/organizations/6940](http://www.preventionweb.net/organizations/6940).

<sup>9</sup> "Who Is Involved." *Conduct in UN Field Missions*, 8 Apr. 2019, [conduct.unmissions.org/who-is-involved](http://conduct.unmissions.org/who-is-involved).

## **Haiti**

In 2004, the UN Security Council authorized an operation in Haiti, to which many UN civilians and also police forces were sent. The main goal was to assist the government in reforming and improving the judicial system, prisons and in providing humanitarian aid. Nevertheless, one of the biggest scandals erupted. Approximately 100 UN officials and experts created “child sex rings” and assaulted many abandoned girls and boys. After 10 years of constant violation of human rights, the operation was called off, the UN personnel sent back to their homelands and only two Pakistani soldiers were sentenced by a Pakistani court, without UN involvement, to one year in prison.

## **Iraq**

The Iraqi government, together with many UN officials and experts in the area, created maybe the biggest economic scandal in the history of UN peacekeeping. In 1996, the agreement between the government of the afore-mentioned state and UN personnel, concerning the oil market was turned into a very lucrative deal for the state, leaving its citizens aside and thus creating a humanitarian crisis.

## **USA**

The United States of America played a cardinal role in the previous case since it sought the extradition of many UN personnel, in order to prosecute them on American soil. The UN officials that assisted the Iraqi government had accounts with US banks and that constituted the reason, for which the US brought them before an American court.

## **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Central African Republic (CAR), Cambodia, Bangladesh, Niger and Senegal**

These 6 countries are the most affected by human rights abuses committed by UN personnel. In the last 15 years, according to the Hear Their Cries organization, there have been over 60.000 rape and sexual assault cases. Diseases like HIV/AIDS and cholera have spread amongst the people. Moreover, there have been many cases of unwanted pregnancies caused by the UN personnel.

### **Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo**

These 2 countries were the first to accuse UN personnel of sexual assault and abuse. During peacekeeping operations in the wars of independence of the people from the nations in the former Republic of Yugoslavia, UN and NATO personnel were sent to the area and committed many human rights violations.

### **TIMELINE OF EVENTS**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description of Event</b>
1948	The first deployment of UN officials and experts on a mission in the Middle East.
1947-1989	Escalation of the operations during the Cold War.
1990s	The first accusations targeting UN personnel concerning sexual assault or financial fraud.
1994	Creation of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)
1996	Financial scandal in Iraq.
2004	Zero- tolerance policy expressed by the Secretary General.
2005	Establishment of the Conduct and Discipline Unit.
2005	The Secretary General creates a group of legal experts (GLE), in order to ensure criminal accountability of UN officials and experts on mission.
2013	The Secretary General publishes the report “Criminal Accountability on UN Officials and experts on mission”.
2004-2017	Child Sex Ring in Haiti.

## UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

- Resolution 62/63, 6/12/2007; Briefly: proposes the extension of jurisdiction by member states, encourages the cooperation between them, exchange of information, <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/62/63> .
- Resolution 63/119, 11/12/2008; Briefly: extradition proceedings, proposal to afford each other assistance in connection with the responsible ones, witness/victims protection, restoring the reputation of mistaken accused UN officials and experts on mission, <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/63/119>.
- Resolution 64/110, 16/12/2009; Briefly: strengthening of training of UN personnel, implementation of the former resolution, similar proposals to the above-apposed ones, <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/64/110>
- Resolution 65/20, 06/12/2010; Briefly: states should provide the Secretary General with information on time, former measures, <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/65/20>.
- Resolution 70/114, 14/12/2015; Briefly: urges the Secretary General to notify member states whose personnel should be convicted and to spread the zero-tolerance policy, <https://undocs.org/A/RES/70/114>.
- Resolution 71/134, 13/12/2016; Briefly: appointment of Special Coordinator, cooperation of member states with the Office of Legal Affairs, <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/71/134>.
- Report of the Secretary General and the Prince of Jordan Zeid Ra’ad Zeid Al-Husseini, 24/03/2005; Title: “A comprehensive strategy to eliminate future sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations”; Briefly: This report was written as a response to the multiple accusations targeting UN officials and experts on mission, concerning human rights violations, [https://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=a/59/710](https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=a/59/710).
- Report of the Secretary General, 14/02/2019; Title: “Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse”; Briefly: focuses on the implementation of the “zero tolerance” policy and on the protection of victims and witnesses, [https://conduct.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/a-73-744\\_sg\\_report\\_on\\_special\\_measures.pdf](https://conduct.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/a-73-744_sg_report_on_special_measures.pdf).

## **PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE**

The issue first arose approximately 30 years ago and since then the United Nations Organization, intending to maintain peace, security, stability and to promote respect of the human rights, has taken many measures to combat it. In 2004, the then Secretary General (SG) Kofi Annan adopted the so-called “zero tolerance policy” towards acts of abuse and corruption by UN officials and experts on mission. This policy has been supported by his successors too and every resolution passed in the Legal Committee and the General Assembly (GA) is created according to this idea.

The publication of various reports and the proposal of resolutions constitute the second important measure taken by the UN. The international community is today aware of past situations that might be unfortunately repeated and, as a result, several new stricter rules must be applied during the training and after the deployment of UN personnel. Member states are highly encouraged to cooperate by exchanging useful information, establishing treaties regarding the extradition of UN officials and experts and finally by extending their jurisdiction of law so as to facilitate fair and effective criminal accountability.

Last but not least, in 1994 and 2005 two organizations that today play a cardinal role in the elimination of acts of abuse and corruption by UN personnel were created, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and the Conduct and Discipline Unit (CDU) respectively. These dispatch special units to vulnerable areas, inspect, investigate, interview and report directly to the GA and SG. It is clear that they provide help of the utmost importance and constitute two examples of the efforts made by the UN to move forward and solve any problem that occurs.

## **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

The efforts of the UN and its specialized agencies to tackle the issue cannot be ignored or doubted. However, it is acceptable that these can be deemed ineffective to a certain extent, seeing the continuation of the problem. Therefore, a series of other ideas that have not been implemented yet will be presented .

First and foremost, since this problem could affect any member state in the future, collaboration among them is an incredibly significant accomplishment as stated by the former resolutions of the UN. Extradition treaties amongst the nations need to be established, since guilty UN officials and experts can only be brought to trial in the state in

which they commit the crime or in their homeland. Acknowledging the frustrating situation that prevails in the nations that UN personnel are sent to, it is clear that they need to be prosecuted by the judicial system of their homeland. This is impossible in most cases due to extradition problems and therefore those responsible are not punished.

Moving on to the next measure that could contribute to the normalization of the issue, a specific percentage of women could be dispatched to operations, taking into consideration that almost all crimes are attributed to men. "This is not just a question of numbers, but also of our effectiveness in fulfilling our mandates," stated the Secretary General concerning the abovementioned issue. The recruitment of female UN personnel would be a step forward towards eliminating gender inequality, especially in non-peaceful areas, in which abuse and exploitation increasingly take place. Finally, since most victims are female, women officials will be able to make them feel more comfortable and provide them with the appropriate protection and security.

Moreover, another drastic solution that should be implemented is the protection of victims and witnesses by the UN. One of the factors that leads to the inadequate accumulation of evidence leading to UN officials and experts accused of committing crimes not being prosecuted are the threats from victimizers. In warzones, the procedure is extremely difficult and therefore a series of measures can be taken, depending on the danger a witness might be exposed to. Generally, there are four types of protection ranging from 24/7 physical protection to identity concealment.<sup>10</sup> Additional UN personnel can be dispatched for that cause or the local authorities could handle the problem. It constitutes one of the most serious issues during the prosecution of criminals worldwide.

Lastly, the legal status of UN officials and experts on mission should be clarified to member states and egregious crimes could be dealt by the International Criminal Court (ICC). UN personnel cannot be granted any immunity in case of violation of law. They must be treated equally as criminals before the court. The problem, nevertheless, in the legal prosecution is that the UN has no jurisdiction over them. However, the Rome Statute ( ICC Treaty ) could , according to article 123, be reformed by a member state that was part of it 7 years previously, so that the ICC would be able to handle egregious cases of UN officials and experts on mission, ensuring their criminal accountability.

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<sup>10</sup> "Witness Protection." *INPROL*, [www.inprol.org/rule-of-law-topics/witness-protection](http://www.inprol.org/rule-of-law-topics/witness-protection).

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### **Biography of graph and picture**

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