CHARLES UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Institute of Political Studies

Department of International Relations

Master's Thesis

2021   **Camila Lyra de Magalhães Melo**

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Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Peacekeeping

Operations: the cases of MONUSCO and MINUSMA

Master's thesis

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Declaration

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.

2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.

3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague on 07 July 2021   Camila Lyra de Magalhães Melo

References

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Abstract

Peace Operations have been used as a tool in the United Nations to achieve peace and security in vulnerable areas since the late 1940s. With these missions come the peacekeepers, personnel chosen by the organisation or sent by their troop-contributing countries to work in the missions to achieve their goals stipulated by their mandate through the UN Security Council resolutions. Due to the nature of the operations, peacekeepers and locals are often in contact with each other, which can lead to sexual encounters. However, these circumstances do not always happen as mutual agreement, and many peacekeepers commit sexual exploitation and abuse violations, taking advantage of their position as a UN officer which can provide money and food to the vulnerable civilian in exchange for them to fulfil their sexual needs. What is noteworthy on this issue is that there are significant variances from one mission to the other – where one such as MONUSCO has more than 100 allegations recorded and others such as MINUSMA do not reach to 30 allegations recorded. Therefore, this study wanted to understand to what extent the sexual exploitation and abuse violations by peacekeepers can affect the effectiveness of the mission and jeopardise its quest to achieve peace and security in the territory they are deployed. Overall, this study found that the extent of the impact of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers varies significantly. The main finding was that the amount of cases will impact differently according to the mandate and the objectives of the mission, whilst understanding that within the mission, these violations might influence more the work of some tasks than others.

Keywords

United Nations; peace operations; effectiveness; MONUSMO; MINUSMA

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When I decided to pursue a master and came to the Czech Republic, I had no idea of the challenges I was about to face. It never crossed my mind that more than half of my studies would happen online due to a pandemic, but here I am finishing my master's degree. First, I would like to thank professor doc. PhDr. Jan Karlas, M.A., Ph.D for guiding me through this process and helping me achieve the best I could whilst writing this paper. Second, I would like to thank my mother, Gabriela, who has helped me during all my life and is my biggest encourager in every moment even when I am kilometres away from home. Third, not to forget all the friends I made here in the Czech Republic, as we helped each other to go through these challenging times in the past year. And last, but not least, I would like to thank Thomas and all the help he has given me throughout my master, always so incredibly supportive and always believing in me and in my potential. To all of you, I am grateful.

Master Thesis Proposal - Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Peacekeeping Operations: the cases of MONUSCO and MINUSMA

Introduction

The topic chosen for the thesis revolves around the violation of human rights by peacekeepers whilst working on the United Nations' peacekeeping operations. As an issue that has been around since the beginning of these missions, it is important to be addressed as there is a range of violations. The focus of this thesis is on the allegations on sexual exploitation and abuse, something that is still not properly reported and most of the perpetrators are not appropriately held accountable for it by the United Nations itself or by their national countries.

This topic is important because the United Nations (UN) puts these missions together for countries that are going through difficult matters, such as civil wars or humanitarian crisis and the selected peacekeepers go there to help the country and its people, and usually stay in the most vulnerable areas of the territory. However, by committing such crimes, they end up making the people feel less safe and contribute to the unsuccess of the mission, bringing more problems to the country and to the organisation. So, through the years, there has been a debate within the international community on the matter, trying to identify to what extent these violation claims affect the operation as a whole and the extent of accountability of these violations. Most of the studies on this issue also try to identify the real number of cases of violations on the missions, as in most of the official data accounts low numbers, not showing how big this issue is.

Academically speaking, this project has the aim to contribute to the research on the issue by analysing and comparing some of the United Nations' missions located in Africa. The missions in focus are MONUSCO, located in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and MINUSMA, in Mali. These two are some of the most relevant missions in the region, and have some common characteristics, but mainly have different outcomes, especially in the situation of sexual exploitation and abuse, as the numbers are significantly different. The idea of this project is that studying these two missions it would help to understand the impact of the peacekeepers' violations and what characteristics influence on the behaviour of the peacekeepers within the missions, leading them to commit those crimes or not to commit.

Research Target and Research Question

The research question of this study is "to what extent cases of sexual exploitation and abuse influence on the effectiveness of the United Nations peacekeeping operations?". Additionally, the research target for this project is to analyse the United Nations' missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and in the Republic of Mali by looking through their development, their work and the impact of the mission in those countries to see how much they have helped to stabilize the environment and support the civilians. Furthermore, the aim is to study and compare the frequency of cases of sexual exploitation and abuse in each of the chosen missions, trying to understand how they affect the mission as a whole.

Literature Review

Peacekeeping Operations

Relating to peacekeeping operations, one can say it is a tool of the United Nations used since 1948, introducing it as a less offensive instrument of security (Tsagourias, 2006), when for the first time the Security Council authorised military observers from the organisation to be deployed to the Middle East. (United Nations, n.d.). At the beginning, the idea for these operations was to maintain a negative peace, which means to achieve a truce or a cease-fire, and the object was the global, meaning that the idea was to secure the interests of the main powers of that period, more specifically the Permanent Five countries at the United Nations' Security Council. Furthermore, this 'first generation' of peacekeeping had a thin scope and focused on impartiality, light armament, and peacekeeping by consent. (Gizelis et al, 2018).

Besides, in its principles and guidelines the organisation states that peacekeepers have the task to seek for advance human rights whilst being deployed to a mission. Thus, since its beginning, these operations have three basic principle that they should follow, which are consent, neutrality/impartiality, and the use of force in self-defence, being constantly reassured in UN's documents on peacekeeping, giving them a constitutional status. These principles are seen as interconnected and that for a mission to be effective, all of them should be followed throughout the whole period the operation is being held. The first one, consent, means that missions can be deployed only with the permission of the host country, and it should secure compliance with its government. When it comes to neutrality/impartiality, it means that the operation should not discriminate and not influence the course of events in the host country and related to self-defence, the idea is that the mission is allowed to use force if

it is to defend the peacekeepers, its components and the operation's mandate. (Tsagourias, 2006).

However, with the changes in the dynamics of the international system and new threats, new "generations" of peacekeeping operations emerged, emphasising the needs of the country's the mission is at. (Gizelis et al, 2018). With that, the newer peacekeeping operations do not follow these principles as much, as there has been a loss in its neutrality and now it has a political agenda. (Tsagourias, 2006). Subsequently, between the 'second' and 'third' generations, these missions began to be set up in inter and intrastate conflicts situations, meaning a more dangerous scenario, (Tsagourias, 2006) and altered its focus to achieve a positive peace, meaning they now included the protection of civilians and vulnerable groups, reform in the security sector, to build state capacity and support the country's economic development. From that moment on, the missions were not just observational anymore, as they would become multidimensional and integrative, leading to an increase in the number of missions and peacekeepers up to 100,000. (Gizelis et al, 2018).

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Regarding to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), in a Bulletin from the Secretary-General in 2003, the United Nations defined sexual exploitation as "any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another". Additionally, sexual abuse was defined as "the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions". (United Nations' Secretariat, 2003). There is a range of actions that are within the definitions of sexual exploitation and abuse, which goes from opportunistic sexual abuse, transactional sex to networked sexual exploitation, and the main victims are vulnerable civilians, mostly being women and children. Anyway, these are still being used as a weapon of war or practice of war, when it comes to being used for private reasons (Westendorf and Searle, 2017), such as coercion to provide sex in exchange of food or money and even actual rape at gunpoint. (Nordås and Rustad, 2013).

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Peacekeeping Operations

It is believed that sexual exploitation and abuse became an issue to the organisation's missions from 1993, after the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia, to which

was seen by the head of the mission as not a serious and big issue, attributing the actions to man's natural behaviours. (Westendorf and Searle, 2017). At first, one can highlight the numerous reports on the proliferation of brothels and prostitution with the arrival of peacekeepers, plus involvement in trafficking of women, and sexual assault. (Smith, 2017). Nevertheless, it was in the early 2000s that the issue started to be more published in the international media, bringing concerns to the organisation. (Grady, 2010).

Furthermore, most of the research on this issue suppose that number of SEA cases is higher than what it is documented, as it is believed that the cases are underreported. Besides, different reports indicated that this issue happen in all types of peacekeeping missions at various levels, the most of it being held at the African missions. (Grady, 2010).

One important matter to highlight regarding sexual exploitation and abuse is that there is a significant variation of cases within the UN's missions. To this day, many studies have been made where the missions are compared between each other and many factors within them are analysed, in an attempt to compile the variables and determine what leads to cases on SEA. One possible influence on the variation is the troop contributing country (TCC) the peacekeepers deployed are from, as the level of accountability is low peacekeepers do not feel threatened and in danger of suffering serious consequences, and in TCCs where gender equality is low, its peacekeepers will most likely commit SEA. (Mullin, 2019). Another fact that it can influence SEA is how strong the rule of law in the host country of the mission is and its level of press freedom, as serious cases in SEA levels could easily get to the national media. (Rodriguez and Kinne, 2019). However, there are many other elements that can affect the variation.

United Nations' Response

As this issue became more frequent to the public, the organisation started to come up with responses in different means. Some of them were the UN Security Council's resolutions, such as Resolution 1325 with a women, peace, and security agenda and through the Bulletin mentioned above as guidelines for future situations on sexual exploitation and abuse (Westendorf and Searle, 2017) and resolution 2272, the first one aimed at preventing SEA by perpetrators under the organisation's mandate. (Smith, 2017). Another response from the UN was a zero-tolerance policy, prohibiting the deployed peacekeepers to engage in contact with persons under 18 years old, and in sexual activities with any civilian from the area they were allocated to. (Jennings, 2015).

With these measures, some changes did occur in the way the missions were held. The idea of the United Nations began to be involved in three pillars, which are prevention, enforcement, and action. (Smith, 2017). From that moment on, peacekeeping operations had conduct and discipline teams, new reporting guidelines and the release for the public on alleged cases, as a tactic of naming and shaming the peacekeepers that would commit any form of sexual exploitation and abuse. (Jennings, 2015). Another measure taken, from the UN Security Council's Resolution 2272, was the decision to repatriate peacekeeping units in cases where allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were proven to be real and had credible evidence in the areas they were installed. (Westendorf and Searle, 2017).

For the mission to start, there is a legal framework which is set out by the status of forces agreement between the host country and the organisation on privileges and immunities of UN's peacekeepers and the other personnel to be sent to the mission. However, in these forces agreements the country that has jurisdiction over the deployed personnel is not the host country, but rather the troop contributing country from where they will be from. In this sense, the United Nations can start an investigation through its office of Internal Oversight Services, and in case the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse are verified, it can choose to repatriate the perpetrator or ban him from future operations, but the major criminal and juridical processes need to be held by his country of nationality. (Smith, 2017).

The main tool on the response from the organisation towards the issue is its Conduct and Discipline Unit website with data on cases of sexual exploitation and abuse committed in its missions. There, it is publicly available most of the information on the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse from the year 2007 and onwards, where you can find data on the number of allegations, on the alleged perpetrators, on the victims (mostly their age), on the status of the investigations, and on the actions taken by the United Nations or national governments. (United Nations, 2020). However, as mentioned before, it is believed that cases are underreported, meaning that the UN data does not indicate the reality of the situation on its missions.

Effectiveness

To analyse the effectiveness of a mission it means to evaluate its performance and see if the mission has been managing to promote and keep a status of "positive" peace in the area it is located, and to reach its objectives. Through the years of study, however, there still has

been a debate on which criteria and standards measure the success of a mission. (di Salvatore and Ruggeri, 2017).

Mostly, the idea is to analyse the short-term and long-term effects of the peace operations in the region. Following this line of though, one of the focus is on the immediate capacity of the mission on reducing conflict and on making peace. Additionally, what is observed is the means of the mission to reach its objectives, such as its mediation, observer groups, and emergency deployments, as a way to see its operationalisation. One possible feature that helps a mission to be effective is a multi-nationality composition of its personnel, (di Salvatore and Ruggeri, 2017) along with the presence of women, when it comes to their contact with the civilians.

When it comes to long-term effects, is to see the results in a post-war phase, meaning it sees if war was renewed, if it has an uncontested sovereignty, and in more strict cases, analyses the level of democratisation. Overall, another factor that is looked at is the responses of the civilians towards the operation, such as the number of attacks against peacekeepers, cooperation between them and their satisfaction with the performance of the mission. (di Salvatore and Ruggeri, 2017). Furthermore, one serious element that needs to be addressed and it has a significant effect in the missions is related to sexual exploitation and abuse, as most studies show that the more the cases are, the more the mission loses its reputation and sense of security from the civilians perspectives, and this is something that attacks not just the mission itself, but also the United Nations and the troop contributing countries that are acting on the peace operation.

Conceptual and theoretical framework, research hypotheses

For the theoretical framework, the main part of the work will be involved around the idea of effectiveness. One matter to be considered for the study of the effectiveness is that under different circumstances distinct outcomes may apply to the peacekeeping operations, and to define one mission as successful or failure a number of common criteria needs to be evaluated, which is why the idea of this project is to go through the work of many scholars and try to reach an agreement on the important variable, but also bearing in mind that this is a field that is still in development.

Taking that into consideration, it should be highlighted some of the criteria that mostly appeared in the works and show what should be considered to evaluate the success of an operation. First, one important element is the clarity of the mandate, as the higher the

clarity of the mandate, less space is giving to the possibility of manipulation of the mission and more restrictions are given, allowing for a more focused work (Diehl, 1988), and a clear mandate helps to analyse the goals of the operation plus see which ones were reached, helping to evaluate its effectiveness. (di Salvatore and Ruggeri, 2017). Second, neutrality is also a relevant issue, because the idea of a peacekeeping operation is not to take any sides or show different support to the parties involved in the conflict, so the more neutral a mission is, the bigger the chances for success. (Diehl, 1988). Furthermore, another criterion is the commitment of the actors involved in the mission, such as the United Nations itself and its deployed troops, plus some third parties that help the mission by supplying it financially or with logistical resources (Pushkina, 2006) and a reliable and good command in the mission, as a helpful element to the mission. (Garb, 2014). Aside from that, the locality of the mission is also an influential element, as related to the size of the mission, it is its level of monitoring, because the bigger the operation and the number of troops deployed, more difficult can be to supervise the mission, and leave the operation more vulnerable. (Diehl, 1988).

Within those criteria, is also important to mention the behaviour of the peacekeepers and analyse how the mission has been acting when it comes to reduction of human suffering, one of the UN's bigger objectives, which involves the civilians and vulnerable people that live in the region the mission has been deployed to. (Pushkina, 2006). Thus, that is where the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse comes in, and by looking through each mission's data, reports, possible testimonies, and news on the matter, it will evaluate its relationship to the effectiveness of the missions and what consequences it may bring to the actors involved in the mission, from the organisation itself to its deployed troops.

Methodologically speaking, this thesis wants to address this issue by comparing specific cases studies that have different outcomes so it can try to understand the frequency of the phenomenon. So, the main research hypotheses of this project, are that: the issue has a huge impact and can bring problems not just to the mission, but also to the institution and the countries that supported it; or that the level of impact is low and the missions can still continue without many obstacles.

Empirical data and analytical technique

The data collected for this thesis will be mostly from the United Nations' Conduct and Discipline Unit and reports from some Think Thanks, in where one can identify the number of allegations, trying to reach the reality as much as possible. In addition, articles from other

research, will be used as a base to find the variables that will help analyse the effectiveness of the chosen peace operations and the relation of this effectiveness of cases of sexual exploitation and abuse that happen within the missions.

The idea of the project is to do a case study research towards a comparative analysis on two United Nations peacekeeping operations, which are MONUSCO and MINUSMA. Those two missions were selected as they are all located in Africa, more specifically in the countries of Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali, and currently have different priorities for the stabilisation of its territories and are countries with similar characteristics. Furthermore, these are examples of cases that represent distinct levels of effectiveness and different numbers of reported cases on SEA within the operations and that is a way of analysing the common factors of those missions and see what affects most in each of them to try to reach a conclusion on the research question.

Planned thesis outline

- Introduction
- UN peace operations, effectiveness, and sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Theoretical and methodological framework
- Case study 1
- Case study 2
- Conclusions

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List of Abbreviations

ADF: Allied Democratic Forces

AFISMA: the African-led International Support Mission in Mali

AQIM: *Al-Qaida* in the Islamic Maghreb

AU: African Union

CMA: *Coordination des Mouvements de l'Azawad*

CNP: Congolese National Police

DDR: disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration

DPO: Department of Peace Operations

DRC: Democratic Republic of the Congo

ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States

FARDC: Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

FPIC : *Front patriotique et intégrationniste du Congo*

ISSSS: The International Security and Stabilisation Support Strategy

JF-G5S: Joint Force of the Group Five for Sahel

MDSF: Malian Defence and Security Forces

MINUSCA: United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic

MINUSMA: United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali.

MNLA: *Mouvement national pour la libération de l'Azawad*

MoHCDGEC: Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children

MONUC: United Nations Organisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

MONUSCO: United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

MUJAO : The *Mouvement pour l'unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest*

NGOs: Non-Governmental Organisations

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OHCHR: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

OIOS: Office of Internal Oversight Services

PKOs: Peacekeeping Operations

Quick Impact Projects (QIP)

RCD: *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie*

SEA: Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

TCCs: Troop-Contributing Countries

UCDP: Uppsala Conflict Data Program

UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC)

UN: United Nations

UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund

UNGA: United Nations General Assembly

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

UNMOGIP: United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan

UNOCC: United Nations Operation and Crisis Centre

UNP : United Nations Peacekeeping

UNSC: United Nations Security Council

UNTSO: United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation

URTEL: *l'Union des Radios et Télévisions Libres du Mali*

USA: United States of America

Introduction

The theme of this study is the occurrence of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) violations by the peacekeepers in the United Nations (UN) peace operations, focusing on two cases: the UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The idea to investigate the allegations of SEA in peace operations came because it is unfortunately common to all peace operations since the first ones deployed and are allegations against the peacekeepers themselves – individuals that are deployed to a country with a civilisation in a vulnerable situation and that have their lives threated in a daily basis. Instead, these individuals take advantage of the locals' vulnerabilities and use their position as a UN worker to exchange sexual encounters for food or money only to satisfy their needs. Then, as the data became more easily available and the high occurrence started to be mentioned in the international news, more space for scrutiny by outside actors was given, leading these peace operations to be questioned within the international community. Therefore, after noticing this situation, it would be interesting to understand if the number of SEA violations would in some extent affect the effectiveness of the missions and jeopardise their work in the host-country. Additionally, in the academic realm, what was found was many quantitative research on the number of SEA violations within the peace operations, asking why there is so much variation, and studies on the effectiveness of peace operations, however it is not common to find a study linking both subjects, SEA and effectiveness. Thus, this paper was brought together trying to see how these two subjects can relate and maybe add more insight into the existing literature.

The initial idea for this paper was to study three missions, the two previously mentioned plus MINUSCA, deployed in the Central African Republic. However, after some consideration, due to the complexity of the investigation and a scarcity of studies linking SEA violations to the effectiveness of UN peace keeping missions, I decided to focus on MONUSMO and MINUSMA for a clearer comparison. This was decided because both missions have different realities when it comes to occurrence of SEA violations and have other priorities, as well as having the majority of the staff coming from different troop-contributing countries. Thus, this study believes that having two cases with some

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divergencies between them can help broaden the spectrum of the link between SEA violations and the effectiveness of an operation.

Trying to answer the question of the extent of SEA cases' influence in the success of the mission, this paper used mostly the data available from the United Nations, as well as reports on the developments of the mission and the situation in the country and evaluations of the UN's work. Additionally, with the help of other studies, it put together some of the concepts related to peace operations and their success so it could focus on some aspects. At first, this paper brings the overall idea of its subject so it can introduce the reader to the situation. Secondly, it puts together important concepts for the development of this study, along with the methods used throughout the research. Then, the third and fourth chapters are dedicated to specific cases, to apply all it has been learned and identify the answer to the study's question. Finally, brings the conclusion of the study putting together the findings from both case studies.

In the first chapter, an introduction to the theme is done. The chapter highlights the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, bringing an overview of what has led the organisation to deploy such tools for international peace and security and a short historical background of their developments, since it was first used – with the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation in the Middle East in 1948. Then, it continues by explaining who these peacekeepers are and which are the standards of conducts they need to follow whilst deployed. This part shows that the UN expects high standards of professionalism and behaviour from the peacekeepers, as they are deployed to dangerous areas – that is why the organisation created many documents stressing what is their role and how they should behave. Later, the chapter brings a general overview of sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations' missions – mentioning the first missions where these cases were recorded – and briefly mentions the UN tools to tackle the issue. The last part of the first chapter mentions the idea of effectiveness and the complexity it comes with, as there is no official understanding of what the term entails and how it should be measured.

The second chapter is the theoretical and methodological part of this paper. In its first part, it puts together the criteria for effectiveness it found as most relevant for the research – explaining them and identifying how they can be measured. For the application of the analysis, this study used the current mandate of the missions as its basis and where the criteria were applied to understand the current level of effectiveness the mission has now. In

the second part, the chapter explores the concept of sexual exploitation and abuse and what can influence for this issue to occur. Also, it further explains SEA in UN peace operations, showing the concepts the organisation created for the analysis of the data reported and some general numbers of previous years in the UN. Later, it brings the other three factors that are going to be analysed, to a smaller extent, in the case studies – nature of the conflict, commitment of the parties, and the interests of the major powers – so a comparison can be made between their influence and SEA violations by peacekeepers' influence in the effectiveness of the missions. Finally, mentions the methodological framework for this study.

The last part of this paper is composed of two chapters in which the chosen UN peace operations are studied. The first case study is on the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Republic of Mali – the one with one of the lowest numbers of SEA violations by peacekeepers ever recorded – and brings a thorough analysis of the mission. The first part of the chapter consists of the facts about MINUSMA, mentioning the current mandate of the mission and its strategic priorities, and its current figures – its location, the size of its personnel and more specific characteristics. The second part is where the effectiveness of MINUSMA is analysed, looking through the priorities stipulated by the UNSC and linking the latest developments in the country to the tasks the mission has, to fulfil such priorities – so it can classify in which parts MINUSMA has achieved success and in which parts has failed. Then, there is an analysis on the effectiveness of sexual exploitation and abuse, that is, the numbers of SEA related to MINUSMA and an interpretation of those numbers. After, to close this section of the part, this paper tries to see what the link between the effectiveness of MINUSMA and SEA occurrence is. In the fourth section of the chapter, a brief analysis is made on the other factors mentioned previously and how they affect MINUSMA so the chapter can be finalised with a comparison between the four factors and a summary of its findings. The fourth and last chapter of this study is dedicated to the UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo – one of the missions with the highest number of SEA allegations. This chapter has the same structure of the first case study – going first through the facts about the mission, the effectiveness of the mission, the effect of sexual exploitation and abuse, and of the other factors – to finish with the findings related to MONUSCO. Finally, to sum up the research, this paper brings the final considerations to this study, putting together the findings from both case studies and which conclusion this study reached.

Chapter 1. UN peace operations, their effectiveness, and sexual exploitation and abuse.

The idea with this first chapter is to introduce the important subjects of this study. It starts by exploring what is a United Nations peacekeeping operation and showing a part of their history, highlighting some of the first missions deployed and the developments through the years of how the UN has adapted to each phase of the international system – for instance, before and after the Cold War. Then, introduces the idea of a peacekeepers and what are the standards of conduct they should follow once they are deployed to the missions. Continuing, it introduces the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse violations into the UN peace operations and what consequences the perpetrators could face when committing such violations. In the last part, explores what the literature on peace operations wants to mean when uses the term "effectiveness", putting together some of the most shared thoughts on peace operations and their effectiveness.

1.1 United Nations Peacekeeping Operations

As defined in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines, also known as Capstone Doctrine (2008, p. 18), peacekeeping is "a technique designed to preserve the peace, however fragile, where fighting has been halted, and to assist in implementing agreements achieved by the peacemakers". Although the Charter of the United Nations does not clearly state the use of peacekeeping operations (PKOs), it is one of many activities undertaken by the organisation to maintain peace and security in the international environment.

The creation of peacekeeping came from the UN after the failure of the collective security system foreseen in its Charter. To sustain relevance in the area of peace and security, the organisation introduced new mechanisms, such as authorisation in the Security Council for when a coalition of member states would be willing to engage in enforcement actions (Tsagourias, 2007). Nevertheless, in its Principles and Guidelines (2008), the organisation mentions that even though peacekeeping missions are used as support to implement a cease-fire or peace agreement, they occasionally play an active role in peace-making and might get involved in initial peacebuilding actions. The document also emphasizes that, when authorised by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), these missions may use force at the tactical level as a self-defence act (DPO, 2008, p.19). In the end, these mechanisms along

with conflict prevention are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, and they should be understood and applied together for efficient and effective outcomes.

Peacekeeping was firstly used as tool in 1948, when the organisation decided to deploy military observers to the Middle East (DPO, 2008), creating the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) (United Nations, 2021a). That began a series of 'traditional' peacekeeping operations which focused on impartiality, light armament, and peacekeeping by consent (Gizelis et al, 2018, p.4). Additionally, the 'traditional' missions were essentially military, involving observation, monitoring and reporting, overseeing cease-fire, and assist in means of verification (DPO, 2008, p.21) to create conditions for a lasting settlement. Throughout the years, these operations evolved into a 'multidimensional' level, working together with police and civilian elements to reach sustainable peace. These 'multidimensional' operations focus on the creation of a secure and stable environment, by helping strengthening the state's ability to provide security, facilitate the political process through national dialogue and promotion of reconciliation, assist the establishment of legitimate institutions of governance, and present a framework of coherent and coordinated activities for the international actors involved in the deployed missions. (DPO, 2008). Nonetheless, these missions are not stagnant, as the United Nations frequently expands operations' mandates, shifting their goals, tasks, and responsibilities. (Gizelis et al, 2018)

1.1.1. Brief history of United Nations peacekeeping operations

As mentioned earlier, the first deployed missions began in the end of the 1940s when they consisted of unarmed military observers and light-armed troops for means of support with the overall idea of resolving conflict by peaceful means. The very first operation, the UNTSO in the Middle East had the role to monitor the Armistice Agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbours (United Nations, 2021a). Another early mission is the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) also created to monitor and observe the region in question. Both missions, UNMOGIP and UNTSO, even until today have had no considerable changes to their mandates. During the first period of PKOs, other notable missions were the First UN Emergency Force, deployed in 1959 to address the crisis in the Suez Canal, which is the first armed mission created by the organisation, and the UN Operation in the Congo, stationed in 1960 and the first in large scale, as involved almost 20,000 military personnel, and showed the risks of an operation in a war-torn area. (United Nations, 2021a). During the 1960s and 1970s, these missions started to be deployed to even more areas of the globe, such

as the Dominican Republic, West New Guinea, Yemen, Cyprus, and Lebanon, and varied between short- and long-terms (United Nations, 2021 a).

In the Cold War period, just 14 missions were authorised by the UN Security Council, which were linked to decolonisation and were used as tool to manage the phenomenon of globalisation of the sovereign states (Bellamy, 2010). One of the reasons that led to the short number of authorisations was the reduced level of consensus that existed (Bellamy, 2010) between the Permanent Five countries of the UNSC with France, the United Kingdom, and the United States in one side and the Soviet Union, and China in the other. Their veto power was mostly used during the Cold War, especially by the Soviet Union and China. The tensions within the UN Security Council got stronger between 1979 and 1988, leading to no new implementations of peace operations as most of the emerging conflicts were of interest to the superpowers and most of the ongoing conflicts were already covered, along with dissatisfaction with the results of some of the deployed operations (Klosek, 2021, slide 11).

Within the first years after the end of the Cold War, there was a shift in the strategic context of the operations, leading the Security Council to authorize, between 1989 and 1994, twenty new missions, larger in size and number of personnel, which went from 11,000 to 75,000 (Gizelis et al, 2018). Due to the end of the Soviet Union, the opening of prior "spheres of influences", and the increase in demand for peacekeeping operations, the United States and Russia embraced multilateralism (Klosek, 2021, slide 12); China adopted a more positive stance towards peace operations; and with the acceleration of democratisation and spread of human rights, participation on missions looked more attractive to governments (Bellamy, 2010). It was around that period that PKOs changed from a traditional character to a multidimensional one, deploying not just military personnel but also police and civilians, such as administrators, legal experts, human rights monitors, and others. Additionally, the peacekeeping operations, frequently involved in interstate conflicts, started to be applied to intrastate conflicts and civil wars. Some of the operations deployed were the UN Angola Verification Mission I, UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia, and UN Transition Assistance Group in Namibia. (United Nations, 2021a).

However, during the mid-1990s, these operations had a setback as they were established in areas with serious ongoing conflicts. Moreover, as the mandates of these missions were getting more ambitious, the resources provided by the UN member states were not being sufficient. As example, the UN Angola Verification Mission II faced many issues

as it did not have the same level of cooperation from the belligerents as the previous mission and could not held up fights that emerged after the elections, and had to withdrawal from the country (Bellamy, 2010). Also, the missions established in the former Yugoslavia (UN Protection Force) and Rwanda (UN Assistance Mission) were heavily criticized, as it seemed they did not have robust mandates and adequate resources, leading to continuous hostilities and significant number of civilian casualties. These circumstances led the UNSC limit authorisation for new operations, but at the end of the decade as many crises emerged in other areas, the international community recognised the important role of the United Nations Peacekeeping operations. (United Nations, 2021a)

The following decade came with an increased interest in humanitarianism, especially in neighbouring areas, the merge of the international development and security agendas, and more active participation of regional institutions, which had some help from the United Nations (Bellamy et al, 2010). Throughout the following years, after analysing the challenges and willing to learn from the mistakes of previous missions, the United Nations brought some reforms to these operations, which include new doctrines, institutions, and procedures (Bellamy et al, 2010), aiming towards a more effective management and stronger capacity to sustain field operations. From that, the new missions faced more complex settings and tasks, through operations such as the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, with the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, and the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor, in process of independence from Indonesia. What followed was a decade of new PKOs deployed to remote and volatile areas, especially in Africa, demanding bigger and more expensive missions (United Nations, 2021a).

Since its beginning, the Security Council of the UN has authorised the deployment of more than 70 peacekeeping operations and more than 120 countries have supplied personnel to the operations (United Nations, 2021a), as the United Nations does not have its own standing army (Bellamy et al, 2010). Now, the United Nations Peacekeeping is composed of approximately 110,000 personnel within twelve missions around the world, showing that after reaching consolidation, the numbers started declining and many missions have been terminated (United Nations, 2021b). Just in Africa, there are six ongoing missions, two of which will be analysed in this study: UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).

1.1.2. Peacekeepers

According to the United Nations (2021c), peacekeepers are a range of personnel of the civilian, military, and police areas. Their role and responsibility vary from monitoring missions to the protection of civilian and human rights, and the promotion of rule of law, evolving with the complexity of the peacekeeping operations. Most often, peacekeepers are also referred to as "blue helmets", as the most significant characteristic of their uniforms is a United Nations' blue helmet, making it easier to identify a mission's personnel. One important note is that the selected personnel are provided to the United Nations by their national country, meaning they are first a member of their national services and seconded a UN workforce (United Nations, 2021c). These are the so-called troop-contributing countries (TCCs) and recent data from the UN (2021d) has shown that the countries that most contribute with personnel as of January 2021 are Bangladesh, with 6,711 personnel, followed by Rwanda, with 6,378, and Ethiopia, with 6,297.

Due to the sensitive environment the peacekeeping operations are usually deployed to, these personnel should have a thorough comprehension of international humanitarian law's principals and rules and be able to observe them in situations where they are applicable (DPO, 2008, p.15). Therefore, they require special training to guarantee they have the expertise, skills, and attitude to face any possible situation. These trainings range from pre-deployment, covering basic principles, guidelines, and policies determined by the United Nations to more specific trainings, on issues such as sexual exploitation and abuse (United Nations, 2021 c). And, due to the high turnover level within the missions, they need to be given every time new peacekeepers arrive, for the mission to keep its integrity and the peacekeepers to not breach their conduct.

1.1.3. Standards of conducts for United Nations' peacekeepers

As briefly mentioned previously, peacekeepers are expected to have a high level of professional and disciplinary behaviour to properly conduct the peacekeeping operation they are deployed to. From that, the organisation created many documents addressing standards of conducts the peacekeepers should follow. For instance, in the Secretary-General's Bulletin Observance by United Nations Forces of International Humanitarian Law (1999) is stressed that "… the United Nations undertakes to ensure that the force shall conduct its operations with full respect for the principles and rules of the general conventions applicable to the conduct of military personnel" (p.1). Furthermore, in its different sections the Bulletin (1999) also mentions the possibility of prosecution in case of violation of international humanitarian

law, the ways of protection of the civilian population, the methods and means of combat (highlighting the limitations), and how to proceed towards detained people.

On the continuous effort to ensure proper conduct, the organisation created the United Nations Peacekeeping: Principles and Guidelines (2008), to consolidate what should be the scope, and nature of the peace operations led by the institution. Regarding the conduct of peacekeepers, this document highlights that not just the mission's mandate should be impartial, but also the deployed personnel when leading with the parties of the conflict. However, also indicates that for a proper execution of the mission's mandate, peacekeepers should not be neutral or be inactive in case one of the parties acts against the peace process. Another important detail is that, much like the mission, the peacekeepers are only allowed to use force in a situation of self-defence or defence of the mandate after the UNSC authorises it. (DPO, 2008, p.34)

Additionally, the UN has generated many other policy documents, whether for all deployed personnel or directed to the uniformed or the civilian personnel. For instance, the policy on Accountability for Conduct and Discipline in Field Missions (2015) brings a framework to warrant accountability for the conduct of peacekeepers. Namely, sets the responsibilities and roles of the personnel involved in the peace operation, as well as the accountability processes related to their category, also in case of misconduct from any personnel. In more specific cases, the UN has addressed the blue helmets with Ten Rules of Personal Conduct (1998), including behaviours such as respect the host country's culture and law; to not indulge in immoral acts, especially physical or psychological abuse; treat the locals respectively; and properly care and account for the mission's equipment. Additionally, following the rule on not engage in acts of violence, the organisation established the Secretary-General Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (2003). This Bulletin (2003) highlights the prohibition of such acts, the obligations set to the blue helmets, the responsibilities of the head of department or mission to prevent such violations to happen, and the involvement of national authorities in case criminal prosecutions should be followed. Besides, the missions themselves can create codes of conduct specifics to the mission itself. (United Nations, 2021e)

1.2. Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in United Nations' Missions

As much as the organisation has the methods and means to stop the violations of international humanitarian law from happening, peacekeepers still commit such acts. That is an issue for

the institution because these peacekeepers are in torn-apart areas where the vulnerable citizens would look at them for protection, but by violating human rights they put into question the credibility of the peace operations.

At first, many reports highlighted the proliferation of brothels and prostitution with the arrival of peacekeepers to the zones in conflict, the involvement in women trafficking and sexual assault (Smith, 2017, p.405). The first UN mission to have records of sexual exploitation and abuse was the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia, between 1992 and 1993. Nonetheless, back them the head of the mission considered those as men's natural behaviour (Westendorf and Searle, 2017), meaning no accountability and consequences were addressed. A change was seen in the early 2000s, when there was an emergence of publications on the issue in the international media, bringing concerns to the organisation (Grady, 2010). Furthermore, an issue involving the discrepancies on the number of cases between the operations is their under-reporting. Even though under-reporting does not explain all the variation (Nordås and Rustad, 2013), it does make it more difficult for the researchers to reach a consensus on the circumstances that lead acts of sexual exploitation and abuse to happen in missions.

1.2.1 Consequences of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) allegations

As previously mentioned, allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, and other violations of international humanitarian law break the civilians' trust on the peacekeepers. With the reports made public, this can escalate to the international community, bringing into question the efficacy and reliability of the peace operations managed by the United Nations. Moreover, because of the sensitive subject that is sexual exploitation and abuse, matters of accountability and measures to try to stop them are not properly assured. For the countries that contribute with the troops, by prosecuting their nationals, these cases will be public and that might lead the United Nations to stop asking this country to contribute with personnel, what can be harmful for the nation (Smith, 2017). Furthermore, once these allegations are put forward, some of the organisation's responses such as repatriation of the unit or national personnel can be costly, as it would involve deploying a new unit or new peacekeepers, which takes time and money (Smith, 2017). Then, that does not motivate the institution to or country responsible to take significant actions against it. Therefore, sexual exploitation and abuse allegations bring consequences to every actor involved in the peacekeeping operations. Besides, as it is not a one-time issue, such violations can affect the outcome of the mission

escalating to the point that previous efforts on bringing peace may not be enough for the torn-apart countries.

1.3. What Can be Meant by "Effectiveness"

To measure the effectiveness of a peace operation is a complex task, as there is no official agreement between researchers on which features are indicators of efficiency. Besides, as peacekeeping operations evolved over the decades, getting more complex, it is difficult to do comparisons between some operations (Diehl and Druckman, 2010). Overall, when one aims to analyse a mission's effectiveness, wants to evaluate its performance, examine if it has been managing to promote and keep the peace in the territory it is deployed. (Di Salvatore and Ruggeri, 2017). For instance, one can identify the effectiveness of a mission by looking at its mandate, understanding its propositions and objectives, to later analyse the steps the mission has been taking and study the mission and its personnel to capture what has and has not been reached. Moreover, one can observe the means of the mission to reach its objectives, such as its mediation, observer groups, and emergency deployments. (Di Salvatore and Ruggeri, 2017, p.14).

Back in 1993, Diehl was one of the first to write on what can characterise a mission as successful. The two criteria he uses in his book are the limitation of armed conflict and promotion of conflict resolution. Then, he suggested that a mission should be considered effective if there was consent from the parties; peacekeepers would only use force in self-defence and embrace neutrality; and the conflict being addressed is an interstate conflict (Garb, 2014), meaning war between two or more states (Council on Foreign Relations, 2021). Other authors also started sharing their findings, and Duane Bratt, for example, used as criteria for effectiveness the following: mandate performance; if the mission facilitated a conflict resolution; if the operation contained the conflict; and limitation of casualties (Garb, 2014, p.47).

Furthermore, it is not a simple task to determine if the goals for the mission have been achieved as desired. Whether there is a set of preferences and regardless of the operational standard chosen, practical issues will emerge when trying to get accurate information in a timely manner on the outcomes of the peace operation (Diehl and Druckman, 2010). For Diehl and Druckman (2010, p.3), for a first analyses on peacekeeping, one should look also to the extent of cooperation of the host country, the type of conflict is happening in the territory, the features of the conflict environment, and to the improvement of the local

population's lives. Besides, when looking at short- and long-term impacts of a mission, one should consider that, as much as they might relate, long-terms are more difficult to assess as they may not be a direct consequence of the mission's actions (Druckman and Stern, 1997).

Moreover, the evaluation of effectiveness also depends on the extent of the measures used to assess effectiveness. That is to say that, having vague or weak specification of standards on effectiveness will produce flawed findings. Plus, by not knowing what constitutes effectiveness, it makes difficult to decide which conditions lead to such effectiveness. Then, studies that use different measures of effectiveness might reach distinct, or even opposite, conclusions on same peace operations. Besides, it should be also taken into consideration that decisionmakers differ in their goals, so it is not appropriate to draw conclusions on only one set of standards (Diehl and Druckman, 2010). Regarding the peacekeepers, researchers need to take into consideration that they are susceptible to situations outside of their control that can happen in the mission. Namely, some limitations can be international events, resources available, and restrictions on their behaviour (Druckman and Stern, 1997). Once these limitations are also considered, the analysis of a mission might not be strongly affected and would help reach proper conclusions on a mission's effectiveness.

As mentioned, studies on peace operations' effectiveness, have been present in academia since the 1990s, each bringing a characteristic of their own, and these studies are getting even more space since the 2000s. Pushkina (2006), for instance, beyond some of the criteria mentioned, also considered important for the evaluation to analyse whether the mission promoted conflict resolution and prevented the conflict to spread beyond the host country's borders. Later, Pushkina (2006), analysed other factors which could or not influence the outcome of the operations. Some of these to be highlighted were the commitment of the parties involved in resolving the conflict, the interference of third parties, and the longevity of the mission. After putting together these and other factors, Pushkina analysed whether the missions were successful, partially successful, or a failure.

In continuous effort to enhance the capabilities of its peace operations, the United Nations in its Principles and Guidelines (2008) has also addressed what it believes to be the indicators of an effective mission. To start, the organisation mentions its core principles, which are the consent of the parties, impartiality, and use of force only in self-defence. Furthermore, it mentions that an operation should have credibility and legitimacy, especially

from the perspective of the civilians; and promote local and national ownership, to help achieve sustainable peace. Some of the aspects to help the operation to be effective involve serious commitment to the effort of achieving peace, clear and achievable mandates along with fitting resources, a UN integrated approach, alongside regional and neighbouring actors, and sensitivity towards the local population, as well as professional behaviour from the peacekeepers deployed. (Garb, 2014)

Later, in 2010, Jaïr van der Lijn also brought a piece on the subject of effectiveness. To him, the major criterion for such indication is the mission's contribution to durable peace(Garb, 2014, p.49). Additionally, he says that other indications are the level of willingness of the parties to cooperate on its implementation; the mission brings a sufficient sense of security to the parties; if the operation pays great attention to the causes of the conflict; its time of deployment; the operation provides "ownership"; its policy tools are coordinated not just within the mission, but also externally; and other criteria. (Garb, 2014, p.49-50)

In the end, as much as the United Nations peace operations follow some frameworks and standards stipulated by the organisation, each has some characteristic of their own. For example, there is a variety of dimensions such as disarmament, the negotiation progress, implementation of agreements, and functioning of domestic systems which will vary within the missions (Diehl and Druckman, 2010). Therefore, not all peacekeeping operations should be analysed by the same factors. Nevertheless, despite of the variety of criteria suggested, one can see that some of the criteria match or have a similar logic. This helps researchers to reach somewhat similar considerations on what can be meant by effectiveness of peace operation.

Chapter 2. Theoretical and Methodological Framework

The aim of this chapter is to bring the theoretical view on the subject of effectiveness. Also, it further explores the application of effectiveness into the peace operations organised by the United Nations, showing the criteria used to categorise the work of the missions. Furthermore, it will present the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse with more depth, illustrating with some data released by the United Nations over the last years. After, it brings some understanding of the other factors that are studied in this paper, which are later compared with sexual exploitation and abuse. Finally, this chapter mentions the methodology of this study throughout its research and findings.

2.1 What are the criteria for "Effectiveness"?

Taking into consideration the works of the authors mentioned in the previous chapter on the section "what can be meant by effectiveness", this section will further explain the criteria and put them together. Noteworthy, as there is no official or common acknowledged definition for "effectiveness", what this section will bring is a more detailed look on some of the criteria that are common in the literature and explain them.

Primarily, for the UN, a mission needs to follow its three core principles: the consent of the parties; impartiality; and the use force only in self-defence. Consent means that for an operation to be deployed to a region, all parties to the conflict need to accept its presence, which gives the mission freedom of action to carry out what has been established on its mandate (Tsagourias, 2007). However, as missions' mandates are getting more robust and missions are getting more complex, for peace operations created under Chapter VII of the UN Charter (1945), on "Action with respect to the threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression" (p.9), consent is not a condition for their deployment. On impartiality, the concept is that the mandate should be implemented without favouritism or prejudice towards any of the parties, but the peacekeepers should not be neutral when executing the mandate of the mission (DPO, 2008, p.33). And on the principle on the use of force only for self-defence is to guarantee peacekeepers will use force only when necessary so the peace process is not disrupted (DPO, 2008, p.34), which later, by the Brahimi Report, was extended to indicate the defence of the mission (Tsagourias, 2007, p. 473). Thus, these principles are indirectly related to the effectiveness of a mission, as by missing one, it could impact the way the mission is handled by the actors involved in it.

At the first stages of evaluation, a significant criterion to identify effectiveness is looking through the mandate of the mission, which has been highlighted by authors such as Pushkina (2006), and by Diehl (1998) and analyse the ability of the mission in fulfilling its mandate. The mandate is where the UN Security Council will state what are the priorities of the mission and what are its objectives. For instance, a mission can have in its mandate civilians' protection, supporting of the election process and the transition of power, helping the stabilisation of a country, through its domestic institutions, or can be just a monitoring mission to observe the aftermath of conflict, and many others. Besides, for the period that the mission is deployed, the priorities can change according to the needs of the host-country or phase the mission is at, in which can evaluate which new priorities should be given. Noteworthy, the creation of a clear, appropriate, and achievable mandate to the situation being evaluated is a key factor (van der Lijn, 2009), as an effort to avoid vague objectives and instructions that may jeopardise the mission. According to Tsagourias (2007, p.481), a clear mandate is one that understands the local needs, responds to the expectations of the parties, and lessen their fears, which are more likely to gain public support; and allows the host-and troop-contributing countries to abide by clear rules of engagement. In this study, the analysis of the mandate of both missions is taken as the basis and the other criteria mentioned bellow are analysed within the tasks and he mandate of the missions. Thus, by identifying the mandate and studying the current developments of a mission and see which actions has the mission been taken, will help one to assert whether the mission is achieving success.

Furthermore, other important criteria for effectiveness are: to analyse the improvement of the civilians' lives with the mission's deployment, as mentioned by Pushkina (2006) and Diehl and Druckman (2010); and the limitation of casualties, meaning identify if the presence of the uniformed personnel helped decrease the number of deaths due to the conflicts in the region (Garb, 2014). Here, one could analyse the behaviour of the peacekeepers, the promotion of national and local ownership by the mission, to build the trust of the actors on the mission (DPO, 2008), and what actions has the mission been taking to support the population during conflict and on their protection. Besides, one can look at how economically and socially affected the civilians were whilst the mission was ongoing and after its departure. With the arrival of peacekeepers, the dynamics of the country change, that is the economy starts to evolve around the peacekeepers wants and needs, urging the locals to adapt to the new reality. That situation leads to a new wave of jobs in the informal sector

such as service, private security, and sex workers who may not find jobs as easily once the mission is gone, bringing issues to the local economy (Jennings, 2014). Besides, another indication of the improvement of civilians' lives is to see the data on the number of displaced people and in need of humanitarian assistance and compare with previous years, and the difference can be a clear indication on how the civilians are being affected by the presence of the peacekeepers.

One important point on the evaluation of effectiveness is to identify whether the operation has managed to contain the conflict, especially within the host-country's border, as mentioned by Pushkina (2006), and decrease its intensity (Salvatore and Ruggeri, 2017). This criterion is linked to the fact that peacekeepers are usually deployed after an agreement on a ceasefire, so their initial role is to maintain the ceasefire in place and reach sustainable peace (Pushkina, 2006). Pushkina also mentions that the analysis of this criterion should follow the mission's ability in supressing the violent crashes between the parties and maintain the conflict intrastate and is helping to decrease intracommunity tensions, as well as helping the process of disarmament. Another important factor, as mentioned, is to maintain the conflict within the borders of the host-state, to ensure regional security. For this situation, the analysis should entail the extent of integrity kept in the neighbouring countries, because of refugee flows and diaspora populations (Pushkina, 2006). A follow-up criterion to conflict containment is whether the peace operation has had the ability to strengthen peace processes (Salvatore and Ruggeri, 2017). That is, analyse the peace-making capabilities of the mission, through call for actions, negotiations, and mediations, between the parties and communication with the local communities. As well, is interesting to note the behaviour of the parties to the conflict, in an effort to see if the mission has managed to change their behaviour towards more peaceful actions. As noted by Salvatore and Ruggeri (2017), these criteria are analysed as an immediate outcome of the actions taken by the mission, meaning in the short-term, and can be seen in the quarterly reports created by the Secretary-General on the recent developments of the mission and the situation in the host-country.

At last, there are two characteristics brought by the United Nations which are, in a lower level, also important for the effectiveness of a peace operation. The first, legitimacy, is really impacted by the way in which a mission is conducted, and it means that a mission to be effective needs to be valid. The firmness and fairness of the execution of its mandate, along with its caution on the use of force, and the discipline of its personnel – especially towards

the host-country's culture, institutions, and law - are all important factors for a mission to keep its legitimacy, particularly through the eyes of the local population. The second is credibility, which is the reflection of the belief the international and the local community have on the ability of the operation to achieve its mandate and a function of the capabilities of the personnel to meet the expectations (DPO, 2008). This means that credibility is linked to the way the local population reacts to the mission, what they think about it.

2.2 The Issue of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Due to the complexity of the deployment of a mission, many factors can influence on the criteria mentioned above and on the positive or negative outcome of a peace operation, which some will be highlighted here. Noteworthy, this range of factors would involve not just the parties to the conflict, but also the people affected by it, the personnel deployed to the mission, and the institutions (the UN, regional, or NGOs) that are working on, or for, the operation. This study focus is on the issue of SEA, within peacekeepers' conduct, and its probability of interfering a mission's success. In many of its documents, such as Principles and Guidelines (2008), the UN stresses that a good and professional behaviour is an essential part of the mission. Some of the premises for the personnel of the peace operations are that they should protect human rights and follow international humanitarian law. In other words, they are deployed to help a country rebuild a secure and stable environment and facilitate political processes (DPO, 2008). The United Nations also emphasizes the need of mandatory and ongoing trainings, especially for the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse, as there is a significant level of turnover in peace operations (DPO, 2008). Sexual Exploitation and Abuse was chosen because since the first cases appeared in the mission in Cambodia in 1993, reports and allegations of such violence being committed by peacekeepers have increased and are a continuous matter within peace operations, which should not be the case as the peacekeepers are deployed to vulnerable areas to bring security to the territory and its population. After explaining SEA, this chapter will also bring other factors that might influence a mission's effectiveness, to later analyse the extent of their influence.

2.2.1 Definition of sexual exploitation and abuse

As this study focuses on the United Nations peacekeeping operations, the definition to be considered is the one defined by the organisation in the Bulletin from the Secretary-General from 2004, which states sexual exploitation and abuse as "any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not

limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another" (p. 2). Additionally, sexual abuse is described as "the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions". (United Nations General Assembly, 2004, p. 2).

On that note, SEA has a significant range, as it encompasses opportunistic sexual abuse, transactional sex, networked sexual exploitation, and planned, sadistic attacks, driven by a variety of factors. Sexual abuse, for instance, includes sexual assault and rape, and is generally seen as 'practice of war' (Westendorf and Searle, 2017, p. 368). The difference from those to planned, sadistic attacks is that the former is more related to opportunistic ways, and the latter is actually planned and coordinated. Transactional sex, the most common in SEA allegations, includes exchanging sex for goods and services, such as food, money, and jobs. What characterizes this type of SEA is that such negotiations happen in an environment of extreme deprivation, desperation, and insecurity, and are not considered necessarily criminal unless children are involved. On the other hand, networked sexual exploitation is of more serious concern, as the peacekeepers use prostitutes, get involved in sex trafficking, and purchase sex slaves, meaning they might not just interact with the women, but they also profit from such criminal activities (Westendorf and Searle, 2017, p.373). After the first allegations in the mission in Cambodia, what followed was the emergence of allegations in the other missions, located in places such Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Haiti, Liberia, Timor-Leste and others (Höghammar, 2015). The violations included cases of rape, forced prostitution, sexual abuse of children, trafficking to name just a few, and the reports would involve all types of UN peacekeeping personnel (Höghammar, 2015).

2.2.2 Factors for SEA occurrence

As the cope and mandate of the UN missions differ as well as their location and from which TCC the personnel is from, many aspects can influence for SEA allegations to be linked more to one mission than to another. A first aspect, identified by Nordås and Rustad (2013), is the size of the mission in number of troops on the ground, meaning that the larger the mission is, more likely such violations will be reported. One hypothesis is that the stronger a country's domestic rule of law is, higher are the chances to ensure the protection of rights and liberties in its territory, and that it will have clearly defined mechanisms for when such rights are breached (Rodriguez and Kinne, 2019, p.630). In the same lines as a strong rule of law,

another hypothesis is that the freer the press of a host-country or TCC is, less likely SEA cases might happen (Rodriguez and Kinne, 2019, p.630). This is due the fact that the agenda-setting power of the press allows it to increase public awareness on cases of violations of human rights happening within a peace operation and the possibility of such violations receiving a formal response (Kinne and Rodriguez, 2019), which can bring bad press to the actors involved in the operation, especially the United Nations. Another factor that might influence the number of cases of violations in a mission is the gender gap within the troop-contributing countries, because the hypothesis is that the greater the inequality between genders is, most possibly the blue helmets of that country will mistreat women. (Jennings, 2015). Besides, what might occur is that some peacekeepers would take advantage of the vulnerable situations the civilians of the host country are going through, they offer food and other goods in exchange of sexual favours (Nordås and Rustad, 2013), in a sort of abuse of power as they are the ones in uniforms.

An important factor related to their occurrence is the level of economic development of the host-country. That is, the hypothesis here is that the poorer a country is, more likely SEA will happen (Nordås and Rustad, 2013, p.530). This can be identified, for instance, in missions where has been established a "peacekeeping economy" (Nordås and Rustad, 2013). Such economies, as highlighted by Jennings (2010, p.231), encompass a variety of industries and services, involving skilled to unskilled formal and informal jobs aimed at the needs and interests of the international audience, in which the sex industry is the one where is more affected. Besides, in conflict environments, women turn into the breadwinners of their households, as the men go fight in the conflict, and the sex industry is more often advertised as a strategy of survival. Consequently, in the sex industry, women and girls are the ones mostly involved in it, especially by providing the sex work as prostitutes, or in exchange of money, food, and other goods, or to provide more for the family engaging in relationships with the peacekeepers whilst they are deployed (Jennings, 2010), which makes them more susceptible to suffer sexual exploitation and abuse.

In contrast, recent studies have linked the presence of women in the military, police, and civilian personnel deployed to the decrease on the number of SEA occurrences. The presence of women in peacekeeping mission it has been growing significantly, as most recent data from the United Nations indicates that women currently form 6.6% of all uniformed personnel (United Nations, 2021f). The hypothesis brought up by the presence of

female peacekeepers is that it might contribute to lower levels of sexual exploitation and abuse (Mullin, 2019). Furthermore, a common though in the peacekeeping community is that women peacekeepers would also help the locals to build stronger trust on the peace operation, also enhancing support to the community as they could be a bridge, i.e., in societies where women are not allowed to speak to other men (United Nations, 2021f). Besides, it is believed it would also decrease the militarised masculinity and patriarchy often found within peacekeepers groups that cultivate misconduct, as their presence could discourage male peacekeepers from taking part in such violations because women peacekeepers would be more likely to report it (Karim and Beardsley, 2015), and give more opportunities for local women to also report and increase the exposure of such behaviour. (Nordås and Rustad, 2013).

2.2.3. SEA in United Nations operations

As stated before, this issue is present on the UN operations since the beginning of the 1990s. For instance, in the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), with the arrival of peacekeepers to the country, the number of prostitutes rose from 6,000 to 25,000, in 1993. In the mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in 1995, what arose was the trafficking of women and girls to work as sex slaves in brothels frequented by personnel of the mission. In the missions in Liberia and Sierra Leone, for instance, reports emerged on peacekeepers abusing and exploiting local women and girls that lived in refugee camps (Westendorf and Searle, 2017). Through the years, SEA allegations kept rising in the missions and, now-a-days, it is difficult for such violations not to happen in the missions, but there is a variation from one operation to another, as it will be shown in this section.

Before the UN gave easier access to numbers for such violations through is websites, the cases would be revealed in a yearly report or bulletin in the General Assembly gathering information on the violations reported to all the organisation's departments. In this paper, the interesting data is related to the numbers reported by the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) on such violations. Noteworthy is that in these reports, the UN highlights that "is aware that the data gathered on cases of sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by personnel affiliated with the United Nations may not reflect the true extent of these deplorable incidents" (UNGA, 2003, p.2). This indicates that the numbers available bring an idea on how often SEA can happen in missions, but do not show the real occurrence, which most researchers believe happen in even bigger numbers.

To study the data, there are important concepts related to SEA defined by the organisation. As such, the cases reported to the UN are at first considered allegations, which means they are "uncorroborated information pointing to the possible occurrence of misconduct" and "can implicate one or more alleged perpetrators, and it can involve one or more victims" (DPO, 2021c, para.1), which in the case of sufficient information is provided, further investigation is held. For the organisation, victims are both the persons who were sexually exploited and abused by UN peacekeepers and the complainants who have reported an allegation (DPO, 2021b). The perpetrators, in the data, are divided by type of personnel, which are: "military – members of military contingent, staff officers, and military liaison officers and observers; police – members of formed police units, UN police officers, and personnel provided by government; and civilians – who are international and national staff members, UN volunteers, consultants, and contractors" (DPO, 2021c, para.2). And the investigation outcome is divided in four categories which are: "substantiated – an allegation proven through investigation; unsubstantiated – an allegation that was disproven or did not have enough evidence to be proven; pending – an investigation that has not started yet; and others – allegations recorded as for information or UN review" (DPO, 2021h, para.4).

For instance, in the bulletin showing the data from 2003, the DPO reported only 38 cases, in which by the time of the bulletin 14 were still with an ongoing investigation, and the other 24 involved civilian or military personnel (UNGA, 2004). In the following year, the bulletin brought that the number of allegations from the DPO rose to 105, which implicated uniformed and ununiformed personnel and 45% of the allegations involved sex with minors and 72 were only from the UN mission in the DRC (UNSC, 2005). Additionally, the data shows that from 2007 until 2020 there were 777 allegations, which implicated 1,202 perpetrators, them being any category of personnel involved in the missions (DPO, 2021c). The same disparity can be identified when looking at the data on the victims of these allegations, as the UN shows that the 777 allegations made involved 1,094 victims, most of them being adults but there were also a considerable number of allegations involving underage civilians. (DPO, 2021b)

When looking at more recent data, released by the United Nations, and putting separately the twelve missions that were still ongoing in 2020, it is possible to see that the significant variation is still present within them, with the numbers of allegations going from 1 up to 217. What is interesting to note is that there is no pattern involved on sexual

exploitation and abuse violations, as some missions, such as UNMOGIP – in India and Pakistan – started in 1949 and has only had record of 1 allegation, whilst a mission such as MINUSCA, in the Central African Republic and established in 2014, has had 181 reported allegations (DPO, 2021j). This discrepancy, as the following graph shows, is a topic that has gained some focus in the recent years, but it is an issue that still does not have a unified explanation, as many characteristics and different situations from mission to mission, help shape the work of the mission and the behaviour of the peacekeepers whilst deployed.

Figure 1. Number of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Allegations by Mission (ongoing) (until 2020):
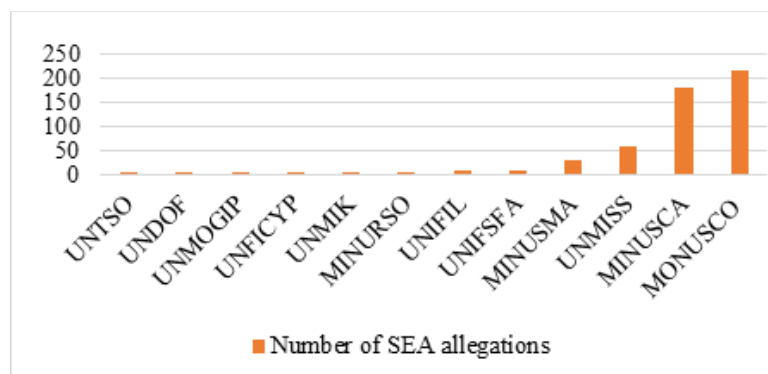
Note. Information on the number of allegations reported by mission. The missions in question were still ongoing in 2020. From Conduct in UN Field Missions. https://conduct.unmissions.org/sea-overview. Copyright 2021 by United Nations.

2.3 Other Factors for the Effectiveness of a Mission

As mentioned, sexual exploitation and abuse is not the only factor that might influence the level of effectiveness of a mission. There is a significant number of factors which can influence a mission, but as they are getting more complex and have their own characteristics, such factors may appear in different levels from one mission to another. For the purpose of this work, the factors chosen were the commitment of the parties, the nature of the conflict and the interest of major powers. These are some of the factors recognised in peacekeeping studies as common to the missions and will be analysed together with the occurrence of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers on the missions in the following chapters.

2.3.1 Commitment of the parties

With the need of consent for the deployment of the mission, comes the expectation that the parties involved in the conflict will have a serious commitment towards the whole

process of the mission (DPO, 2008). In this factor the level of cooperation of the actors to the process of implementation, as highlighted by Diehl and Druckman (2010) and Pushkina (2006) are crucial to the mission's performance. As well as cooperation from the UN itself and other regional or international institutions the UN may reach out to support its work in the host-country. Additionally, it is important to analyse whether this cooperation happens throughout all the time of deployment, especially from the host-country. For instance, a way to analyse the extent of the commitment of the UN towards the mission, is check whether the institution is giving the necessary resources for the mission to fulfil its mandate in a timely manner (Pushkina, 2006). An illustration on how badly a situation can intensify when there is a certain level of indifference from the organisation was the genocide in Rwanda, 1994, when even with the UNAMIR mission, it failed to stop the mass killings (Berdal, 2005). The level of cooperation from the actors can be analysed through the mission's reports where the institution showcases how the mission is acting alongside the government itself or national institutions towards the stabilisation of peace in the country, for instance. One of the hypotheses related to this factor is that the more the parties to the conflict, especially the host-country, show commitment to the implementation of the mission throughout all its deployment, more likely the mission will be effective.

2.3.2 Nature of the conflict

A factor that has been recognised as able to influence the effectiveness of a mission is the nature of the conflict in the host-country. That is, what led the disputes to begin, the intensity of the dispute, and duration of the dispute at the time of deployment of the operation (Bercovitch and Langley, 1993). Bercovitch and Langley (1993), stress that these three characteristics are intertwined and can affect a mission's effectiveness. They continue by saying, for instance, that the intensity of the conflict is determined by the number of conflict-related fatalities, which the higher it gets, more hostility behaviour is seen. Also, they find that

low complexity and brief duration of conflict also have a direct impact. That is, that the probability is that the sooner an operation is deployed to the country in conflict, there is more likeliness of its success. Therefore, the idea with the nature of the conflict factor is that its historical background might implicate on the outcome of a mission, so this study will try to analyse how much it can influence the effectiveness.

2.3.3 The interest of major powers

It is no secret in the international community that the major powers will act in the international system according to their own interests. This pattern is the same when it comes to participation in peace operations, meaning they will do so or not to first preserve their interests (Neack, 1995). The history of peace operation in the UN has shown that its capacity to control or limit regional conflicts is linked to the consensus between the major powers in the Security Council, especially through great political and economic support (Weiss and Kessler, 1990). For instance, in the Cold War period, the clashes between the USA and the Soviet Union led to a period with a significant number of vetoes on peace operations, in which just few operations were deployed. However, due the necessity of neutrality within the deployed troops to the missions, major powers do not have the tendency of supporting the mission through personnel contingent (Weiss and Kessler, 1990), leaving that part mostly to in-development countries, or middle powers.

Another instance, brought up by de Coning (2021), that shows how major powers' interests can affect peace operations was the Trump administration from 2017 to 2020. During the latest administration, the US used its role in the organisation to reduce its overall budget for peace operations by decreasing their size and scope. Additionally, reduces its contribution from the agreed 28% to 25% (de Conning, 2021, p.213) for peace operations, which implicated in a significant reduction of uniformed and civilian personnel. These actions taken by the US have negatively affected the UN peace operations, also bringing bigger share of financial burden to the countries that contribute the most to the operations, such as Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan, as the UN cannot manage to reimburse them in a timely manner (de Coning, 2021, p.213). What this indicates is that the interest of major powers and their actions within the organisation may also affect the way a mission is handled, and consequently its effectiveness, as these powers still have a significant saying on the UN actions.

2.4 Methodology

The research question of this dissertation is "to what extent cases of sexual exploitation and abuse influence on the effectiveness of the United Nations peacekeeping operations?", which was determined after investigating that the number of SEA violations vary significantly from one mission to another. Therefore, the aim is to try to understand if such violations committed by the UN peacekeepers do or do not affect the progress and the outcome of a

mission. Some of its general objectives is to further understand the operationalisation of a mission, the impacts it has in the host-country, and the variation of SEA allegations. Noteworthy, the dissertation is aware that many other factors are there to influence the management of a mission, but decided to focus on sexual exploitation and abuse, due its serious character and clear breach, from the part of the peacekeepers, of the standards of conduct stipulated by the UN, which, in its turn, still lacks in proper accountability measures towards the situation.

The chosen method for this study was a mixture of qualitative and quantitative, as it used the data on the numbers of sexual exploitation and abuse allegations, but also investigates through reports and papers on the progress of the missions and other research papers on similar subjects. The main source was the United Nations itself, through its own websites and some reports for the UN General Assembly or the Security Council, on the missions or on more specific subjects; especially from the beginning of the 2000s onwards, as the UN operations to be studied were established in the 2010s and are still running. A significant limitation to this study is the fact that not many data on sexual exploitation and abuse violations are easily available or are reported, therefore it works with small numbers, but which already give an idea on the variations between the missions. Besides, as these are ongoing missions there is no conclusion on whether they are effective or not, whether there are evaluations on the latest progress of the missions and through the criteria mentioned previously, it is possible to reach some thoughts on the missions and on sexual exploitation and abuse variation. Also, to understand the effects of SEA, this study briefly analysed three other factors – the nature of the conflict, commitment of the parties, and major powers' interests – so a comparison could be made between them and reach a better understanding of SEA's influence in a mission.

To decide which missions would be evaluated, there was a research on the current missions being held and on the characteristics of the host-countries, as well as on the numbers of SEA allegation. After many considerations, the decision was to study two missions happening in Africa, which are: MONUSCO – in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and MINUSMA – in Mali. The two countries have similar characteristics, and the two missions were established under chapter VII of the UN Charter. Additionally, they both have complex conflicts ongoing in their territory. Regarding their mandates, MINUSMA and MONUSCO have some similarities, but their priorities differ: whilst MONUSCO has its current mandate

more focused on the protection of civilians, MINUSMA is more focused on the stabilisation of the country and reintroduction of state authority in the territory. Besides, both have records of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers but whilst in MONUSCO there are significant numbers of SEA allegations, the same is not true in MINUSMA.

Chapter 3. The Case of MINUSMA

The next case to be studied is the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), established in April 2013. This chapter will bring general information about the mission, with a focus on the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, and developments that have occurred during its time of deployment. With the gathered information, this chapter will apply the concepts mentioned in the second chapter to the case of MINUSMA, also to do an analysis on the factors important to the operationalisation of the mission. The though of starting with the case study on MINUSMA is due the fact that as it has fewer records of SEA violations, the expectation is that SEA violations will not influence on the effectiveness of the mission. Thus, the aim with this chapter is to see whether such assumption is correct or not.

3.1 Facts About MINUSMA

MINUSMA is a mission organised by the UN DPO that took over the authority of another operation authorised by the UN Security Council: the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA). AFISMA was authorised by the UN in Resolution 2086 (2012) in an effort led by Mali's neighbouring countries to diminish the threat imposed by the presence of terrorist groups and criminal networks in Northern Mali (UNSC, 2012). Additionally, the same resolution had approved the establishment of a United Nations Office in Mali, following a request from Malian interim authorities at the time, to help strengthen the capacities of the country's transitional authorities after the *coup d'état* that happened in 2012 (DPO, 2021g). With the escalation of the tension in the country, the UN characterised the Malian conflict as a threat to international peace and security, due to transnational organised crime and its links to terrorism, kidnap and hostage-taking to raise funds or gain political concessions in the Sahel region.

What triggered the UNSC to decide on the deployment of MINUSMA was that in 2012, a variety of extraordinary events lead the Malian state to almost collapse. In the beginning of that year, the Tuareg movement – the *Mouvement national pour la libération de l'Azawad* (MNLA) – along with Islamic armed groups, *Ansar Dine*, *Al-Qaida* in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the *Mouvement pour l'unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest* (MUJAO), that started a series of attacks against forces of the Malian government in the north (DPO, 2021g). In March 2012, what followed was an uprising composed by the

disaffected soldiers from the units defeated, resulting in a *coup d'État.* With this coup, the *Comité national pour le redressement de la démocratie et la restauration de l'Etat,* led by Amadou Sanogo, took power and decided to suspend the Constitution and dissolve the government institutions (DPO, 2021g, para.7). This allowed groups such as the MNLA to overrun government forces in the northern regions and to proclaim the independent State of Azawad in April 2012. What followed was many clashes between the armed groups and by November 2012, Islamic groups like the Ansar Dine and MUJAO expelled the MNLA of the towns of Gao, Timbuktu, and Kidal (DPO, 2021g). Therefore, the UNSC decided on the deployment of a UN Stabilisation mission, during a vote on resolution 2100 in April 2013, creating the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali, which is currently ongoing.

At the same time, the Islamists set their own administration and started imposing Sharia law – which regulates a Muslim's relationship with neighbours, the state, with God, and their own conscience (El Shamsy and Coulson, 1999) – on the Malian population. Also, they started to move south to Bamako, which triggered the attention of the international community (van der Lijn et al, 2019). Between these developments, in March 2012 the heads of State of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) appointed the then president of Burkina Faso to mediate the situation, and later ECOWAS and the *Comité national pour le redressement de la démocratie et la restauration de l'Etat* signed a framework agreement, leading to the nomination of Amadou Toumani Touré as interim President as of April 2012 (DPO, 2021g, para.8). This agreement provided the framework for the establishment of a transitional government to be led by an interim PM with executive power (DPO, 2021g). Additionally, after the Islamists took over Konna in Central Mali, the Malian government sought the help of the French government for a military intervention. In January 2013, the operation Serval of the French in cooperation with a Chadian contingent from AFISMA interceded and managed to neutralise and disperse the Islamic rebels from major Malian cities. (van der Lijn et al, 2019)

MINUSMA`s first resolution (UNSC, 2013) advocated for a Joint Task Force for Mali in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, composed by the African Union (AU), ECOWAS, the European Union and the UN to support stabilisation in Mali. The resolution stressed the need of embracing a culture of democratic governance, consolidate stability, and cooperation of international institutions on the transitional road map. Regarding to hold fair and transparent

elections, the Secretary-General mentioned the request of the transitional authorities in Mali for support of the institutions to assist on the electoral process, through financial resources, electoral observation capacity and technical assistance (UNSC, 2013, p. 4). Regarding its personnel, the UNSC decided to first deploy 11,200 military personnel and 1,440 police personnel, and asked other UN peace operations in the region, such as UNMIL in Liberia to provide inter-mission cooperation by transfers of troops and assets and sharing of logistic and administrative knowhow (UNSC, 2013, p. 6). And the UNSC decides that the mission would act under Chapter VII of the UN Charter and authorised the operation to use all necessary means to fulfil its mandate. (UNSC, 2013)

Due to the complex situation in Mali, the mission is still deployed in the country and has been through some changes throughout the years. For instance, Resolution 2164 (2014) stressed the signings of the *Ouagadougou* Preliminary Agreement, which reaffirmed the Malian state and its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national unity, and which established a framework for inclusive peace dialogue with northern Malian communities, as well as of the cease-fire agreement supported by the African Union and its call for a political solution (UNSC, 2014). On the following year, what is worth mentioning from Resolution 2227 (UNSC, 2015) is the signing of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation, still valid, between the government of Mali, and coalitions of armed groups *Plateforme* and *Coordination des Mouvements de l'Azawad,* addressing political, security, and development dimensions to the crisis in Mali and in which the parties were given full responsibility for its effective implementation. One of MINUSMA`s tasks stipulated by resolution 2227 is the support on the implementation of the Agreement through monitoring, supervision, and implementation of the disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration of armed groups framework, including a gradual redeployment of the Malian Defence and Security Forces, especially in Northern Mali. Additionally, Resolution 2227 stressed the need of MINUSMA to strengthen its interaction with the civilian population and communication with the Malian Defence and Security Forces, to raise awareness and comprehension about its mandate and actions, as well as to be in full compliance of the UN's zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers. (UNSC, 2015)

3.1.1 Resolution 2531 and MINUSMA's current mandate

The latest resolution is 2531 from 2020 which established the current mandate of MINUSMA and extended the mission until June 2021. This resolution expressed alarm

towards the deterioration of the situation in Malian territory, especially regarding security and humanitarian issues, due to continuous attacks by terrorist groups and intercommunal violence in North and Central Mali. It also appreciated the creation of a "Coalition for the Sahel" to fight terrorism and reinforce the military capabilities of the Sahelian States, and to support the restoration of State authority (UNSC, 2020b, p.2). Therefore, it brought new tasks to MINUSMA, and mentioned the need of some changes in the mission, such as ensure meaningful participation of women in the implementation of tasks, to reach a 30% quota of women in political functions and offices as defied in Malian legislation (UNSC, 2020b, p.4). For its mandate, the UNSC decided to put as primary strategic priority the support of implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation, and as second strategic priority to facilitate the execution of the *Stratégie de stabilisation du centre du Mali,* in a comprehensive and politically led way to protect civilians, reduce intercommunal violence, and restrengthen the authority and presence of the state, as well as re-establishing basic social services in the centre of the country. The UNSC kept as important tasks the protection of civilians, through a comprehensive and integrative approach to anticipate and effectively respond to threats to the civilians and reinforce community engagement; provide good offices, promote human rights, and ensure humanitarian assistance in support for Malian authorities. What is noteworthy is that this resolution increased the number of authorised personnel to 13,289 military and 1,920 police personnel. (UNSC, 2020b, p.6)

On its support for the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation, the UNSC advised the mission to provide good offices for encouragement and support on identification and prioritisation of steps for the agreement's full implementation and for the Malian government to raise awareness on the Agreement and its objectives to the civil society (UNSC, 2020b, p.8). On the political and institutional reforms mentioned in the agreement, it was decided as an objective to support the Malian government on an "effective restoration and extension of state authority and rule of law throughout the Malian territory" (UNSC, 2020b, p. 8). For the premises set in the agreement on defence and security measures, the mission is there to monitor and supervise the ceasefire, through continuous "control measures on movement and armament of the signatory armed groups" (UNSC, 2020b, p. 8). Additionally, it needs to apply the disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) framework on armed groups and implement a community violence reduction program, in an inclusive and consensual reform of the security sector. Also, the mission is deployed to

support the establishment of a comprehensive plan on the reform and reconstitution of the Malian Defence and Security Forces (MDSF) in Northern Mali, through operational, logistical, and transportation aid. (UNSC, 2020b)

On its priority of stabilisation and restoration of State authority in Central Mali, the UNSC (2020b) stresses that the mission should provide full support on the implementation of the strategy. To re-establish Malian state authority in the centre, MINUSMA should put in full operation the internal security forces, judicial entities, and basic social services, as well as fight against impunity for violation and abuse of human rights and international humanitarian law (UNSC, 2020b, p.6). Additionally, the operation should support the redeployment of the MDSF in the centre, via coordinated and joint operations, enhancement of information sharing, and planning (UNSC, 2020b, p.9). For protection of civilians, the resolution mentions that the objective of the mission is to support the Malian authorities to anticipate and have an effective response to the threats faced by civilians, paying especial attention to the north and central regions, through a comprehensive and integrated approach. For instance, the UNSC advises the mission to strengthen early warning mechanisms, community engagement, and protection mechanisms – by implementing mobile, robust, and proactive steps such as a Mobile Task Force with the deployment of ground and air assets in more risky areas (UNSC, 2020b, p.9). Moreover, MINUSMA should prevent the return of armed groups to key population centres and provide specialised assistance and protection of women and children affected by violent conflict and address the needs of victims of sexual and gender-based violence. In MINUSMA, good offices and reconciliation should be provided at the local and national levels in an effort to reduce tensions, and help to hold fair and transparent elections. At last, the mission should promote human rights and create a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, without prejudicing the responsibilities of the Malian authorities. (UNSC, 2020b, p.10)

3.1.2. MINUSMA's current figures

The latest report on the recent developments of the mission available is the S/2021/519 from June 2021. The mission has its headquarters in the Malian capital of Bamako. The report mentions that as of the period covered, there were 12,968 military personnel deployed – which corresponds to almost 97% of the authorised strength of 13,289 personnel – also 520 staff officers, and 12,769 contingent personnel (UNSC, 2021c, p.14). Regarding its police personnel, MINUSMA counts on 1,753 – 91.3% of the current authorised strength – in which

299 are individual police officers and 1,454 are for formed police unit. As for the staff personnel, 92% of the authorised number – which is 1,619 – have been deployed to MINUSMA, which includes 92% of the international staff, 91% of the UN Volunteers, and 90% of the national staff (UNSC, 2021c, p.14). What is worth mentioning is that the presence of women in MINUSMA is increasing, with 3.8% of the military personnel composed of female personnel, in the police personnel 78 individual police officers are women, and around 200 of the formed police unit are women; as for the civilian personnel, women compose 29% of the international posts, 39% of the United Nations Volunteers, and 18% of the national staff. (UNSC, 2021c)

In MINUSMA, recent data shows that the countries that have contributed the most with troops and personnel as for this moment are the following: Bangladesh, 1,601; Chad, 1,458; Senegal, 1,350; Burkina Faso, 1,261; Egypt with 1,243; and Togo with 1,237 personnel (UNP, 2021, p.6-10). From countries that share borders with Mali other that have significantly contributed with personnel were Niger with 903, Côte D'Ivoire with 831, and Guinea with 677. When looking at the numbers of deployed troops from the UNSC Permanent 5, it shows that China is the one to have contributed the most with 426 and Russia is the only one to not have contributed with troops, whilst the United States contributed with 9, the United Kingdom with 256, and France with 38 (UNP, 2021). In the following map, from September 2020 (UNSC, 2020c), it is shown how the mission is spread across Malian territory, where one can note the mission has headquarters in all regions for a better support for the personnel and better reach of civilians. It is noted that different troops can be found in different areas of the Malian territory: Bangladeshi personnel mostly in eastern and northern Mali; Chadian personnel are focused on northern Mali; Senegalese more in the centre; troops from Burkina Faso are mostly found in the west; Egyptians are spread around all regions; and Togolese troops are found mostly in the centre. Furthermore, for its current mandate, the General Assembly decided to provide for MINUSMA the amount of US$ 1,270,104,400, from which US$ 1,183,384,700 should be reserved for its maintenance. (UNGA, 2020b, p.7)

Figure 2. Presence of MINUSMA in Mali.

Note: map on the presence of MINUSMA mission in Mali in late September 2020. From MINUSMA. Report S/2020/952. https://minusma.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s_2020_952_e.pdf. Copyright by the United Nations 2021.

3.2 Effectiveness of MINUSMA

A good way to analyse where the mission has been effective and where it has not, is to look through the mandate and objectives of MINUSMA. As well, it is important to have a look into the latest developments in Mali and in the actions of the mission. With that in mind, the aim of this section is to analyse such developments and indicate how effective the work in Mali has been. Thus, this section is divided by the main strategic priorities of MINUSMA, showing what are the objectives and what are the developments, to then say where it has been achieving success and where it has been failing.

3.2.1. Support the implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement

The Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, also known as the Algiers Agreement, was created in 2015 and signed by the Government of Mali, the *Plateforme* coalition – constituted by armed groups – and by the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) – formed by Tuareg rebels (van der Lijn et al, 2019). The implementation of this Agreement was necessary due the deterioration of the security situation in the north of Mali, and as stated in its article 1, some of the principles are: the respect of national unity and integrity of the territory; to reject the use of violence as political expression; respect human rights and fundamental freedoms;

fight against corruption and impunity; and fight against terrorism (Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, 2015). Besides just aiming for a durable peace in Mali, the Agreement mentioned the need of an institutional architecture for the Malians in the north to be able to manage their own affairs, the distribution of powers and competences, finance and resources – at the local and national levels – and on security and defence - the implementation of a DDR framework, redeployment of armed and security forces to the north, and to fight against terrorism – and other important areas such as development, and reconciliation and justice (Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, 2015). An important role of MINUSMA on the creation of the Agreement was the inclusion of gender issue and its monitoring of them (van der Lijn, 2019). Therefore, as this Agreement involves key areas for the stabilisation process, it is crucial that MINUSMA and the parties to the Agreement that they manage a proper implementation. However, since its singing, its execution has been one of the biggest challenges for the work of MINUSMA.

With the signing of the Agreement, the UNSC deployed 40 military observers to MINUSMA for the monitoring of the ceasefires. During the first months, there were no significant violations reported to them but, in 2016, as the interim administration in Northern Mali continued to be delayed, armed groups from *Plateforme* and CMA would frequently violate the Agreement (van der Lijn, 2019). Recently, the Agreement was overshadowed by the murder of the President of CMA and Secretary-General of the *Mouvement arabe de l'Azawad*-CMA, Sidi Brahim Ould Sidatt, by unidentified armed individuals (UNSC, 2021c, p.1). The assassination was condemned by all parties to the Agreement and national and international actors called upon the transitional authorities in Mali to do a thorough investigation (UNSC, 2021c, p.3). To help observing its implementation an Agreement Monitoring Committee was created, presided over by the Algerian government (van der Lijn, 2019), which has met outside of Bamako for the second time in its history, noting the lack of progress in the execution of the commitments, i.e., on the expansion of women's participation within the Committee and on the operationalisation of the army battalion deployed in the city of Kidal, north of Mali (UNSC, 2021c, p.3). The UNSC report (2021c, p.3) brings that in this meeting, the Committee stressed the need to resume the consultations on defence and security issues and the launch of the next phase of the DDR process, as well as adoption of the law on the creation of a territorial police and to finalise the operationalisation process of the regions of Ménaka, in the east, and Taoudenni, in the north. In 2021, interesting developments on the

Agreement were the establishment of the *Cadre stratégique permanent,* by CMA and *Plateforme,* a body to coordinate efforts for its implementation and joint mechanisms to tackle the worsening of the security and humanitarian situation in Mali, and the signing in May of an agreement on the creation of a security and political coalition. (UNSC, 2021c, p.4)

The implementation has been facing many challenges and, even though it has been more than 5 years since the signing, the UN stresses that the progress on its implementation has been slow (UNSC, 2021c). The challenges begin with the fact that there has been significant fragmentation within both coalitions and creation of new armed groups, which have made the process of implementation difficult. Additionally, many self-defence militias in the north have joined the *Plateforme* coalition so they could advance their own interests (van der Lijn et al, 2019, p.30). Something of concern is the presence of organised crime and competition over illicit trafficking and trade routes, because as is not part of the mandate of MINUSMA to tackle it, it has not been addressed properly and is the reason for many clashes between armed groups, even for the ones that are parties to the Agreement. Consequently, it hinders the Agreement's implementation and increases insecurity for the Malian population. Furthermore, since the Agreement only covers the situation in the north of Mali, what happens is that any progress made in that region sees the extremist groups and criminal activities expand to the centre and south of Mali, intensifying the instability in those areas and increasing inter-communal violence in Central Mali. What has been noticed is that the parties to the Agreement have taken ownership over MINUSMA's work, but do not invest political capital in it, even though they are dependent on the mission to some extent and even use the mission as a scapegoat for when they fail to deliver any of their own tasks to the process. (van der Lijn, 2019, p.87)

According to van der Lijn et al (2019, p.67), when MINUSMA was deployed the population's satisfaction with the government had a significant increase in many regions, but the situation changed once the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement was put in place, leading their satisfaction to decrease. This can be explained by the fact that whilst in recent years the parties to the Agreement have stopped fighting in the north, Islamist groups continue to act violently. Additionally, as mentioned, the groups move into other Malian regions, and since 2016, the situation in Central Mali has significantly destabilised (van der Lijn et al, 2019, p.104). For instance, attacks carried out by Islamist groups against state institutions in Mopti and Segou regions led the state, already highly absent in the area, to further retreat from the

region. Intercommunal violence has also had a worrying increase, a potential consequence of the fact that it was only in 2018 that the UNSC added to MINUSMA's mandate the support to the Malian government to address such circumstances (van der Lijn et al, 2019, p.104).

One important process to the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement is the disarmament, demobilisation, and reinsertion program, with some articles in the body of the Agreement dedicated to it. The idea of the Agreement with DDR is to identify combatants that are eligible for the programme, according to standards stipulated by MINUSMA, to set up a national committee between the parties just on DDR, and the integration should begin once the combatants are integrated into State-formed units or into civilian life (Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, 2015). According to the report S/2021/519 (UNSC, 2021c), to support this part of the Agreement, MONUSCO has recently opened a transit camp in the city of Kati, western Mali, which can accommodate around 250 ex-combatants for training before their redeployment to reconstituted units of the MDSF. In addition, there are plans to integrate another 1,800 combatants who opted to reintegrate into civilian life, so a workshop was held in March to decide the modalities and eligibility criteria for their DDR programme (UNSC, 2021c, p.4). As a result of this programme, up until now there were 1,735 – out of the 3,000 envisioned – ex-combatants from the parties to the agreement who have been reintegrated into the MDSF. This delay can be explained by disagreements between the transitional government and the other parties to the Agreement on quota for allocation and demands from the groups that other terms of the Agreement should be implemented at the same time (UNSC, 2021c, p.4). Another part of the DDR programme is the "community violence reduction", which for the latest fiscal year has 16 ongoing programmes in regions across the country. (UNSC, 2021c, p.4)

On the redeployment of state administration to the northern region, there has been some significant progress. As an example mentioned in the UNSC report (2021c, p.4), in April, 30 municipal and three district-level interim authorities were established in the Taoudenni region, which brings the total to 44 out of the 50 required to be installed in the North of Mali, as part of the Agreement. In addition, 18 out of 131 administrators were physically deployed to duty stations in the north (UNSC, 2021c, p.4). As a step forward, *Plateforme* and CMA have signed a memorandum focusing on reaching peaceful settlements of issues in the west, organisation of joint missions to protect civilians and the creation of a joint commission to follow the developments of this memorandum. Nevertheless, there is still

a security vacuum in the region with armed groups being the sole security providers, bringing an obstacle to an effective restoration of State authority. (UNSC, 2021C)

As explained previously, the implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in Mali's north, pushes the presence of armed groups into other regions, especially the centre and south. What is of concern is that, even though the parties are complying to their part of the implementation, the presence of Islamist armed groups – not part to the Agreement – is still significant in the north. MINUSMA camps have also been targeted by terrorists, as it was the case of the camp in Aguelhok, but Chadian troops managed to launch a counter-offensive which neutralised the attackers, resulting in the death of several of them (UNSC, 2021c, p.8). So, currently extremist groups are the major threat to peace in the north. Therefore, what the mission should do is focus on these areas that need to be improved for an effective implementation and provide the parties to the Agreement with support on expanding their truce to other unstable parts of the Malian territory.

As mentioned earlier, the current mandate of MINUSMA puts as priority of the mission the support of the implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, and after looking at the developments of the implementation and the tasks in the mandate, this study finds that MINUSMA has been partially successful in achieving them. A first indication of this partial success is the fact that with the mission's support and the commitment of the parties, it has been possible to achieve stability in the north of Mali, as they have stopped to fight in northern territory. The progress of the DDR framework is also a success, as the information shows that even though the process is slow, more than 50% of the envisioned number of ex-combatants have been part of the process and successfully transitioned into the MDSF or into civilian life, as well as the "community violence reduction" program, which has been positively impacting more than 30,000 people. However, when looking at other tasks, this study understands that the implementation project has not been successful, e.g., the mission should support the Malian government in its quest to raise civil society's awareness regarding the objectives of the Agreement, but what van der Lijn et al (2019) bring is that the population is not supportive of it. Another example of a non-success is that despite the redeployment of local interim authorities, armed groups are still seen as the major security providers in the region, indicating more work is to be done in this regard. Therefore, the current situation shows that despite some success regarding the implementation of the Agreement, MINUSMA has still a lot of work to do, especially

considering that it has been already five years since its signing and beginning of implementation.

3.2.2. Facilitate the execution of the Stratégie de stabilisation du centre du Mali

One of the reasons for MINUSMA's deployment was the struggle of the state to project its authority within the territory. According to van der Lijn et al (2019, p.26), the presence of the state beyond the big urban cities is low – which is concerning as more than 70% of the Malian population lives in the rural areas – and the Malian government controls about 20% of the territory and by 2019 there was 29% of civil authorities' presence in the north and 31% in the centre. Even though the security situation got worse, especially in the centre, the UNSC was first hesitant in expanding the mission's mandate because it would need to increase the costs. Additionally, the Malian government was reluctant to accept it because they saw the situation in Central Mali as one that could be taken care of without interference of other actors. Nevertheless, as the circumstances kept deteriorating, the UNSC saw the need for a strategy of stabilisation for Central Mali and decided to make it as a second major priority to MINUSMA. The idea with this stabilisation strategy was to deter threats, prevent the return of armed elements and support the restructuring of the security sector in Mali. One of the UN's first moves for the implementation of the new strategy was to transfer the quick reaction forces from the operation in Côte D'Ivoire to the mission for more support (van der Lijn, 2019, p.58). Furthermore, the mission established a *Cadre politique de gestion de la crise au Centre du Mali* to ensure the objectives of the strategy are delivered and support the development of the new action plan to the area. (UNSC, 2021c)

The latest report from the UNSC (2021c) brought many developments on the restoration of state authority in the centre. Still, state authorities' presence is limited outside the central areas of all Malian regions and as of this moment in Central Mali there are 7 out of an intended 15 prefects physically present in their station of duty (UNSC, 2021c, p.6). In its continuous efforts, MINUSMA organised training on decentralisation and public administration to 200 officials and elected authorities in Mopti and Ségou (UNSC, 2021c, p.7). There has been a relative decrease of intercommunity violence, notably in districts of Bankass and Koro after the conclusion of several local peace agreements since September 2020. In Ségou, the High Islamic Council of Mali negotiated a ceasefire on 14 March which was initially intended for one month, but it was extended indefinitely, whilst in the Douentza region there have been numerous attacks on position of the MDSF. One of the aims of the

strategy is to reduce community-based violence and strengthen reconciliation at the community-level, so to achieve that MINUSMA – along with regional reconciliation support teams in Mopti and Ségou – helped establish three communal reconciliation committees, 11 inter-community dialogues and five peace agreements. This partnership continued through many areas in Central Mali, resulting in another four peace agreements to ensure equal access to natural resources, freedom of movement, stop armed hostilities, and the use of reconciliation committees to peacefully settle disputes between communities (UNSC, 2021c, p.6). Additionally, to address the root cause of dispute on access and management of land and natural resources, MINUSMA offered capacity-building to the government's land commissions to improve land management. There was recently the training of 103 Malian police officers on securing electoral processes, protection of civilians and on counter-terrorism actions (UNSC, 2021c, p.6). Finally, on its fight against impunity, little progress has been made as trials on the most serious cases of violations of international human rights law committed in the last two years are yet to happen and only recently have cases from 2015, involving the deaths of peacekeepers, led to the prosecution of the attackers. (UNSC, 2021c, p.16)

One tool established by MINUSMA's mandate was the execution of Quick Impact Projects (QIP) to support the implementation of the mission's main tasks (UNSC, 2020b, p.10). By the end of 2020, as part of these QIPs, three new projects were established. They focused on the regions of Mopti and Ségou, they were organised in cooperation of the *l'Union des Radios et Télévisions Libres du Mali* (URTEL) and had financial sponsorship from the Department of Political Affairs of MINUSMA (UNP, 2020). These projects involve the production and broadcast of radio programmes focused on the stabilisation strategy throughout 46 radios for the duration of six months. The idea behind this being to inform the population located in Mopti and Ségou about the stabilisation strategy for Central Mali, especially women, the young, and the vulnerable population, to adhere and contribute to the implementation of the strategy in their areas (UNP, 2020). The choice for the regions of Mopti and Ségou can be explained by the fact that in 2019, those were the areas in Central Mali that generated the higher number of internally displaced people, reaching more than 45,000 in Mopti and more than 15,000 in Ségou (van der Lijn et al, 2019, p.67). Through the radio stations, these programmes would promote cohesion, the culture of peace and community reconciliation. Thus, these projects help the improvement of community

engagement, an important factor stipulated for both principal priorities for MINUSMA's current mandate.

Despite these developments, the situation in Central Mali is still of instability and insecurity, so MINUSMA has been facing many challenges to implement their strategy and to protect the civilians in that region. As an example, terrorist activities have increased in the region with attacks against convoys and militias, and fire attacks against camps of the Malian Armed Forces (UNSC, 2021c, p.8). These are mostly related to high occurrence of attacks by Jihadist groups – which also provide offensive governance – causing the state to retreat from the area, and the expansion of activities of violent groups beyond the north of Mali. Additionally, the constant violent attacks hinder the freedom of movement of the population and of the providers of humanitarian assistance, leading to the disruption of local livelihoods and access to basic services in the centre. According to van der Lijn et al (2019, p.38), one of the reasons for the escalation of violence in Central Mali is the constant inter-community disputes over demarcation of land and rights to land which occur due bad management on customary and statutory Malian systems. Also, one circumstance that can impede the personnel of the mission to reach areas in the centre is that one-third of Central Mali becomes inaccessible for six months, or more, due to flooding between the last months of the year, which prevents personnel from reaching the local populations, in part because MINUSMA is not provided with adequate air sets or fluvial capability. (van der Lijn et al, 2019, p.73)

Considering the situation in Central Mali, this study believes that MINUSMA has not been successful in assisting the execution of the strategy to Central Mali. The clearest indication for this is the fact that the presence of a State authority is still fragile in the central region, which allows for continuous violent attacks by the extremist groups present in the region. Another example is seen on its slow progress on fighting impunity and strengthening of the judiciary sector, where the number of prosecutions is low, and trials are taking a long time to be held. Moreover, the security situation is precarious as the mission has not managed to decrease the presence of radicals in Central Mali, and the threats are still there. The security situation is not just concerning the lives of the civilians but also the lives of the peacekeepers, as MINUSMA is the mission from the DPO with the highest number of peacekeepers fatalities by malicious act, reaching 144 casualties (UNOCC, 2021). Therefore, these circumstances suggest that the violence happening in Mali should still be considered as

an international threat – mainly due to the presence of the Islamic State and other terrorist groups – and that MINUSMA is a long way from fulfilling its mandate.

3.2.3. Protection of civilians, protection of human rights, and humanitarian assistance

Due to the alarming situation in Mali, the UNSC has stipulated other priority tasks for MINUSMA's mandate focusing on the Malian population, such as their protection, human rights' protection, and to provide humanitarian assistance (UNSC, 2020b). Tasks focusing on these issues are crucial for the success of MINUSMA, as the theoretical chapter of this study has shown that many authors, such as Pushkina (2006) , credit the success or failure of a mission to the improvement of civilians' lives with the mission's deployment. This improvement is not just indicated by the decrease in the number of deaths, but also whether the mission helped diminish threats and has been assisting the population in accordance to the mission's objectives.

The UNSC stressed in Resolution 2531 that the mission should support Malian authorities through active steps in anticipating, deterring, and effectively responding to threats, especially in north and centre Mali (UNSC, 2020b, p.9). MINUSMA is doing so through its early warning tracking system and in the latest period there has been a slight decrease in the number of attacks, which reached a total of 307 attacks reported (UNSC, 2021c, p.10). Another point mentioned in the current resolution was to strengthen protection mechanisms (UNSC, 2020b, p.9). MINUSMA, local authorities, and community leaders have negotiated with terrorist groups for the permission to reopen some schools in risky areas such as Timbuktu – which faces violent activities of extremist armed groups – to use them as temporary operating bases (UNSC, 2021c, p.10). The idea with these operating bases, which should be composed of civilian staff, is to improve the protective environment and reach of the mission's and national authorities' mechanisms, as it helps them get to remote areas and manage the gathering of important information for follow-ups. These temporary operating bases were also established in the town of Tessit in the Gao region (UNSC, 2021c). In Gao, the local population is under continuous threat by violent extremist groups which aggressively impose their religious norms, leading to an increase in the number of internally displaced persons (UNSC, 2021c, p.10). Another action taken by MINUSMA was the establishment of a stabilisation and recovery section to manage funds for QIPs, as support for political and security structures (van der Lijn et al, 2019).

The humanitarian situation in Malian territory is still alarming. The report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (UNSC, 2021c, p.12) indicated that 5.9 million people are currently in need of assistance, and the number of internally displaced persons went from 332,000 to 346,864, over the first months of 2021, in which 56% is composed of women and 61% of children. Furthermore, out of the US$ 563 million requested for the humanitarian response plan only around US$ 78 million was received (UNSC, 2021c, p.13). The same can be said about the human rights situation in Mali, especially in the south, due to an increase in violent attacks against civilians. These attacks involve numerous abuses, such as killings, bodily injuries, and civilian displacement, as well as abductions, mostly committed by community-based armed groups and militias. Malian women and girls are still the main target of conflict-related sexual violence and various human rights abuses, as mentioned in the UNSC report (2021c, p.11). For the latest period, the mission documented 422 violations and abuses of human rights, including executions, torture or ill-treatment, illegal arrests and detentions, forced displacements, threats, and destruction of property (UNSC, 2021c, p.11). Furthermore, these attacks have happened mainly in central Mali but also occurred in the north and south, and were attributed to national forces, judicial authorities, foreign armed forces, armed groups, and extremist groups. Regarding grave violations against children, in comparison to the period of March and June 2021, the number reduced as there were recorded 172 violations against 126 children and they were mostly attributed to various armed groups. Regarding conflict-related sexual violence, cases continue to be under-reported due to lack of medical and psychological services, stigmatisation, and lack of accountability for the crimes. (UNSC, 2021c, p.12)

This study could see with the data available that the situation regarding the protection of civilians in Mali has had many fluctuations throughout all its years of deployment, but that progress has been slow and short. Therefore, this study believes that MINUSMA has been failing in fulfilling these objectives. As mentioned previously, the Malian population still clearly lives under continuous threats to their lives and their territory. With MINUSMA, it was possible to note a decrease in conflict-related deaths, but the mission faces the issue that the death toll of peacekeepers is quite high in this host-country and that parties to the conflict such as terrorist groups do not collaborate to the quest of reaching stabilisation and peace in Mali. Looking back at the tasks mentioned in resolution 2531 (UNSC, 2020b) regarding these areas, this study finds that the struggles MINUSMA has been facing stop the mission from

achieving most of the objectives. For instance, its early warning mechanisms have helped only a small decrease in the number of attacks, it has not stopped armed individuals from returning to areas with a large population presence and has not managed to engage the community significantly – as this study mentioned earlier that a significant part of the population do not understand the mission's mandate. However, this difficult situation could be partially explained by many issues, such as the complex circumstances in which MINUSMA was deployed, as well as the need of dialogue with extremist groups which work for their own interests, and the extension of the territory which can make it difficult for the mission to reach many areas.

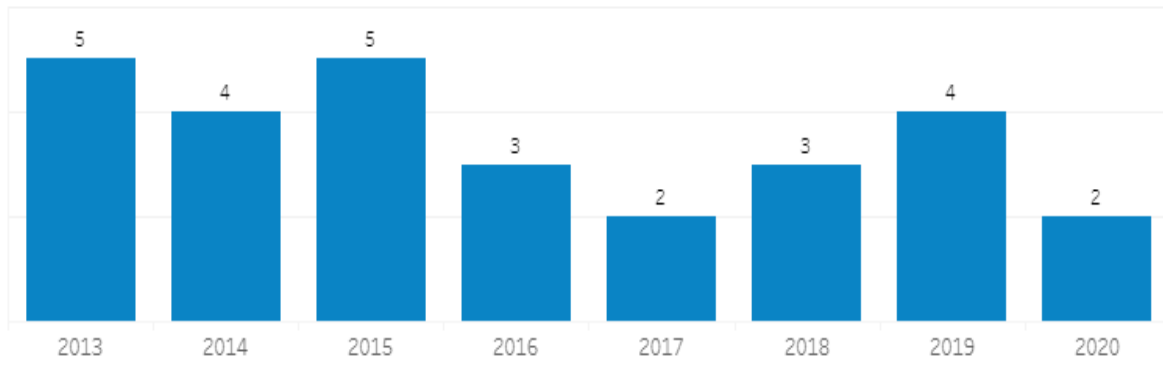*3.3. Effects of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*

In this section, it is studied the data on SEA by peacekeepers in MINUSMA. The important indicators here are: the reported numbers; the characteristics of the perpetrators, such as their category of personnel and nationality; the number of victims; and the status of investigations. After, there is a subsection analysing the possible link between the occurrence of SEA by peacekeepers in MINUSMA and the outcomes of the mission. This information assists on the comprehension of the extent of SEA influence on effectiveness.

3.3.1 SEA in MINUSMA

In contrast to MONUSCO in the DRC, MINUSMA is one of the UN peace operations with the least recorded numbers of allegations of SEA committed by peacekeepers. Over its eight years of deployment, the UN database (United Nations, 2021i) shows that only 28 allegations were recorded by the mission, with 2013 and 2015 being the years with the most allegations, reaching a total of five in each year. From the 28 allegations, 18 allegations were characterised by sexual exploitation and the other 10 were of sexual abuse. Additionally, 21 of those allegations were recorded in their year of occurrence, whilst the remaining 7 were recorded a year after it happened or do not have a clear date of its occurrence (United Nations, 2021i). Overall, even though is well known that the number of allegations is under-recorded one can see that SEA by peacekeepers in MINUSMA is not so expressive as in other UN peace operations. Van der Lijn et al (2019, p.93) suggest that what might help the low number of allegations is the fact that the camps where the peacekeepers are housed are protected to the point that they have almost no interaction with locals, and the dangerous nature and general insecurity peacekeepers have to operate at, discourage them to engage in SEA. Also, what might happen with the low indicators is that in Mali, there is no custom of

reporting sexual crimes and prostitution is still a taboo for the Malians. (Van der Lijn et al, 2019, p.93)

Figure 3. Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in MINUSMA (2013-2020).

Note. Information on the number of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in MINUSMA between 2013-2020. From Conduct in UN Field Missions. https://conduct.unmissions.org/sea-overview. Copyright by United Nations 2021.

Regarding the victims, the UN data shows that these 28 allegations involved 26 victims, in which 17 were adults, 8 were children and in one allegation the age of the victim is unknown (DPO, 2021b). Regarding the data on the perpetrators, it is shown that the 28 allegations involved 55 peacekeepers and they were from all types of personnel. Within these allegations, 16 implicated peacekeepers of the military personnel, whilst 4 allegations implicated police personnel, and 8 implicated peacekeepers were from the civilian personnel. Regarding the nationalities of the perpetrators, 37 did not had theirs identified, but out of the 18 left, the nationalities vary with 10 being from Burkina Faso; 2 from Chad; 2 from Tunisia; and 1 each from Benin, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Togo (DPO, 2021c).

The Social Institutions and Gender Index, which provides countries' overview in relation to women and family, women's physical integrity, access to productive and financial resources, and their civil rights, is an interesting tool to see the current levels of gender equality in the world. In the latest report, released by the OECD in 2019, the Republic of Mali is ranked with 46%, considered as high level of discrimination, whilst the Democratic Republic of the Congo ranked with 40%, meaning it has a medium level of discrimination, but the occurrence of SEA is still higher in the DRC. Additionally, out of the nationalities involved in SEA in MINUSMA, Benin and Burkina Faso are countries considered by the index with medium level of discrimination, whilst all the others are considered to have a high level of discrimination (OECD, 2019), which also shows that their cultural background do

influence on their actions towards women whilst their period of deployment. What happens in Mali, however, is a significant level of gender-based violence, going beyond sexual encounters, as the Malian society is embedded in a rigorous religious discourse and social norms which marginalise women, along with the fact that there is no specific law on violence against women nor mechanisms to hold accountable the perpetrators. For instance, a survey in 2018 by the National Institute of Statistics on demographic and health revealed that 1 in 2 Malian women between 15 and 49 suffered physical or sexual violence, one in two encounter emotional, physical, or sexual abuse in relationships, whilst 79% of women and 47% of Malian men considered justifiable if a man is violent against his female partner (Moderan, 2020, para.6).

Regarding the course of investigations of the allegations, the data (UN, 2021g) shows that 12 allegations were substantiated, 12 were unsubstantiated, three are pending, and one was recorded for information or UN review. When looking at the entities investigating, most of the investigations were conducted by UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) in which out of 15 allegations, 10 they considered substantiated. The mission itself had investigated only three, in which two were considered unsubstantiated. There were also investigations by the TCCs, in which resulted in two allegations as substantiated, three as unsubstantiated, and two are still pending. Other four allegations considered not to have enough information for an investigation to be held, so they went for UN review (UN, 2021g). If looking at the actions taken by the entities, the only TCC mentioned was Chad in which decided to put in jail one Chadian military peacekeepers that was involved in an allegation, and the UN went for repatriation of that peacekeeper. The other numbers show that the UN decided on repatriation for other eight perpetrators, whilst on the actions taken by national governments show that two are still pending, another one was sentenced to jail, and six were just dismissed (UN, 2021h). These numbers indicate that even though the proportion of substantiated and unsubstantiated allegations in MINUSMA is better than in MONUSCO, the situation is still the same when it comes to holding the perpetrators accountable, as one can see that out of the 55 alleged perpetrators, not even half of them have been suffering the consequences of taking such violent actions towards Malian civilians.

What is noteworthy is that MINUSMA has adopted the strategic approaches of prevention, enforcement, and remedial action for the conduct and discipline of its peacekeepers – especially on SEA. In the latest report, it was mentioned that the mission

continues to deliver updated induction trainings to all personnel, and conduct risk assessments, as well as organised activities to raise awareness among the populations and to assist SEA victims (UNSC, 2021c). Furthermore, the mission became a promoter of gender equality and responsiveness in the areas of politics, economics, civil, and judicial of Mali's reconstruction process (van der Lijn et al, 2019). Van der Lijn et al (2019, p.90-91) highlight in their report that the mission tries to implement Women, Peace, and Security goals to its mandate through the deployment of more gender advisors and the Gender Unit, which provides support for the mission, the Malian authorities and civil society on women's political participation, security sector's reform, human rights' promotion, and addressing gender-based violence. For instance, participation of women in the peace process was increased with the help of MINUSMA when it facilitated the creation of a committee exclusively of women to establish their priorities for the implementation of the Agreement (van der Lijn et al, 2019, p.91). Nevertheless, the level of insecurity for women and girls in the north and centre of Mali is extremely high to the point of stopping them from freely moving around those areas even though the mission provides confidence-building patrols in the short and long-range, in an effort to reduce cases of rape, kidnapping, and conflict-related sexual violence (van der Lijn et al, 2019). One step MINUSMA needs to take to assist on the mitigation of insecurity is to deploy more women peacekeepers, as it has been mentioned in the previous chapters that a more significant presence of female peacekeepers helps the mission to be closer to the local population and to achieve priority goals such as the protection of civilians. In that regard, MINUSMA has been slowly increasing the presence of women, as the latest figures of the mission show that every new quarter more women have been deployed.

3.3.2 Is there a link?

As the theoretical chapter of this study mentions, there are many factors for a mission to be successful or to fail. The major indicator for the effectiveness of a mission is whether it has been able to fulfil the tasks of its mandate, which was brought in afore mentioned sections in this chapter. In the case of MINUSMA, this study found that for its current tasks the mission has been having mixed outcomes, as it has been successful in supporting the implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in the north, but not in the long-term, and is struggling to facilitate the execution of the *Stratégie de stabilisation du centre du Mali.* Furthermore, the protection of the Malian population is still fragile, as the current developments show that the violent threats the extremist groups pose is still high and does not

seem to be decreasing. Also, they indicate that the situation in Mali still needs to be considered as a threat to international peace and security due to the presence of foreign armed groups and the fact that it also hinders the security in the neighbouring regions to Mali. Therefore, due to these current developments this study believes that the mission has been only partially successful duet to its robust mandate and difficult tasks.

After looking at both the effectiveness of MINUSMA and the occurrence of SEA violations by peacekeepers, this study understands that there is no significant link between the occurrence of these violations and the effectiveness of the mission in general. When it comes to sexual exploitation and abuse there are not many records on cases throughout Mali. This is a curious situation, as the OECD report (2019) shows that Mali was ranked higher than the DRC in women discrimination. What could explain this is that intimate partner violence is an ongoing issue in Mali, where there are no laws against it (Hayes and van Baak, 2016) but it has no effect in relation to the mission. What is noteworthy is that whilst MONUSCO is considered the mission with the highest numbers of SEA violations by peacekeepers, MINUSMA has opposing figures and is one of the missions with the fewest cases recorded. However, these violations still occur, as this study found through its research that in the first months of 2021 no SEA allegation had been recorded, but when visiting the UN data again, it was noted that recently one allegation was recorded (UN, 2021i), in which one member of the civilian personnel (DPO, 2021c) – whose nationality was not identified – sexually abused 4 child victims (DPO, 2021b). The fact that most of the nationalities of the perpetrators in the mission were not identified can hinder the understanding of why the number is low, as it is more difficult to identify the background of the peacekeepers. However, few circumstances can help understand the low recording of SEA by peacekeepers in MINUSMA. First, severe threats posed by the presence of terrorist armed groups, stop the population and even the peacekeepers to go around freely within Malian territory. Second, as mentioned earlier, many regions in Central Mali get inaccessible through large part of the year due to floods, and the mission is not equipped with proper air sets that could lead the peacekeepers to those areas.

Moreover, the current strategic priorities of MINUSMA – implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement and of the *Stratégie de stabilisation du centre du Mali* – do not lead peacekeepers to engage so often with the local population. Thus, the less contact a peacekeeper has with a local, the less chances are for sexual violence to occur. By taking a

closer look at the first priority – the implementation of the Agreement – it is notable that its main tasks involve the reconciliation between the parties to the Agreement, reach stabilisation in Northern Mali, and bring back State authority to that area, which are all tasks that mostly involve the peacekeepers having to deal with armed groups or State leaders, rather than the local population. Also, due the robust mandate, what happens is that the mission needs to organise projects to bring awareness to the civilians but because of the extension of the territory, is not possible to reach a considerable part of the population – as it was mentioned earlier that around 70% of Malians live outside the big city centres – and even projects such as the one with in cooperation with URTEL might not have a lasting effect. When looking at the tasks for its second priority many similarities can be seen, as most of them involve more communication with other actors, rather than the civilian population. For instance, to reimplement state authority in Central Mali, MINUSMA should work to support the full operation of internal security forces, judicial institutions and provide social services – which the mission has been struggling to achieve. Even in its task to fight against impunity on human rights violations, the focus is working with the Malian legal authorities to enhance its mechanisms. Again, situations where the contact with civilians is minimum. Then, when looking at its priority on protection of civilians, the main objectives involve the improvement of early warnings and protection mechanisms – to prevent re-emergence of armed groups in key population centres, for instance – and to enhance community engagement and assist victims of sexual and gender-based violence, the last ones been where the interaction is higher and where the population should have more access to the mission and see its effects in the territory. Additionally, as mentioned in the section "SEA in MINUSMA", by being a promoter of gender equality, adopting strong approaches and trainings on SEA for the conduct and discipline of its peacekeepers, MINUSMA might has managed to stop the numbers of violations by peacekeepers to be high because the mission sees that the Women, Peace, and Security goals are important for an effective operation.

Looking at the effects of SEA violations by peacekeepers in the principles of credibility and legitimacy in MINUSMA, it was surprising to see that these violations do not impact them. Rather, van der Lijn et al (2019) suggest that the way the population sees the mission varies across the Malian regions. Whilst protests in some places are being held because the population thinks the mission is working too much in favour of the government, others are protesting the talks between the mission and other armed groups non-signatories to

the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement (van der Lijn et al, 2019, p.76). Alongside this, populations in other areas argue that MINUSMA does not have an active role in those areas, therefore leaving the security situation to deteriorate. Hence, MINUSMA has been losing some of its credibility and legitimacy due to the fact that the security situation is unstable, though part of the population still recognises that without the presence of the mission in Mali, the situation could be a lot worse (van der Lijn et al, 2019, p.68).

In sum, what this study saw in the case of MINUSMA is that SEA by peacekeepers has not affected the mission's effectiveness. Even after looking more closely at its mandate, it was possible to note that the main tasks of the mission do not seem to be influenced by SEA occurrence, rather they would be more influenced by the current circumstances in Mali. That is, the significant presence of terrorist groups, difficult access to a large part of the country, lack of state authority are situations that do affect the effectiveness of the mission. Moreover, the situation in Mali is still of concern because the threats are not secluded to the Malian territory and often, when MINUSMA achieves some success in one region, other regions will see deterioration on their side, due to the movement of the armed groups. Therefore, the Malian territory still faces insecurity and instability.

3.4. Effectiveness of Other Factors

This next section will explore how other factors – the nature of the conflict, commitment of the parties, and major powers' interest – are present in Mali. The idea here is to understand whether these factors can influence the effectiveness of the mission and whether the extent of its impact is more significant than the occurrence of sexual exploitation and abuse violations by peacekeepers.

3.4.1. Nature of the conflict

The Republic of Mali is in a conflict environment since its independence in the 1960s. The phases of rebellion in the territory were influenced by historical tensions between the north and the south. Additionally, the country faced a depressed economic environment which led to combatants receiving economic incentives to get disarmed and ceasefires that were always broken – turning into a rebel economy (Chauzal and Van Damme, 2015). Foreign interference has also influenced the environment in Mali as neighbouring states, such as Libya and Algeria, would sponsor rebels or indulge through cross-border movements due to the regional race for leadership in the Sahel region. Chauzal and Van Damme (2015) continue by saying that the first instances of the conflict happened because the Malian post-

colonial authorities did not address the root causes of the situation, characterised by a special status and attention given to the northern region and neglection of the others, to the point of closing the north for tourism, establishing martial law and a military administration there. Later, serious droughts pushed the population in the northern tribes to flee Mali and seek refuge in adjacent countries – especially Niger and even Libya – making a wave of discontent and distrust among the north over the Malian government. This exodus led Malians to connect with other groups such as the Tuareg rebels – which later turned out as participants to the following rebellions in Mali, and in Libya – the then leader Muammar Gaddafi saw the situation as a way to secure his political influence in the Sahara. (Chauzal and Van Damme, 2015)

As Chauzal and Van Damme (2015) continue, the situation in Mali deteriorated with the next rebellion, in which the participants demanded better living conditions, the recognition of a northern political identity and for members of the Tuareg community to be allowed as soldiers in the national army of Mali. As the government ignored the requests, there was an emergence of radicalisation in the region, with constant abuses happening – especially from the Malian military in the regions of Gao and Ménaka. It reached a point where even agreements organised by third parties like Algeria were being questioned and would not be efficient (Chauzal and Van Damme, 2015). Even after the end of a single-party regime in the 1990s, Mali was already embedded in a political situation where elites would be in power and have the state institutions in their hands for their own interests to be heard. Consequently, the Malian armed forces and its security agencies were politicised, and the state turned fragile. Thus, even if an electoral process was introduced, Mali had no foundation for democratic politics and for functioning democratic institutions (Francis, 2013). Then, with the collapse of Gaddafi in 2011, more Tuaregs fled to Mali but now they were heavily armed and were joined by non-Tuaregs also part of Gaddafi's military and formed a political-military platform for their fight on self-rule. In 2012, this coalition defeated the government forces and declared Northern Mali as the independent state of Azawad (Francis, 2013, p.2). This situation was the catalyst for the UN to organise a multidimensional stabilisation mission in Mali, MINUSMA, which has been there since 2013.

These brief findings on the nature of the Malian conflict show that bad governance and neglection of part of the population, and external interference led the violence in Mali to escalate and bring insecurity to the country. When analysing how the nature of the conflict

affects the mission from these developments, this study believes that the conflict's complexity and the involvement of many armed groups forced the UN to implement since its beginning a robust mandate and the establishment of a big mission – which would suddenly increase the presence of foreign personnel in the Malian territory. Furthermore, this rivalry between the north and the other regions in Mali, lead for different scrutiny of the population towards the mission, as some think it is not right that the mission is talking with armed groups non-signatories to the Agreement or are working too much in favour of the government, which can hinder the operationalisation of the mission. Also, the biggest impact the effectiveness of the mission would have due to the nature of the conflict is the large presence of terrorist armed groups – who are finding their own way to rule the regions where they are present and are not willing to cooperate, complicating the job of the peacekeepers. Consequently, the UN needs to keep changing the mandate of the mission and making it more robust so MINUSMA can have sufficient apparatus to function. This study understands that in the case of MINUSMA, the nature of the conflict does affect the mission more significantly than SEA violations by peacekeepers, because the way the conflict develops will impact how the UNSC sees the needs of the country and the operationalisation of the mission, changing its tasks and objectives.

3.4.2. Commitment of the parties

The commitment of the parties is a crucial factor for a mission to do its work. The more the parties work together towards the same goal, i.e. reaching peace and security in the region, more likely a mission will be effective. MINUSMA is no different in how such factor affects its own outcome. The first clear indication in the mission on how the commitment of the parties is important can be seen in the efforts of the Malian government and the coalitions *Plateforme* and the Coordination of Azawad Movements, to put together the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. Even if at first the parties would breach the Agreement constantly, throughout the years they became more reliant and managed to bring significant improvement to the peace process in the north of Mali. By working together and in cooperation with MINUSMA, these three actors have stopped fighting each other in Northern Mali and even collaborated during the elections held in 2018 and have progressed on the implementation of the Agreement (van der Lijn, 2019), even if slowly, showing that with their commitment, MINUSMA has been partially successful in its priority on the support of the implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. Moreover, due the large presence of terrorist

armed groups in Mali, the peacekeepers need to be in constant dialogue with them, trying to reach ceasefires and smaller agreements, so stabilisation in Mali can improve. Thus, as long as these extremist groups do not cooperate and only act thinking about their own ruling and interests, they are obstacles for the effectiveness of MINUSMA.

On the side of the Malian government, it has not stopped in its cooperation with the mission. Firstly, the mission was only officially deployed once the Malian government asked for assistance (van der Lijn, 2019). Second, the government has worked alongside MINUSMA on its quest to regain state authority in the regions. A good example of how important the commitment of the parties to a mission is, is the way the Malian government firstly dealt with the situation in Central Mali. Initially, the government was reluctant in allowing MINUSMA to expand its presence in the territory, because it thought it could take care of the situation in the centre without foreign help, which delayed the mission to begin operating in Central Mali and to help build the strategy for its stabilisation. Though the government has been cooperative, not all of its interests are directed to the people, and agents are seen as predatory and illegitimate, and it is not so willing to empower groups that have yet to reach a powerful voice in the Malian peace process (van der Lijn, 2019, p.72). Van der Lijn et al (2019) continues by mentioning that there are sectors in the Malian government that are quite condemning of the mission's presence, saying that it is too much interference on the sovereignty of the government or that the mission should have an approach more linked to counter-terrorism measures, or that the government does not have enough ownership of the mission, at any level.

At UN level, the UNSC has been quite active regarding MINUSMA. Most of what the UNSC has been doing is modifying the mandate; though at times it has not been sure if it should make it more robust or not as some countries in the UNSC, such as Russia, have advocated to limit the mandate. On top of this, the mission has had many disagreements with the AU and ECOWAS due to disagreements over the conditions on how the situation in Mali should be handled. However, van der Lijn et al (2019) mention that there were situations where the UNSC worked in favour of the mission, for example, when it increased the presence of the JF-G5S, organised by the G5 Sahel to help fight terrorism and organised crime in the Sahel region, once it saw that it was assisting the stability of Mali and on MINUSMA to fulfil its mandate. Another moment was the signing of the Pact for Peace in 2018 between the UN and the government of Mali to be used as a tool for accountability on

the implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. Also due to the resolutions created by the UNSC alongside the international pressure, the leadership body of MINUSMA is facing difficulty in engaging with terrorist armed groups and which without its collaboration the mission cannot fulfil its mandate. (van der Lijn et al, 2019)

As seen through this chapter, when it comes to the armed groups' commitment there are various levels. On one side there are groups like the *Plateforme* and the CMA who cooperate and are willing to stop fighting in some regions in Mali and who are contributing to the implementation of the agreements they are part of. On the other side, there are extremists or Islamist groups that have a larger scale presence but are not parties to any important agreement or smaller ceasefires – meaning they can act as they wish and continue to pose a threat to the Malian population and the territory. These circumstances show the importance of proper commitment for the effectiveness of the mission because if the collaboration of the parties does not happen at the same level, then MINUSMA faces many barriers to its success. This collaboration is especially relevant to the current priorities of the mission in which both focus on the implementation of an agreement and of a stabilisation strategy to rebuild the strength of the state in Mali and to decrease the level of violence imposed by the continuous presence of numerous armed groups, situations where without proper commitment there cannot be progress. Therefore, the situation in Mali indicates that the impact of the commitment of the parties to the effectiveness of the mission is a lot higher because without their willingness to improve the situation or to assist the mission in reaching its objectives, MINUSMA cannot operate in all its capacity.

3.4.3. Major powers' interests

As for the interests of the major powers, what MINUSMA shows is that their influence can affect in many levels. In the case of the Republic of Mali, this study saw that the influence of the major powers has affected both the circumstances that led to the aftermath of the conflict in the country and MINUSMA per se. That is, its neighbouring countries and powerful states like France have, since the independence of Mali, interfered in the conflicts and continue to do so within MINUSMA. What is interesting is that MINUSMA has been one of the UN missions where the Western countries have participated more actively, through the deployment of troops and other support mechanisms and is a mission where other actors such as the AU and ECOWAS have worked alongside to improve the situation in the region. However, the presence of so many different regional and international actors can sometimes

hinder the operation of MINUSMA, as their distinct interests may lead to tensions and discourage collaboration for the stabilisation of Mali.

Discussions on how robust the mandate of MINUSMA should be have always generated many debates between the members of the UNSC. In this case, whilst most of the Western members advocated for the focus on the restoration of the democratic order in the country, countries such as Russia and China believe the focus should be on protecting the country's sovereignty and the integrity of the territory. Another matter of discussion was the role of regional organisations – with China, India, Russia, and South Africa saying they should be more involved and other traditional powers did not see it as a main concern to be discussed (Avezov & Smit, 2014). The US view on Mali began with the support of France on the quest to stop Mali from becoming a hub for Islamic terrorism and provide technical support for the operations led by France, though with Trump's administration the decision was made to stop significant military engagement and advocating for a budgetary cut (van der Lijn et al, 2019, p.98). As the current MINUSMA's figure section mentioned, as of this period, the US contributed only nine troops to the mission (UN, 2021d).

What is curious regarding MINUSMA is that China is a major power that has been actively present in the mission beyond the UNSC. According to Lanteigne (2014), this is because the country is changing its peacekeeping policies and Mali's location happened to be close to the extensive African economic interests of China. This led China to become Mali's greatest bilateral trading partner just before the conflict in Mali deteriorated in 2013. The author mentions that, at the first instances of the operation, China's main comments were condemning the attacks of the rebels and corroborated its support to the Malian government, also calling for a support operation led by regional actors, according to the Chinese view that regional actors are the ones that should be addressing regional crises when possible. Also, China was one of France's biggest critics, as it saw the French intervention as too unilateral and contradictory to the goal of reaching lasting peace in the region (Lanteigne, 2014). As a result, China has contributed with 413 troops to MINUSMA (United Nations, 2021d).

As for France, it has been intervening in Mali since its colonisation and even after Malian independence, continuing through the conflict and the introduction of MINUSMA. In many instances, France has worked unilaterally, e.g operation Serval, and multilaterally through the support of the G5 Sahel, the support of a military operation led by ECOWAS, and so on. Additionally, van der Lijn et al (2019, p.47) highlight that France was one of the

countries in the UNSC to note the necessity of replacing AFISMA with the UN-led operation, MINUSMA. At the same time, is because of countries like France – which strongly opposes talks with extremist groups – that the leadership of MINUSMA is struggling to set up dialogue with them and are facing some setback in improving the security situation (van der Lijn et al, 2019). This being a clear example of how major powers' interest can affect a mission.

In sum, in the case of MINUSMA, the interests of major powers play a background role on the operationalisation of the mission per se. That is, they have been influencing the level of robustness of the mission, the budgetary and personnel approval, as well as some important tasks. Consequently, these interests affect the effectiveness of MINUSMA in a considerate level because most times they are the ones with the last saying on UNSC decisions. Therefore, in comparison to SEA violations by peacekeepers, in MINUSMA the interests of major powers have played a bigger role on the mission's effectiveness and its outcomes.

3.5 Findings

After taking into consideration the factors studied and their possible influence on the effectiveness of a mission, this study understands that sexual exploitation and abuse violations by peacekeepers have not significantly affected the work and the objectives of MINUSMA, confirming the assumption mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Many circumstances helped MINUSMA to be one of the missions with low SEA cases recorded, as the unstable environment stops the Malian population and the peacekeepers to be freely walking around some neighbourhoods, the strategic priorities of the mission are related to strengthening of the state authority and institutions – as well as stabilisation of the north and the centre – and for being a mission advocating for gender representation and equality within MINUSMA and within Mali. It is true that these numbers might not be an accurate portrayal of such incidents, but it was noticed that sexual violence scandals are not portrayed in the media as often and MINUSMA has focused on implementing Women, Peace, and Security objectives. Then, because of the situation in Mali, the tasks stipulated for MINUSMA occupy the personnel to be more in touch with Malian leaders and security forces, rather than the population itself, thus it does not give space for peacekeepers to interact with them. With fewer violations, it is harder to correlate the impact of SEA violations with the effectiveness

of the operation, rather the nature of the mission reduces the possibility of SEA violations occurring by the peacekeepers.

Regarding the other factors, different levels of influence in MINUSMA were noted. For instance, the nature of the conflict led for the extension of the Malian conflict and its complexity but not its effectiveness. Therefore, it influences the way the mandate of the mission is planned and the updates by the UNSC. Regarding the commitment of the parties, it is clear that the more they cooperate with each other more likely MINUSMA is to succeed, especially as MINUSMA`s priorities involve an active participation of the parties. As an example, with the cooperation of the Malian government, the *Plateforme* coalition, and the CMA, MINUSMA has been managing to support the implementation of the Agreement and reaching some stabilisation in Northern Mali and has been partially successful in that regard. In contrast, the situation in Central Mali shows that due to a delay on the expansion of MINUSMA`s mandate to the centre of the country, and the migration of the terrorist and other armed groups to other regions of Mali, MINUSMA is facing considerable difficulties in facilitating the implementation of the *Stratégie de stabilisation du centre du Mali.* This happens specially because MINUSMA does not have much space to dialogue with the extremist groups and reach some ceasefire agreement, thus as they are not bound to any agreement, they continue to be a serious threat to the Malian population and its territory, as well as the neighbouring regions. Thus, whilst MINUSMA is being partially successful in achieving the tasks related to the north, the same cannot be said for the tasks related to Central Mali or on the protection of civilians. Regarding the interests of major powers, they have affected MINUSMA's outcomes through the decisions reached in the UNSC and through their level of interest in the development of the conflict in Mali. It was noted that two members of the UNSC' Permanent 5 – China and France - have had more interests in Mali and in the mission, with China even deploying a considerable amount of personnel and France on advocating for the initial deployment of the mission and supporting, and expressing its option on some important tasks.

In sum, this study sees that out of these four factors, the commitment of the parties is the one which impacts the effectiveness of MINUSMA more directly. In MINUSMA, the nature of the conflict and major powers' interests have a more indirect effect on the mission, influencing more the establishment and operationalisation of the mission than its outcomes. Finally, sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers have not seemed to influence the

effectiveness of the mission or its tasks. What happens in MINUSMA is that the interactions between peacekeepers and the local populations are so infrequent and the situation of Mali is still so unstable that only few peacekeepers engage in such violations. Therefore, this study could not find a significant relationship between SEA violations by peacekeepers and the effectiveness of MINUSMA.

Chapter 4. The Case of MONUSCO

The second case to be studied is the UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), initiated in July 2010. Similarly, to the case study on MINUSMA, this chapter will describe the peace operation, bringing general information and data on sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers. It will demonstrate the data in SEA and apply the concepts brought in the previous chapter to analyse how effectiveness and SEA in MONUSCO come together. The idea of this chapter is to also study other important factors and see how they link to the effectiveness of the mission in comparison to SEA. The assumption related to the MONUSCO case is that due to the high number of SEA violations recorded, the issue might have significant impact on the effectiveness of the operation. Therefore, this chapter will help see if the assumption is right or not.

4.1. Facts About MONUSCO

The security situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo deteriorated back in 1994 following the genocide in Rwanda. Since then, the country has faced endless cycles of armed rebellions, government repression, political settlements and involvement of its neighbours and regional actors (Novosseloff et al, 2019). With the establishment of a new government, around 1 million Rwandan Hutus fled to the Kivu regions, an area mainly composed by ethnic Tutsis. Rebellions began in 1996 when forces led by Laurent Kabila acted, supported by Rwanda and Uganda, against the forces of the then President Mobutu Seko. Another rebellion occurred in 1998 against Kabila and rebel forces took large areas of the country, resulting in a stronger presence in the eastern region, and many of its neighbouring countries interfered in the internal affairs (DPO, 2021e). A big issue in the DRC is that a small elite has ruled the country for decades and it is to their interest that the DRC state institutions remain weak and subject to manipulation. This leads to extremely underpaid state armed forces, capacity deficits with the absence of good governance, and a weak education system, as well as huge flows of displaced people (Novosseloff et al, 2019, p.45). This situation led the United Nations to establish an observation mission, called MONUC, which went from 1999 to 2010 to monitor the establishment of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement between the DRC and five other regional states (DPO, 2021d).

After the 2006 elections, even though the United Nations had achieved significant progress in the DRC, and many regions had reached some stabilisation, Eastern DRC was

still afflicted with many issues, such as humanitarian crises, serious violations of human rights, and exploitation of natural resources, as it had a continuous presence of a variety of domestic and foreign armed groups and continuous interference of regional actors. These groups are present mostly in eastern DRC due its power and security vacuums, so they take advantage of the situation to commit violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. Additionally, there was widespread impunity and ongoing interstate disputes, as well as the Congolese domestic institutions' weak capacity on the protection of civilians. Moreover, the Congolese government was imposing some pressure into the mission – to be reduced and possibly transition – as they wanted to show that no external help was needed (Novosseloff et al, 2019). These circumstances led the United Nations Security Council to continue to implement a peace operation in Eastern DRC with a focus on stabilisation of the region. That was when MONUSCO was established by the UN Security Council resolution 1925, from May 2010 as a follow up to the MONUC mission. The idea for MONUSCO's deployment was to avoid the DRC to have a security vacuum which could lead to renewed instability in its territory, as well as to improve the human rights and humanitarian situation in the country, as its civilians still suffered from violent threats due to the aftermath of ongoing conflicts between armed groups, so the DRC can develop and reach long-term security. (UNSC, 2010)

The resolution 1925 (UNSC, 2010, p.3) mentions that this mission would be introduced due to the new phase of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on its transition towards peace consolidation and emphasized the need for stronger collaboration between the UN and the DRC government. It highlighted the necessity of the implementation of a comprehensive reform in the security sector, and to achieve the DDR of Congolese armed groups as well repatriation and resettlement of foreign armed groups. These count as efforts to ensure a sustainable economic development in the DRC, along with a long-term stabilisation. Noteworthy, this operation was created to act under Chapter VII of the United Nations' Charter, which allows the Security Council to approve the use of force when necessary to maintain peace and security. Besides, the resolution reinforces that MONUSCO has authorisation to use all means necessary to carry out its mandate (DPO,2021d, p.4). Thus, for its first implementation, it was authorised the deployment of 19,815 military personnel, 760 military observers, 391 police personnel, and 1,050 of formed police units. (UNSC, 2010, p.3)

4.1.1. Resolution 2556 and MONUSCO's current mandate

As of 2020, the UN Security Council renovated MONUSCO for another year and, as stated in resolution 2556 (2020, p.8), it reduced the number of authorised military personnel, the maximum dropping to 14,000 troops. Regarding the mandate, it currently has as strategic priorities the protection of civilians and to support the stabilisation and bolstering of DRC's State institutions, as well as key governance and security reforms. These should be achieved through stabilisation, reform of the security sector and DDR of Congolese and foreign armed groups. Moreover, it highlights the objective of the mission as to decrease the threat by armed groups to the security of civilians and to state authority and to find space for stabilisation activities. On sexual exploitation and abuse, the UNSC calls on the Congolese national government to complete investigations on such allegations by members of its armed forces and requests the continuous implementation of the UN's "zero-tolerance" policy and measures to ensure compliance from the peacekeepers' side. (UNSC, 2020a, p.15)

For its protection of civilians, the UNSC stressed that the mission should give this objective a priority in decisions regarding the use of available resources and capacity. The resolution mentions a comprehensive approach also through consulting local communities to prevent and deter all armed groups and militias from acting violently towards the population through disarmament and undertaking mediation efforts, paying special attention to civilians located in camps for refugee and displaced persons (UNSC, 2020a, p.9). Furthermore, it is important for the mission to provide a proactive deployment with a mobile and robust posture, for instance through active patrolling, especially in high-risk areas. Besides, the mission should work with the national government and humanitarian works to identify the threats and implement joint prevention plans to protect civilians from human rights abuses and violations (UNSC, 2020a, p.9). Another important step on the protection of civilians is to improve community engagement to raise awareness about the activities and mandate of the mission and create measures with the Congolese government to build trust among the population towards MONUSCO. For a more robust approach on the protection of civilians, the mission should work with the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) on its objective of reducing the threat imposed by armed groups, through a Force Intervention Brigade (UNSC, 2020a, p.10) and to implement more combat units from TCCs on the mission's effort to execute its mandate effectively. MONUSCO should also support and reinforce the DRC's judicial system to thoroughly investigate and prosecute perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and violations of human rights in the territory of the

DRC, through cooperation with the International Criminal Court, UN police with its expertise, and MONUSCO's justice and corrections capacities. (UNSC, 2020a, p.10)

For its priority on the support for stabilisation and strengthening of DRC's State institutions, key governance, and security reforms, the objective is to establish functional, professional, and accountable institutions, such as in the security and judicial sectors. On stabilisation, the UN advises the mission to work with the Congolese government and international partners in a coordinated and targeted approach with a conflict analysis, by implementing the International Security and Stabilisation Support Strategy (ISSSS); as well as indicates the mission should provide the national government technical advice for an effective civilian structure which controls key mining activities, such as extraction, transport, and trade of natural resources (UNSC, 2020a, p.12) as the DRC has great natural resources which leads to clashes between armed groups in the country. On its objective of addressing the root causes of conflict, MONUSCO should provide good offices, it should help the DRC government to promote community engagement by dialogues on the security of the community, promotion of initiatives on justice and reconciliation, and secure that actions the government takes against armed groups would be supported by the population and police components (UNSC, 2020a, p.11). For the reform of the security sector, the objective of the mission is to aid the DRC government through strategic and technical advice and by coordinating the support of other actors, especially in the regions of North and South Kivu, and Ituri to accelerate national ownership and implementation of a comprehensive roadmap, strengthen the fight against impunity and make sure security and judicial institutions take into account the participation of women. Finally, it should provide trainings and expertise to Congolese security forces to enhance their capabilities and the sector's effectiveness. On disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration, the mission should assist to reach DDR for the implementation of an approach on Community Violence Reduction through security and stabilisation mechanisms, coordinate with civil society and government authorities the reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life and consolidate the Action Plan to Prevent and End the Recruitment and Use of Children. (UNSC, 2020a, p.11)

4.1.2. MONUSCO's current figures

As of the moment of this paper, the latest report available on the current situation in the DRC and in MONUSCO dates from March 2021, which is the report S/2021/274. Budget wise, the latest approved by the UNGA equals US$ 1,154,140,500, in which US$ 1,075,338,600

should be for the maintenance of the mission (UNGA,2020a, p.8). MONUSCO has currently deployed 17,673 personnel, including civilian, staff officer and volunteers, and as for the uniformed personnel, there are 18,316 including military troops, military observers, police and formed police units (DPO, 2021a). Within these numbers, female peacekeepers encompass 19% of the total contingent, and 18.5% are part of formed police units within the operation, showing a 1.7% increase from what was mentioned in the former report from 2020 (UNSC, 2021a, p.13). Regarding the troop-contributing countries in the DRC, India is the one to have contributed the most troops, reaching 2,048, followed by Pakistan with 1,973, and Bangladesh with 1,878. Other countries that have also considerably contributed with troops were Indonesia, South Africa, Morocco, Uruguay, Nepal, Tanzania, and Malawi which varied between 718 to 1,042 contributions to the mission (United Nations, 2021d). Looking at the numbers of troop contributions from the Permanent 5, in recent months, the data shows that the United States and United Kingdom have only contributed with three, France with five, Russia with 11 and China contributed the most with 232 (United Nations Peacekeeping, 2021).

Figure 4. Presence of MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Note: map on the presence of MONUSCO mission in the DRC in late February 2021. From MONUSCO. Report S/2021/274. https://monusco.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s_2021_274_e_report_of_the_secretary-general_on_monusco.pdf. Copyright by the United Nations 2021.

4.2. Effectiveness of MONUSCO

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the way to analyse whether a mission is being effective is looking through its mandate and objectives and see the latest developments in the country and the actions of the mission. This way, it is possible to identify in which areas the mission has been able to fulfil its mandate and where it has failed to do so, making it possible to understand the effectiveness of the mission overall. For the analysis, this section will bring the current developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the activities MONUSCO has done in its effort to bring peace and stability and help tackle the threat presented by the numerous armed groups that are still active in the country. Also, it will identify where were the successes and failures of MONUSCO to understand the effectiveness of the mission.

One important factor is that the presence of the mission allowed for other international and national actors to provide services to the DRC and to stimulate the domestic economy. Besides, the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System, helps the mission to reach a better operating environment, ensuring a whole-of-mission approach to planning, articulating clear objectives, and creating joint plans (DPO, 2021f). Throughout its years of deployment, the mission has played a preventive role, as numerous initiatives, especially from the Civil Affairs section, prevented or delayed local violence, and force's intervention avoided the level of violence to escalate. Still, the mission many times lacked good resources, capability, political support, and proper tools to reach its goals. However, the mission has managed to prevent the reoccurrence of a major violent conflict (Novosseloff et al, 2019).

4.2.1. Security environment

An important area for MONUSCO's success is the security environment of the Congolese territory. As the DRC has suffered with many violent attacks from local and foreign armed groups, the outcomes affect both the priorities on the protection of civilians and the stabilisation and strengthening of DRC's State institutions, key governance, and security reforms. Noteworthy, chiefs of DRC's and Rwanda's security forces have recently met in Kigali to discuss the strengthening of the bilateral cooperation to tackle common threats in the region, such as armed group activities, and have jointly issued recommendations and action plans for such efforts to restore peace in Eastern DRC and the neighbouring region (UNSC, 2021a, p.3). Additionally, there was a meeting between the Congolese President and

a delegation of Uganda People's Defence Forces in Kinshasa to talk about a bilateral cooperation on security matters (UNSC, 2021a, p.3). However, the security situation in the country varies from region to region, with the regions of Ituri, North and South Kivu being the most challenging for MONUSCO's peacekeepers.

In the Ituri region, due to continued attacks on civilians and State security and defence forces by two armed groups, the security has deteriorated in the past year. There has been a retaliatory attack against a research operation and tensions between local communities rose because of attacks on citizens from the group *Front patriotique et intégrationniste du Congo* (FPIC) (UNSC, 2021a, p.3). Related to FPIC, there were recently reported over 55 incidents, which led to the deaths of no less than 37 civilians, and abduction of civilians, recruitment, burning of homes, and robbing. Another armed group, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), have carried out 15 attacks in the southern Irumu region, involving civilians and DRC's Armed Forces. In the Djugu region, there have been continuous internal clashes for the control of numerous gold mine sites in the region (UNSC, 2021a, p.3). In the North Kivu province, there have been continuous attacks on civilians and FARDC positions, mostly being organised by the ADF. As an example, the ADF occupied the Loselose region, where such attacks led to the deaths of civilian men and soldiers of the DRC's armed forces, burning of houses, and abduction of civilians. However, with the help of MONUSCO, FARDC was able to recapture the Loselose area in January 2021 (UNSC, 2021a, p.4). Furthermore, in other areas of North Kivu there was a spike in armed groups activities, with clashes resulting in the displacement of around 3,000 people, and tensions increasing between them as factions tried to reclaim territories. (UNSC, 2021a)

In the provinces of South Kivu, Maniema and Tanganyika, the current security situation is of improvement, whilst in the Kasai province the situation is precarious. In South Kivu and Maniema there has been a decline in the number of human rights violations and attacks against civilians. Some territories, such as Fizi and Shabunda, however, face an increase in violence due to intra-community clashes of armed groups, leading to displacement and death of civilians (UNSC, 2021a, p.4). There has been reports of more than 70 cases of sexual violence following factions' confrontations. In the Tanganyika province, despite the improvements, there have been incidents between armed groups, especially along the *Kalemie-Bendera* road, with ambushes of FARDC convoys. In the Kasai province, what follows is the report of 28 new security incidents, which include sexual violence against

women (UNSC, 2021a, p.5). In this region, there have also been reports of attacks against State security and defence forces, resulting in the death of police officers and civilians (UNSC, 2021a, p.5).

From time to time, the mission has managed to stop major conflicts from rising again. It has also prevented further loss of life and kept the smaller conflicts from spreading to other areas of the country and its neighbours. Nevertheless, the current circumstances have shown that instability in the country – especially in the east – is still high, as when certain regions have improvements, others face deterioration of security. This indicates that even with its robust mandate covering important areas for the stabilisation of the country and its long years of deployment, MONUSCO has not managed to secure a safe environment for its civilians in the long-term perspective. Therefore, this study believes that MONUSCO is not ready to leave the DRC because if it does so now, the country and its citizens might suffer even more, and peace may never be secured.

4.2.2. Support the stabilisation, strengthening of DRC's State institutions, key governance, and security reforms

Throughout its deployment, MONUSCO has suffered many ups and downs in its quest for stabilisation, strengthening of state institutions, key governance, and security reforms. On stabilisation, for instance, the Stabilisation Coherence Fund was suspended due to disagreements, and there has been talks to reimplement this programme focusing on community violence reduction activities (UNSC, 2021a, p.9). Previously, this Fund of US$40 million, created in 2016, helped MONUSCO to prioritise investments and actions for the stabilisation based on an area-based programming approach, enabling the organisation of Action Plans for the areas mostly affected by armed groups' violent actions. At the same time, however, this approach leads to such areas being vulnerable to possible spill-over from areas that have not had the same care or approach by the mission, so the level of stability is also vulnerable (Novosseloff et al, 2019). Additionally, there are two new projects: one with focus on strengthening justice, social cohesion, and socioeconomic reintegration of displaced individuals, and the other is to promote women's participation in peacebuilding. (UNSC, 2021a, p.9)

However, the weak state and the fact that instability of its governance is favourable for the Congolese elites in control, meaning that they pose many obstacles for the mission to achieve its objectives. As a consequence of MONUC, there has been a lack of political framework, and the end of the transitional period led the current mission to face even more

daily challenges, weakening its capacity to protect the political space and support of free and fair elections. This situation was seen in the 2018 elections, where MONUSCO had no impact in the electoral process nor gave support for its implementation, according to Novosseloff et al (2019). Furthermore, due to lack of transparency and repression in the electoral process from part of the Congolese government, MONUSCO has suspended some of its support in that regard. What follows is resistance from the side of the Congolese government on the support of the mission in such processes, by lacking good engagement in the Peace, Security, and Cooperation framework and rejection of the mission's logistical support for electoral purposes (Novosseloff et al, 2019, p.80). These circumstances led the international community to believe that the mission had not effectively used its influence to stand up to the electoral process and, consequently, made the mission lose some credibility in the eyes of the international community.

Furthermore, the DRC has always faced the problem of emerging armed groups, hampering the stabilisation of the country. Novosseloff et al (2019, p.93) stressed in their report that by mid-2018 there were more than 120 armed groups identified throughout its territory and many cooperate with the national armed forces. This situation makes it complicated for MONUSCO to engage with local actors, which can affect the operation of the mission. However, the FARDC together with MONUSCO has managed to defeat or significantly decrease the presence of larger groups such as the M23 and the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda. Despite many obstacles, MONUSCO has managed to keep the threat of these armed groups within the Congolese territory, meaning they are not seen as a regional or international threat any more (Novosseloff et al, 2019), which is a major achievement of the mission, indicating that MONUSCO has been effective in decreasing the threat of armed groups at the international level.

On the reform of the security sector and justice systems, MONUSCO continues to advocate for national ownership of initiatives in this matter, as well as build consensus with national stakeholders on the necessity of a national strategy on the reform of the security sector. Furthermore, MONUSCO held a training programme on rules of engagement in the field of operation to bolster strategic leadership skills of FARDC officers (UNSC, 2021a, p.9). Related to justice, MONUSCO advanced on the implementation of the Joint Justice Reform Programme, which holds workshops with justice actors in the national and provincial level to identify the challenges, such as overcrowded prisons (UNSC, 2021a, p.10). For

instance, MONUSCO supported the tribunal in Bunia by bringing 76 pending judicial cases to trial and to trial other 86 defendants, in which 38 were convicted of charges for sexual violence (UNSC, 2021a). Other important developments were the deployment of a Geolocation Threat Analysis Unit, which helped the mission to enhance its capacity to conduct intelligence-driven operations on the protection of civilians and aiding FARDC in strengthening the strategic capacity (UNGA, 2021).

MONUSCO has not been successful regarding national ownership, as the Congolese have failed in taking ownership of these reforms. For instance, Congolese soldiers would often be on their own to have MONUSCO's training, as the Congolese government would not provide sufficient support (Novosseloff et al, 2019, p.101). Due to this lack of effort, the Congolese government still does not have proper mechanisms and capacity to have an effective security system as its soldiers are not provided with basic training and lack allocation of resources. Regarding the FARDC, its reform has also been difficult to achieve, as foreign states would provide funding without proper coordination, leading to different training of battalions and weak interoperability within the institution. Consequently, in some situations the mission had to perform some of the security responsibilities of the government. (Novosseloff et al, 2019)

The failure of achieving a restoration of the security sector is a major setback for MONUSCO, as prepared and capable security and defence Congolese forces would be crucial, once the mission departs, to stop major violent conflicts from emerging and to maintain stabilisation in the areas that have already achieved. Furthermore, there still is a long way to go as the weak State, the Congolese political context, and interference of external powers, hamper the mission to deliver a stable security environment to the population of the DRC. Also, as one can see that in many regards there is a lack of support from many actors to the conflict, especially the Congolese government. Therefore, MONUSCO also has not been successful in helping the country to achieve key governance, as the mission has little influence in the electoral process, and in strengthening state institutions due to the lack of proper mechanisms for training, and technical support. However, MONUSCO has achieved some success by reducing the capability of some armed groups through cooperation with the FARDC and its DDR, as well as reintegration and resettlement framework.

Nevertheless, these developments indicate that regarding its priority on supporting the stabilisation, strengthening of DRC's State institutions, key governance, and security reforms

in the country, MONUSCO has been failing to fulfil the objectives. This study understands that the mission was able to achieve some important steps, such as keeping the threat of armed groups within DRC's territory, providing training for the strengthening of groups like FARDC or working with funds to deliver Action Plans in some areas. However, looking at the bigger picture and considering the long deployment of the mission, MONUSCO has failed in most of its tasks. For instance, the mission has not made any progress on the security reforms and that seems unlikely to happen soon. That is due to lack of interest from the national government for supporting the Congolese soldiers or MONUSCO, impeding the mission from enhancing the Congolese defence and security forces capabilities. Additionally, the election processes in the DRC are always leading to allegations of fraud, lack of transparency and freedom, therefore its institutions are still weak, and the Congolese state is still considered a failed state, making it difficult for the mission to progress. Therefore, this study finds that MONUSCO still has considerable work to do if it wants to fulfil this priority.

4.2.3. Protection of civilians

Regarding protection of civilians, MONUSCO's responses at field-level vary across the Congolese regions. The main regions where the mission acts are North and South Kivu, Kasai, and Tanganyika. In those areas, the latest report (UNSC, 2021a, p.7) mentions the occurrence of combat deployments, joint protection teams and assessment missions. Furthermore, the mission has a Community Alert Network system to receive early-warning alerts, which lately received around 330 alerts per month. MONUSCO, together with Congolese security and defence forces answered to 64% of the alerts received. In its efforts to protect the civilians, the mission has planned training with Congolese entities, such as the training of safe storage and use of weapons to the Congolese National Police (CNP). (UNSC, 2021a, p.7)

In the Ituri region, there was an increase in joint patrols between MONUSCO, CNP, and FARDC to deter attacks in the area. In North Kivu, the Intervention Brigade supported the Armed Forces operations to prevent retaliatory attacks against civilians by the ADF, as well as sent standing combat deployments due to the deterioration of security between North Kivu's border with Ituri UNSC, 2021a, p.7) In South Kivu province, MONUSCO acted by facilitating inter-communal dialogue meetings and by conducting long-range and aerial patrols to dissuade confrontation between communities' armed groups (UNSC, 2021a, p.8). In some areas in South Kivu deployed joint protection teams to assist sexual violence

survivors and secure the access of humanitarian actors to help internally displaced individuals. What is noteworthy is that there has been greater community engagement to ease the tensions intra-communities and deter armed groups. For instance, there were held workshops were held for local authorities on their role in security governance, to improve collaboration and coordination between them, and with civil society and community representatives to enhance information-sharing with the Congolese security and defence forces and MONUSCO itself, and to enforce the capacity of local protection actors to contribute to the Community Alert Network system. (UNSC, 2021a, p.8)

As Pushkina (2006) and Diehl and Druckman (2010) mention, a good factor to understand the effectiveness of a mission is the improvement of the civilians' lives and number of casualties with the deployment of the mission. Some latest figures from the UN Refugee agency (UNHCR, 2020) show that the conflict has generated over 900,000 Congolese refugees found around Africa, and just between October 2017 and September 2019 there were 5.01 million displaced people in the DRC. Additionally, between October 2019 and June 2020, 1,300 people died due to these conflicts, mostly in Ituri, North and South Kivu regions (OHCHR, 2020). On the number of casualties, however, data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program shows that since the deployment of the mission the number of deaths has been declining, reaching less than 3,000 in 2019, the latest year available (UCDP, 2019). In many situations, MONUSCO has failed to act proactively and in a timely manner on reports of attacks on civilians (Novosseloff et al, 2019), and on providing appropriate training for its personnel and the domestic and national institutions on SEA, and on supporting the victims. Novosseloff et al (2019) also mention that MONUSCO lacks a significant dialogue between the mission and the population, which leads the locals to not understand MONUSCO's work and, due to its status as a UN mission, to have different expectations on it.

Regarding the humanitarian and human right situation, the latest report brings that the mission documented 1,111 violations and abuses, 2% higher than the previous period, in which 51% were committed by armed groups whilst 49% were by State officers (UNSC, 2021a, p.5). Violations related to the democratic space decreased by 58%, with less cases of threats, intimidation, and arbitrary arrests for the exercise of fundamental freedoms. Notably, MONUSCO supported Congolese authorities in their effort to combat impunity by providing technical, financial, and logistical support to help prosecuting perpetrators of war crimes,

crimes against humanity, and other human rights violations (UNSC, 2021a, p.6). The UN mission also helped military judicial authorities to investigate allegations of serious crimes committed by FARDC in Djugu territory, in the Ituri region. Furthermore, the lack of access and security are still major limitations to the delivery of humanitarian assistance in the distant areas around the DRC. (UNSC, 2021a)

As for MONUSCO's work on women, peace, and security, the UNSC report (2021a) mentioned that MONUSCO continues to encourage a significant participation of women's organisations and women leaders in peace processes, also worked with them to map security hotspots in the provinces of South Kivu and Ituri, which was shared with national security and defence forces to be included in protection mechanisms (UNSC, 2021a, p.11). On the protection of children, MONUSCO has been facilitating for the signing of armed groups on a unilateral commitment to prevent child recruitment and other violations, such as sexual violence which has been recorded by the mission. At last, MONUSCO has recorded in the period of the last report around 92 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, mostly committed by armed groups, but also by State agents (UNSC, 2021a, p.11). On sexual violence, MONUSCO has a framework of denouncing, reporting, and monitoring, writing frequent reports and data analysis in cooperation with its field offices and other UN agencies such as UNICEF and UNHCR. Another action taken by MONUSCO was to assist medical and psychosocial support for the victims, through local partners, UNFPA and UNICEF (UNGA, 2021, p.11). For instance, the Field Victims' Rights Advocate relocated victims and facilitated transportation for the service providers, also gave training around the country for community leaders and local authorities on reporting and assistance for victims (UNGA, 2021, p.12). However, this mechanism faces many issues as joint missions do not reach the areas in a timely manner, bringing back to the infrastructure problem of the mission. Besides, the civil society has complained about the behaviour of MONUSCO staff and negligence of the UN towards the issue of "mission babies" as MONUSCO's staff have relations with local women and leave them pregnant but do not give support for them to raise the child. (Novosseloff et al, 2019, p.113)

Throughout its deployment, MONUSCO has faced many successes and failures regarding the protection of civilians. For instance, one of the biggest failures was the occupation by rebel groups in the town of Luvungi, Eastern DRC, and its surroundings when there was a mass incident of sexual violence in the period of four days back in 2010 (Heaton,

2013). For that reason, MONUSCO started to be seen as a laboratory for the improvement and development of tools in this regard, as well as on revisioning the operational concept of protection within the organisation. For instance, successful tools first set in MONUSCO were the Community Liaison Assistants – national staff working in military bases to improve interaction between the local communities and the Force, to analyse needs and bring protection strategies – and Prosecution Support Cells to help bolster prosecutions capabilities of the military. What happens in the mission is that after a failure, it generated numerous innovations of the UN portfolio on mission-specific protection tools, and it is seen as a test case for new changes on concepts or posture (Novosseloff et al, 2019). Novosseloff et al (2019, p.86) also highlight that although the mission is present in many regions in the DRC, there still is a limitation on its geographic reach, due to a deficiency of transport infrastructure, and lack of training and guidance for the peacekeeping troops, and its high level of turn-over, as well as the presence of leadership, command, and control issues. Consequently, this restricts the mission on its efforts to tackle emerging or ongoing threats.

In its latest update of mandate, the UN Security Council has decided to reduce MONUSCO's size and its budget, which significantly affects the mission's ability to protect civilians. That is so because the updated resolution stresses that decisions on the use of available resources should give priority to the protection of civilians (UNSC,2020a), but with reduction of available resources, such a complex priority – considering the size of the country – makes it difficult for the mission to properly work towards its goal. To illustrate this point, recently some MONUSCO bases were closed without finding a proper alternative presence, leaving the locals without safe grounds in case of attacks and increased concerns that non-state armed groups would retake territories vacated by the mission, and violations against civilians would increase (Novosseloff et al, 2019). This constant fluctuation of situations and outcomes, however, is not good for the mission as what is at stake are the lives of vulnerable civilians, and the peace and security of a state. This is one more factor that causes MONUSCO to lose its credibility and reduces the legitimacy of the mission, impacting its effectiveness. Besides, this also affects the way the locals see the mission, as the population stops to associate it with safety and ask for it to be gone from the DRC.

Overall, this study suggests that MONUSCO has been failing to provide protection of civilians in a long-term perspective. That is, throughout its 10 years, the mission has encountered various degrees of success, but looking at the major objective on protection of

civilians, the developments in the DRC show that they still face violent threats from armed groups and threats to their territory. It was noted that the presence of MONUSCO managed to stop major conflicts from spreading or decreased the number of deaths but not sufficient to the point that these numbers are always going down but rather are always in variation. For instance, one of the tasks related to protection of civilians is to ensure that children's rights are considered in sector reforms and to see child protection as a cross-cutting issue in MONUSCO's mandate, but the latest report brough alarming numbers – in the last quarter there were reported 217 grave violations against children, a 13% increase from the previous period (UNSC, 2021a, p.11) – on violations against children by state and non-state armed groups. When looking at the numbers of sexual violence, it was noted that in most provinces where MONUSCO is deployed there was an escalation on the number of cases of sexual violence, e.g., in Maniema province more than 70 cases were recorded, and between two months – December 2020 and January 2021 – there at least 92 adult victims perpetrated by armed groups and by Congolese defence and security forces (UNSC, 2021a). There were moments where the mission managed to provide community engagement in some areas to raise awareness about the mission's mandate and build the trust of civilians. However, this trust has been declining as civilians have been out in the streets protesting the deployment of the mission and asking for its departure (Mulegwa, 2021; Al Jazeera, 2021) because in their eyes, the peacekeepers have been failing to protect their lives. Therefore, this study understands that protection of civilians is still fragile in the DRC and that MONUSCO has failed to achieve most of its objectives for this priority.
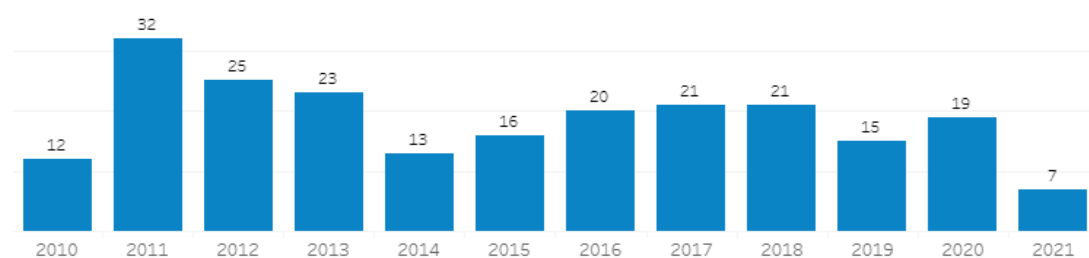
4.3 Effects of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

UN data shows that sexual exploitation and abuse is an issue that has been happening in the UN peace operations since the first deployments. This violence is not committed just by rebels and armed forces, but what has been found is that UN peacekeepers also take part in such actions. This situation represents not just a violation of the UN Standards of Conduct but also presents a serious violation of human rights and presents a threat to the well-being of individuals, especially women and girls. In this section, the data on SEA by peacekeepers will be explored, with the mentioning of reported numbers, characteristics of the perpetrators, and status of investigations. The idea in this section is to after bringing the data, to understand whether there is or is not a link between the occurrence of SEA by peacekeepers and the outcomes of the mission.

4.3.1 SEA in MONUSCO

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is one of the host-countries of a UN-led mission that has the most records of sexual exploitation and abuse, and that reflects in the operations held by the UN in the country. The previous mission, MONUC, in its last four years (2007-2010) recorded 181 cases, but numbers were even higher in the beginning of the operation. MONUSCO, on its turn, as the following graph indicates, has recorded 224 allegations of SEA, with the latest data available in 2021. The data reveals that allegations of sexual exploitation is the most occurrent one reaching 131 accusations, followed by 86 reported cases of sexual abuse, and seven allegations involving both sexual exploitation and abuse (DPO, 2021j). The graph shows that in less than a year of deployment, as MONUSCO was established in 2010, there were 12 reported allegations (DPO, 2021j) a number that can be higher considering there is the issue of under-reporting of SEA cases in all peace operations. The following year, 2011 is the year with the greatest number of reports, reaching 32 in which 19 were of sexual exploitation, whilst 2021 figures in the last place, as of this moment there were seven cases reported, all related to sexual exploitation. (DPO, 2021j)

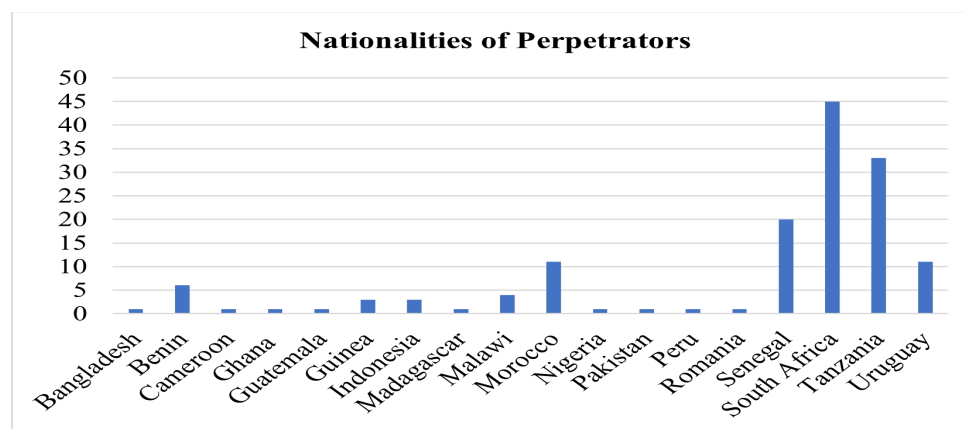**Figure 5.** Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in the DRC over the years (2010-2021):

Note. Information on the number of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in MONUSCO between 2010-2021. From Conduct in UN Field Missions. https://conduct.unmissions.org/sea-overview. Copyright by United Nations 2021.

Regarding the perpetrators, the data shows that, in MONUSCO, the 224 SEA allegations reported, involved 303 perpetrators, in which 140 allegations implicated military personnel, whilst 71 allegations of SEA involved civilian personnel and 13 implicated police personnel (DPO, 2021b). Regarding their nationality, in which the data available starts from 2015, what the data says is that out of the 303 perpetrators, 156 did not have their nationality confirmed, whilst the other 147 had their nationality mentioned, the graph that follows brings the nationalities recognised and the number of perpetrators from those nationalities involved

in SEA allegations in MONUSCO. Within these 147, most of the perpetrators were from South Africa, reaching 45 perpetrators involved in 37 cases; followed by Tanzania with 33 perpetrators in 15 allegations; then Senegal with 20 of its deployed police and military personnel involved in 5 allegations; and Morocco and Uruguay, both with 11 of their military personnel implicated in 8 and 4 allegations, respectively (DPO, 2021c). Taking the information mentioned in the previous chapter on the nationalities of the perpetrators in MINUSMA, it is noticeable that the nationalities in common are Benin, Cameroon, and Nigeria with a small number of perpetrators related to these countries, and that the TCCs for both missions differ significantly, a factor that influences the bigger occurrence of SEA violations in MONUSCO than in MINUSMA. On the number of these perpetrators' victims, the data reveals that in the 224 alleged SEA cases, 258 victims were involved, in which 187 of them were adults, 71 were underaged and the rest is unknown. (DPO, 2021b)

Figure 6. Nationalities of the SEA perpetrators in MONUSCO

Note. Information on the identified nationalities of alleged perpetrators of sexual exploitation and abuse in MONUSCO. From Conduct in UN Field Missions Https://conduct.un missions.org/sea-subjects. Copyright by United Nations 2021.

From these data, it is notable that in the DRC violations of sexual exploitation and abuse are not committed just by the UN peacekeepers, but also by non-state armed groups, and Congolese armed police and forces. As mentioned by Rodriguez and Kinne (2019), many characteristics can influence in the higher or lower occurrence of SEA within a mission, such as the strength of the host-country's domestic institutions and law enforcement, and its societal norms, along with the societal norms and cultural behaviour of the UN personnel's national country. In the DRC, just in 2020, the mission recorded 1,053 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, in which most of the victims were women, following by girls, and

most were attributed to non-state armed groups – 700 cases- whilst the rest accounted for state actors, such as FARDC and the Congolese National Police (UNSC, 2021b). These numbers show that SEA has been a problem in the country for a long time and it did not come with the UN mission, rather it has been used as a weapon of war throughout its violent conflicts. Furthermore, due to its government weakness in addressing such issue, even state armed groups engage in such violations, showing the country has weak law enforcement and does not bring much effort into tackling the problem and continues to let them happen by not holding perpetrators accountable.

Thus, when peacekeepers arrive, although they go to training and the UN points out the consequences if they behave inappropriately, it does not stop them from perpetrating SEA. Besides, as previously mentioned, their cultural standards and the strength of their country's law enforcement can also influence their actions (Rodrigues and Kinne, 2019). In MONUSCO, most peacekeepers perpetrators are from South Africa, a country with one of the highest rates of violence against women and with a strong "rape culture" (Human Rights Watch, 2001), thus as it is common in their country, such behaviour does not stop once they start as Blue Helmet or civilian personnel to the UN. In Tanzania, also from where many of the perpetrators are from, what happens is also a high number of women experiencing sexual violence and has a culture of circumcision in women (MoHCDGEC et al, 2016), indicating that it is also embedded in the society. Such domestic behaviours do follow the personnel to their area of deployment, in addition to the lack of governmental actions to tackle the issue, which may facilitate higher numbers of SEA allegations in MONUSCO. Therefore, although the presence of MONUSCO might decrease the numbers of sexual exploitation and abuse, there still is a significant number of violations, especially as many of the institutions that can prosecute the perpetrators, including the UN, have not shown effective efforts to tackle this issue.

When it comes to the status of the investigations on these 224 cases, the data indicates that most of them – 94 – were unsubstantiated, meaning that 94 allegations were disproven by investigation or there was insufficient evidence to prove it. Meanwhile, 81 were substantiated, 35 are still pending, and 14 were recorded for information or review purposes (DPO, 2021h). Within the investigative entities, as most of the perpetrators form the military personnel of the mission, theTCC from where they are from, are responsible for further investigations, and in MONUSCO 76 allegations were being investigated by them, in which

33 were substantiated. Meanwhile, MONUSCO was involved in the investigation of 42 allegations, in which only 13 were substantiated and 28, the majority, were unsubstantiated. Other UN entities, such as the OIOS, also investigate the allegations, and in this case, out of the 68 investigations, 29 resulted as substantiated and 28 were unsubstantiated (DPO, 2021h). Furthermore, in its efforts to deter misconduct, MONUSCO continues to establish preventive measures, through training, risk assessments, and enforcement of curfews, as well as continuing with community outreach on the UN's "zero-tolerance" policy on SEA. Also, in 2021, it has started to implement projects under the trust fund in support of SEA victims in areas such as Bunia, Bujovu, and Sake. (UNSC, 2021a, p.15)

These low numbers of substantiated allegations of SEA, show another issue involved in UN peace operations, which is the matter of accountability. What happens is that responsibility towards proper accountability can become a burden, as these personnel are representing both the United Nations and each national government acting as a troop-contributing country, as the military and police personnel still act in the name of their national government (Smith, 2017). For a mission to begin, there is a legal framework which is set out by the status of forces agreement between the host country and the organisation on privileges and immunities of UN's peacekeepers and the other personnel to be sent to the mission. However, in these forces agreements the country that has jurisdiction over the deployed personnel is not the host-country, but rather the troop-contributing country from where they are be from, then even if the violations happened in the host-country's territory, the host-country cannot prosecute the UN militarised personnel. In this sense, the United Nations can start an investigation through the OIOS, and in case the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse are verified, it can choose to repatriate the perpetrator or ban him from future operations, but the major criminal and juridical processes need to be held by his country of nationality, meaning the troop-contributing country (Smith, 2017). Additionally, the high level of turn-over of peacekeepers personnel in a mission is an obstacle for investigations to go further, along with the fact that the UN does not have the status of a state, thus does not possesses the same juridical or administrative powers to discharge its personnel of the obligations stated by the Geneva Conventions (Murphy, 2006). Besides, from the national governments' side, due to the negative publicity it can bring to the country – on the eyes of the international community or the UN's – there might be few prosecutions most

likely, because high numbers of prosecutions can bring the organisation to decide that troops from this country should be banned from participating in peace missions.

In the same way, the lack of accountability is seen negatively by the international community because a short number of investigations or prosecutions passes the idea that the UN, the national government, or the TCCs are not able to protect the population of the host-country and to hold accountable the responsible from these violations. Consequently, they might not be able to bring stability to the territory of the mission. In the case of MONUSCO there is even more negative scrutiny because SEA is embedded in DRC's history since before MONUC's deployment; a situation in which the UN, and the other actors to the mission, failed to stop high numbers of SEA by armed groups and by peacekeepers from occurring. Then, what happens is that the mission leaves the population vulnerable and at the mercy of perpetrators. Thus, MONUSCO loses credibility because it presents the idea that it is not doing its job properly.

4.3.2. Is there a link?

It is possible to notice that when it comes to effectiveness, there are many areas in which MONUSCO has struggled to achieve long-term success. Overall, the mission has managed to maintain the violent clashes within the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but its civilians still face life threats from the ongoing presence of armed groups, particularly in the eastern side of the country, where MONUSCO is mostly active. That is, despite limiting the area of influence of the armed groups, MONUSCO has not managed to stop their number from rising, as there still are more than 100 armed groups located just in Eastern DRC. Regarding its priority on the protection of civilians, the data brought in this paper shows this is the area in which MONUSCO has had most complications, as at times it has encountered significant failures – cases of mass sexual violence or several deaths directly related to the conflict – but in others created mechanisms in which have helped to improve the lives of the Congolese. When going through the reports available on the numbers of sexual violence committed by non-state and state armed groups, one notices that due to its historical and cultural background, the rape culture is embedded in the Congolese society, as many of the individuals in the armed groups use them as weapons of war but is noticeable that the deployment of MONUSCO has helped these numbers to decrease in some periods. Nevertheless, the mission failed in stopping its own personnel from committing sexual

exploitation and abuse, even with the implementation of its mechanisms and rules on the misconduct of peacekeepers.

After going through the data on SEA committed by peacekeepers in MONUSCO, the numbers are alarming, especially when knowing that under-reporting cases is an issue faced by all UN peace operations. As explained in the previous point, these violations happen due to many factors such as the cultural behaviour of the deployed personnel, the level of the rule of law in the host-country, and the lack of accountability by the institutions involved, including the UN. The situation in MONUSCO is worrying, as the numbers do not seem to be going down even after so many years of deployment and the improvement on the UN tools against misconduct. After looking at the outcomes of MONUSCO, the question that comes is whether there is a link between the failures and the occurrence of SEA violations by the peacekeepers.

What this study could find from its investigations is that despite the alarming numbers recorded of SEA by peacekeepers, MONUSCO still managed to continue working on its tasks and achieve relative success in some of its projects and developments. This study saw that there is no direct link between the outcomes of the mission and SEA violations in the overall performance, thus such violations could be seen more as a consequence of the presence of the peacekeepers in the DRC. However, when looking separately at its priorities on the protection of civilians and on the support for the stabilisation, strengthening of DRC's State institutions, key governance, and security reforms, it can be noted that the occurrence of SEA affects them differently and can influence on the outcomes of its tasks. For instance, in its priority regarding the strengthening of the state and its institutions, cases of SEA by peacekeepers do not seem to affect the work of the mission or that the actors to the conflict bother about such occurrences. That could be so because, as mentioned earlier, the DRC itself is known worldwide as a country where sexual violence occurs daily and is committed not just by violent individuals in armed groups, but Congolese soldiers working for the country's defence and security forces also engage in such violations. In the case of non-state armed groups and militias, such violations by peacekeepers do not affect them or their activities so they are indifferent on such issues. In the case of state armed groups, because they also commit these violations, it can be indifferent to them whether a peacekeeper commits SEA or not, and such acts do not stop the Congolese soldiers from doing their training and work along with MONUSCO around the country. When looking at the perspective of the

Congolese government, SEA by peacekeepers might have a small impact in MONUSCO's work with local governments because there is a more direct engagement between those, but it would not be the same when talking about the national government, as the government itself brings almost no effort in supporting MONUSCO. That is, this study found that what happens in MONUSCO is that if the national government has different interests from the mission in a specific issue, it most likely ignores the mission's support and advice – especially in the political situation in the country because the instability of the DRC works in favour of the elites in power. Then, for the Congolese government, cases of SEA by peacekeepers do not affect their work and might even work in favour of the desire of the government for the mission to leave, as with such cases MONUSCO loses legitimacy and credibility. Besides, most tasks related to this priority mostly involve people that are not affected by SEA violations, namely victims, and do not have significant participation of women, thus the people that are working together with peacekeepers that have committed SEA are not aware of the consequences it can bring to the victims and possibly not even acknowledge that the peacekeepers have committed SEA, as these perpetrators are not hold accountable for their misconduct.

Looking at the priority on the protection of civilians, it is noted that SEA can have some impact on MONUSCO's work. The first thing here is that tasks involving protection of civilians often put the peacekeepers and civilians together, that is, there is more engagement between them. And in contrast to the other priority, the peacekeepers would be working immediately with civilians that have suffered directly or indirectly from SEA violations, giving more space for scrutiny within the communities. Additionally, most of the people in urgent need of protection are those that live in remote areas or places such as camps for refugee and displaced people, thus these people see the peacekeepers acting in the name of the UN and have high expectations on them and their work. This happens in part because it is not easy for the mission to reach all areas in the DRC and bring awareness to these people on the scope of MONUSCO's work. Then, when the peacekeepers commit these violations so often, these people stop seeing them as a means of protection and start to lose trust on the peacekeepers and on the mission itself. Besides, once the population notices that the numbers of civilians' death are still high and the mechanisms MONUSCO is using do not seem sufficient, the mission starts to lose credibility within the population and people turn sceptical towards the peacekeepers. Overall, this study understands that SEA plays a major role on

civilians' trust on the mission and the peacekeepers, which can affect to a certain extent the work of the mission towards protection of civilians. For instance, MONUSCO has been the target of protests from the Congolese people in the last few years (Kniknie, 2021). In the end, sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers may affect the tasks in which the peacekeepers have constant contact with the population, but in other tasks such as joint patrols or responding to the Community Alert Network, the fact that they committed these violations do not influence them from having a rapid response on any alert.

Therefore, the case of MONUSCO shows that even though the impact of SEA by peacekeepers might not jeopardise the operation, it can affect the work of the mission towards specific tasks stipulated on its mandate. In the case of MONUSCO, what happens is that SEA violations hinder a lot more of a priority which requires the peacekeepers to have direct contact with the local population rather than a priority that is focused on giving strength to the states' institutions or require reforms in some sectors. Thus, this study believes that cases of sexual exploitation and abuse in MONUSCO affected more the principles of credibility and legitimacy, which have been declining due to the long-term deployment of the mission. This happens due to the loss of trust from the Congolese population and negative evaluation from outside actors in the international community, because in their view these peacekeepers should be there to help the population to feel safe and sound but instead act in order to fulfil their needs – in the case of sexual encounters – rather than protecting the vulnerable population. Thus, sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers does influence in a small scale the effectiveness of MONUSCO.

4.4 Effects of Other Factors

As shown in the previous chapter, SEA by peacekeepers is not the only factor that can influence the effectiveness of a mission. In this section, it is explored the other three factors mentioned – nature of the conflict, commitment of the parties, and major powers' interest – and their influence in MONUSCO's outcomes.

4.4.1 Nature of the conflict

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has faced numerous challenges since its colonisation by king Leopold II of Belgium in 1885. Due to its abundance in natural resources, it suffered exploitation until its independence in the 1960s, which led to a crisis involving multiple coups and insurgencies (Reid, 2019). Nevertheless, what brought the DRC into a state of continuous civil war was the unresolved clashes between the Rwandan government

dominated by the Tutsi and the extremist rebels Hutu Interahamwe, which operate in Easter DRC. In an effort to increase border security, Rwanda – backed by Uganda and Burundi (Pottier, 2002) – helped Laurent Kabila to get into power in the DRC, but in the eyes of Rwanda, Kabila was not able to deal with the *Interahamwe* rebels – one of the groups mostly responsible for the Rwandan genocide (Pottier, 2002) – and decided to break the alliance (Aid, 2004). With Kabila ordering many groups to leave the DRC and the other side creating the rebel group *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie (RCD),* composed mainly by Congolese Tutsis, tensions escalated in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, leading to a rebellion (Pottier, 2002; Aid, 2004). This rebellion did not manage to take control of Kinshasa, due to interference from Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe but in Easter DRC – the regions of North and South Kivu – with the help of Rwanda and Burundi, the *Banyamulenge* rebels managed to take control (Pottier, 2002). Since then, the tensions in Eastern DRC continue, with more than 120 armed groups still operating in the region and mistrust between Congolese security forces and civilians (Conciliation Resources, 2021). The ongoing violent conflicts have left over 12 million people in need of humanitarian assistance around the DRC. (Reid, 2019)

Furthermore, one can see from the history of conflicts in the DRC that the artificial nature of its borders, the disregard of ethnic groups and distribution of natural resources led to several military and ethnic factions to compete for control over the natural resources. Topped with weak public institutions, and lack of political organisation which focuses on the interests of the population and distances them from rudimentary principles, as well as civilians looking for other sources of securities rather than the state, creating grounds for the emerge of violent conflicts in Congolese territory (Solomon and Cone, 2004). Overall, these conflicts in the DRC are characterised by a change from the survival of the state as priority to a situation of chaos, with autonomous states – the principal players – using insurgent groups from their neighbouring regions as proxies to achieve their goals. Thus, the status quo of the conflict came to be profitable for the key state parties but damaging to the population. (Kisangani, 2003)

As mentioned by Bercovitch and Langley (1993), it is important to look at the roots of the conflict, its intensity, and duration before the arrival of a peace operation to the territory when studying the nature of the conflict and its effect in a mission's success. In the case of the DRC, regarding the roots, it was noted that they are embedded in the delimitation of its

borders and massive exploitation of its natural resources back in the colonisation period. The duration is over decades, as the tensions in the Congolese territory never ceased to exist, but rather is characterised by peaks in time, such as the 1990s and the two Congolese wars, reaching the point of involvement of its neighbouring African states (Bercovitch and Langley, 1993). Regarding its intensity, data have shown that only in the five years prior to MONUC deployment in 2000, the death toll was more than 56,000 deaths related to the conflicts (UCDP, 2019), indicating a high intensity. Further, when looking at the current developments in the political situation is possible to see that despite its democratic electoral process, there still is space for fraud and unfair elections with constant changes within the government, and that the Congolese institutions still lack strength as there are numerous non-state armed groups that continue to threaten the lives of the Congolese people, especially in Eastern DRC, weakening the security situation in the country.

Despite a decrease in the death toll with the support of MONUSCO, it is possible to note that the characteristics of the nature of the Congolese violent conflicts are still present in the country after all these years. But, if looking specifically to the mandate of the mission and its developments, one can see that this factor influences more the behaviour of the actors to the conflicts, rather than the effectiveness of the mission. That is, the nature of the Congolese conflicts influences the ongoing emergence of armed groups and how they act against each other and against the civilians, i.e., due to historical disputes intra-community. Consequently, MONUSCO is affected because its tasks are defined according to the developments in the DRC and the actions taken by these armed groups. Therefore, the nature of the conflict impacts the tasks but not the effectiveness directly as this depends on other factors to be successful.

4.4.2. The commitment of the parties

Another important factor related to the effectiveness of a mission is the level of commitment of the actors to the conflict towards the mission. On the side of the UN regarding MONUSCO, there has been a significant division within the Security Council, in which the members cannot reach an agreement on a common blueprint, leaving the mission many times to deal alone with the Congolese government. The same happens when agreeing about the use of force, which is important for MONUSCO due to its deployment by the UN Charter chapter VII. Furthermore, the latest reports have brought some cuts in MONUSCO's personnel and budget, which negatively affects the mission's operation (Novosseloff et al,

2019). For instance, that the UN has decreased the authorised budget for MONUSCO throughout the years, i.e., for the year from July 2015 to June 2016, the organisation authorised US$ 1,396,617,400, including US$ 1,330,739,300 for MONUSCO's maintenance (UNGA, 2015), whilst now the amount for its maintenance is of US$ 1,075,338,600, as previously mentioned. By decreasing the number of the work force provided and the budget for its maintenance, the UNSC prevents MONUSCO from providing a proactive and robust deployment and from focusing on the protection of civilians, as less resources mean more division between its priorities, shifting the focus of the mission.

On the side of the Congolese government, historical figures show that it has committed human rights abuses, through ethnically based killings and limitation by decree on freedom of expression and of assembly (Solomon and Cone, 2004), which can be a first indication on the position of this party. The information gathered shows that although it gave legal consent for the deployment of MONUSCO, it has not shown care and willingness to support the mission's work to stop the threat to peace due to the several conflicts happening in Congolese territory. Novosseloff et al (2019, p.91) highlight that the Congolese government at provincial level is a lot more collaborative than those at the national level. In elections, for instance, MONUC managed to achieve agreements on the transition of power, however MONUSCO has a weak political framework, which has been marginalised by the Congolese government in the latest elections. As another example, when the interests of both institutions do not match, the Congolese government choose to follow theirs, especially regarding the security sector reform, so the Congolese elites would not lose their power and control in the society, and for such they would try to disrupt and delay reforms in sectors important for their way of ruling the system (Novosseloff et al, 2019). In this regard, some of the developments show that due to lack of interest in the security sector reform, the Congolese security and defence forces have not had basic trainings in many situations, even when organised by the mission itself as the national government would not follow its part of the bargain and the soldiers would have to find solutions on their own. Another obstacle for the effectiveness of MONUSCO is that neighbouring states still support illegal armed groups acting in the DRC, and favour continuity rather than transformational changes. Another actor to these conflicts is the armed groups, which in the DRC are represented in numerous groups. When it comes to non-state armed groups, they still need to be seen as a major threat to civilians' lives in the country, despite not being a regional or international threat, as they

continue to have a significant presence in the Congolese territory. Furthermore, these non-state armed groups continue to commit human rights violations and war crimes, as they recruit child soldiers – in which 63 children were separated from them by the DDR framework of MONUSCO (UNGA, 2021) – and engage in sexual violence or threat the lives of the civilians.

Therefore, one can see that the commitment of the parties towards the implementation of the mission is a significant factor for its operation and it has a more direct impact on the effectiveness of a mission. Without proper commitment from the side of any of the actors involved in the conflict and in the operation, a big mission like MONUSCO cannot improve the situation of the territory and bring stabilisation to the region. The lack of dedication from the parties stops the mission from putting into practice its plans and actions. In the case of MONUSCO, the mission suffers from a high level of lack of commitment, as reports and data show that important actors to the conflict, such as the Congolese government, do not give the mission sufficient support, the UN has not given proper continuous support, and the armed groups do not seem interested in stopping conflicts from happening. Consequently, the mission loses legitimacy because the actors to the conflict do not seem interested that the mission continues its deployment, which also affects the effectiveness of MONUSCO. Within MONUSCO, when looking at both priorities – protection of civilians and stabilisation and strengthening of state institutions – it was noted that because in some circumstances one or more of the parties have not given enough effort to stop civilian's suffering or enhancing the capacity of the state institutions, MONUSCO has not been able to fully fulfil its mandate.

4.4.3. Interest of major powers

Another factor important for effectiveness is the interest of major powers towards bringing peace to the region in question. That is so because, these major powers are holders of big influence in the international system, especially in institutions such as the United Nations as is where most talks about peace operations happen. These powers act according to their strategic interests, therefore what happens is that they are more willing to have an active participation in peace operations when they have primary interests towards the region in conflict and are not going to work as actively for a mission's success if they have secondary interests (Ogunrotifa, 2012). Then as mentioned previously, their actions reflect in the UN's institutions, which in its turn can affect the operationalisation of a mission, as it is in the UNSC where the practices and steps to be taken in a mission are defined. Novosseloff et al

(2019) have mentioned that, regarding MONUSCO, the Permanent 5, China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States, in the UN Security Council have not shown interest in putting their strategic weight and power into tackling the instability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As mentioned in the "commitment of the parties" this has led to a certain level of stalemate in the Security Council towards the mission, leading MONUSCO to be on its own many times.

In the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, what one sees is that the participation of the major powers in opposing sides of the Congolese civil wars and their level of interference played a major role not just in the conflict but also in the operationalisation of the previously deployed mission in the country, MONUC. The French–USA rivalry regarding their sphere of economic and political influence significantly affected the situation in the DRC, with the then President Mobutu switching sides – first he was backed by the USA and later by France – and later the Anglo-American support for Kabila to join the Congolese presidency. Furthermore, the trade of weapons between both countries to Uganda and Rwanda supporting the rebels, gave strength to both parties to the conflict, undermining the peace process and efforts in disarmament of the operation (Ogunrotifa, 2012). This situation reflects on the current outcomes of MONUSCO, as it is possible to see that the Permanent 5 are still reluctant to send their troops and military knowhow to the mission as the data show that none of the major powers have significantly contributed in this regard to the mission (DPO, 2021a), especially in troop numbers – together the number of troops sent by the 5 countries is equal to 254 (UNP, 2021). Then as the interests of the major powers are linked to the actions the Security Council takes to support a mission, influencing the commitment of the organisation, one can note that this factor can affect the mission's effectiveness in a certain level. For instance, in MONUSCO, reports have shown that recently the UN has backed down in the number of resources given to the mission, culminating in a few setbacks the mission has encountered. That is, by not providing their knowhow these major powers can hinder MONUSCO from fulfilling its mandate in a wider scope.

4.5 Findings

After the analyses of the information gathered, it is possible to do a brief comparison between the factors. Overall, it was noted that all factors – sexual exploitation and abuse, nature of the conflict, commitment of the parties, and major powers' interests – have a certain level of influence on the effectiveness of a mission. In the case of sexual exploitation and

abuse, it can be noted that many factors impact its occurrence and in MONUSCO it led to high numbers of allegations. Due to the historical context of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its records on sexual violence committed by state and non-state actors, together with the cultural background of the troops deployed to the mission, and the high level of turn-over of the troops, there is space for these violations to be common. The lack of accountability from the host-country, the troop-contributing country, and the United Nations also facilitate the occurrence, as the peacekeepers feel they will not face consequences or if so, the consequences will not be significant. Then, it was noted by the tasks and the latest development in the country that sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers does not have significant influence in the overall effectiveness of the mission, but rather affects tasks related to more specific priorities which in their turn might succeed or fail. As mentioned earlier, peacekeeping principles, like credibility and legitimacy, are a lot more affected by cases of SEA, as they are influenced by trust and scrutiny from outside actors. Thus, the assumption that the higher number of SEA violations would have significant impact in the effectiveness of the mission it is not true, as the research showed that SEA violations have minor impact in MONUSCO.

Now, after looking at the other factors, this study believes that the commitment of the parties has a deeper influence in the effectiveness of the mission, as if they work together the chances of success are higher than when they act thinking only about their own interests. Without commitment from any of the parties, the mission can face setbacks and more obstacles to achieve its objectives as it will not have enough support and resources for its success. For instance, the Congolese government does not show interest in fulling committing to MONUSCO, then in important situations such as the political process, the mission has little space to support the electoral process because is more interesting for the national Congolese government that the current status quo continues in the country, which consequently stops the mission from advancing on its priority of the security sector reform. Also, armed groups are still quite active in the Congolese territory, and bring many obstacles to the mission, as whilst some decide to cooperate to diminish the violent clashes, others still commit violent actions. Additionally, the UNSC is not as supportive of the mission as before, as this study saw that it has been decreasing the number of personnel in the mission throughout the updates of the mandate, even though the situation in the DRC is still precarious and its members do not seem to be on consensus in some aspects of the mission,

consequently impacting the resources to the mission and affecting the actions MONUSCO can take to fulfil its tasks.

Regarding the nature of the conflict, one can see that in the case of the DRC the ongoing conflicts since its independence and interference from regional and international states led the country's government to be considered a failed state, giving the mission difficult circumstances to work at. This background might influence the violent behaviour of the armed groups, as they have grown up in these extreme circumstances. Therefore, the nature of the conflict would affect the behaviour of the parties more than MONUSCO's tasks. Regarding the interest of the major powers, it was noted that they can play a more indirect role on a mission's effectiveness, because their interests reflect in the United Nations, especially in the Security Council, and consequently in MONUSCO. However, when looking at the specific tasks to the mission, the interests of major powers do not influence the effectiveness of MONUSCO, as they do not have representation there and the peacekeepers can still work on reaching the mission's objectives.

In sum, SEA violations by peacekeepers do not affect MONUSCO's effectiveness significantly. Rather, such violations influence more the tasks where peacekeepers and Congolese civilians have direct contact or tasks which instantly affect civilians' lives. Then, the situation indicates that principles of peacekeeping are a lot more affected by SEA violations within the mission, because these depend on the scrutiny of the population and the outside actors. Furthermore, it was also found that between the other factors briefly studied, the nature of the conflict and the interests of major powers affect other matters within the complex circumstances the DRC faces. However, the commitment of the parties was shown to be the one with most impact to MONUSCO's effectiveness, because it involves all the parties to the conflict in the DRC and their willingness to help the mission to bring stabilisation and peace to the Congolese territory. Therefore, this study understands that sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers impacts the effectiveness of MONUSCO to a small extent and thus does not jeopardise the outcomes of the mission.

Conclusion

This paper had the aim to understand the extent of influence the cases of sexual exploitation and abuse can have in the effectiveness of a UN peace operation. Its research consisted of looking at the UN data available on the cases of SEA by peacekeepers within the two missions chosen – MONUSCO in the DRC and MINUSMA in Mali – and at reports describing the developments of the mission, as well as at the literature on effectiveness. Then, this study merged some of the most common ideas of effectiveness to try understanding the link SEA violations have with the effectiveness of the mission. To illustrate that, it analysed the mandate and the tasks of both missions to find out where they are being successful and where they are failing so it could cross the data and see the outcomes. Additionally, to have a better understanding of the impact of SEA on the mission, it also briefly investigated three other factors – the nature of the conflict, the commitment of the parties, and the interests of major powers – and tried to see where these can affect the mission and compared to SEA violations.

The choice for MONUSCO and MINUSCA as case studies was due the fact that the missions are on different levels regarding the cases of sexual exploitation and abuse that are reported. Whilst MONUSCO is one of the UN peace operations with the highest number of cases ever recorded, reaching 224 allegations, MINUSMA has one of the lowest numbers, reaching 29 allegations. Furthermore, both missions have close numbers of personnel currently deployed – between 17,000 and 18,000 - both have a vast territory, and some of the tasks stipulated by the UN Security Council are similar – as both are considered stabilisation missions. With that in consideration, by studying missions with different levels of SEA allegations it can help to have an initial understanding of the extent of the influence of this issue towards the effectiveness of a peace operation. Thus, looking at these two different missions and the findings related to their case, this study saw a variation in the level of impact the SEA violations have.

In the case of MONUSCO, which has been deployed in the DRC since 2010, SEA violation by peacekeepers is a serious issue and this study found that it has some impact in the effectiveness of the mission. The initial problem in MONUSCO is that sexual violence is a common "practice" in the Democratic Republic of the Congo where not only individuals of non-state armed groups but also members of the Congolese defence and security forces are often committing them. Additionally, some of the countries with biggest troop contribution in

MONUSCO – such as South Africa and Tanzania – happen to be ones where sexual violence and abuse are common within their society, meaning most of their people do not see the engagement on such violations as "wrong-doing". Moreover, the current mandate of MONUSCO has the protection of civilians as its main strategic priority and most of the tasks related to it entail peacekeepers to constantly be in touch with the local populations, as they go for patrols in the areas, promote community engagement with trainings and talks with community leaders, also to enhance the population's awareness on MONUSCO and its work. Apart from that, this study also found that with the high number of SEA allegations comes the issue of lack of accountability, involving all actors to the mission – the host-country, the troop-contributing countries, and the UN itself – as these actors do not want to be the targets of negative scrutiny from the international community seeing that no proper measures are given towards the perpetrators. Then, as the possible perpetrators see that there are no significant consequences – even with the UN's standards of conduct – they do not see as a problem to be engaging in such violations. Therefore, all these circumstances give space for the occurrence of sexual exploitation and abuse and lead to the high numbers reported.

Then, within MONUSCO this study saw that there are areas in which SEA violations will have more influence than others. For instance, in its priority of civilian protection, the Congolese have more contact with the peacekeepers which makes them more aware of the occurrence of these violations – as they might be related to a victim or are acquainted within their community. Therefore, the population starts to see these peacekeepers as new threat because they see them engaging in those situations and lose their trust in them, as well as their view of peacekeepers as security for their lives and their territory. With the loss of trust from a considerable part of the population, the mission loses credibility – an important characteristic of UN peace operations. The same happens in the eyes of external actors, as the protests the Congolese are making in their country, and more criticism on the mission, leads to more loss of credibility and legitimacy. In contrast, when looking at the other strategic priority of MONUSCO – to support the strengthening of state institutions, security reforms, and key governance – this study understood that SEA violations do not have much impact in the way of working of the mission to achieve this goal. This happens due to the fact that the tasks related to this priority involve government authorities and Congolese state armed forces and are focused on strengthening the Congolese institutions. Besides, the Congolese government at the national level has been decreasing its level of commitment to MONUSCO

meanwhile, all types of actors to the conflict engage in sexual exploitation and abuse, as such these individuals are not bothered by the high number of cases involving peacekeepers as perpetrators. Then, through this analysis this study finds MONUSCO to be a mission where it is mostly failing to achieve its objectives, because the level of insecurity and instability is still significant – due to the presence of more than 100 armed groups just in Eastern DRC – and that the state institutions are weak, and no security reform has been achieved. In the end, this study did not find a significant link between the number of SEA violations by peacekeepers and the effectiveness of the mission. Rather, this study believes that such violations have more impact on the credibility and legitimacy of the mission and does not stop the mission from achieving its most important objectives.

Then, after comparing SEA violations by peacekeepers with the nature of the conflict, the commitment of the parties, and the interests of major powers, it was even more noted that the extent of SEA violations' influence in effectiveness is small. That is so because, when looking at these other factors and the tasks of the mission, this paper understood the commitment of the parties to be the one with the biggest impact on the effectiveness, as this involves the participation of the parties to the conflict on the quest to stable peace and security in the DRC. What is noteworthy is that the less the parties to the conflict are willing to work with MONUSCO to achieve its goals, the lower the chances for the tasks to be fulfilled – especially when even the Congolese government at the national level sees the current status quo as interesting for its elite to keep ruling the country and most of the non-state armed groups are not engaging in cease-fires to stop fighting with each other. The nature of the conflict and the interests of major powers are factors that do not affect the effectiveness of the mission directly, with both influencing more which tasks are given priority in the mission and the major powers' interest also dictating the tools the mission will have to fulfil its mandate. Therefore, with these findings it was noted that SEA violations by peacekeepers in MONUSCO do not stop the mission from achieving success in its objectives.

With the case of MINUSMA, established in Mali in 2013, the impact of SEA violations by peacekeepers is even smaller than in MONUSCO. First, there are many circumstances that can explain why there are less cases of SEA by peacekeepers in this mission, such as the extreme level of insecurity in most areas of Mali, the lower possibility of peacekeepers reaching remote areas, and the mandate of the mission. In the case of the high level of insecurity, what happens is that despite some big coalitions, as the *Plateforme* and

the CMA, have stopped fighting each other in the north, more dangerous armed groups – such as the Islamic State – continue to act violently in many areas of the regions, which hinders the free movement of the Malian population around the territory and of the peacekeepers themselves – as they stay most of their time in UN compounds – which means that the level of interactions between peacekeepers and the local population is very limited. In addition, the fact that some areas of the Malian territory are difficult to reach during most part of the year due to intense flood and the fact that the mission is not equipped with proper air set that could take the peacekeepers and humanitarian assistants to those regions. Moreover, the current mandate of MINUSMA focuses more on the implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement and on the stabilisation and strengthening of state authority, situations in which involve more the participation of Malian security and defence forces and state leaders. In addition, MINUSMA is a promoter of gender equality, advocating for a more significant presence of women in the mission and in the Malian government, and has even a Gender unit to address such issues, as well as promotes more training on the conduct of the peacekeepers and on the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda. Thus, there is less space for sexual exploitation and abuse occurrence in MINUSMA.

After analysing the mandate of MINUSMA and its current priorities, this study found that SEA violations by peacekeepers have no impact in the effectiveness of the mission. Regarding its priority on the implementation of the Agreement, one which the mission has been partially successful, the peacekeepers engage more often with the Malian government, the *Plateforme*, and CMA coalitions so it can support the implementation of the accords and secure that the three parties do not engage in conflicts between each other in the north of Mali. For its priority on the facilitation for the execution of the *stratégie de stabilisation du centre du Mali,* the tasks aim the re-establishment of Malian state authority in the centre and reach security in the region, also situations where there is almost no contact between peacekeepers and the population. Even regarding its priority on the protection of civilians, what this study saw was that the limited freedom of movement, lead the peacekeepers to act more on quick impact projects or the early warning mechanisms. Thus, together with the low number of SEA violations reported, what happens in MINUSMA is that there is no link between SEA violations by peacekeepers and the effectiveness of the mission. Even on the credibility and legitimacy of the mission, these are principals more influenced by the scrutiny

towards the lack of counter-terrorism tasks within the mission, as well as the fact that peacekeepers engage too often with armed groups due to MINUSMA's priorities.

Doing the comparison with the nature of the conflict, the commitment of the parties, and the interests of major powers, SEA violations show even less impact in MINUSMA. That is, the effectiveness of the mission is affected a lot more by the commitment of the parties and the interests of the major powers. In the case of the nature of the conflict, this study noted that the complex conflict and the presence of numerous foreign armed groups posed a serious threat to Malian territory and led the UN Security Council to go for a more robust approach in MINUSMA and to continuously need to adapt the mandate according to the development of its previous tasks. For instance, the initial mandate in 2013 focused on the northern territory, but as the armed groups started spreading to other areas – especially the centre – the UN saw the need to implement a strategy specific to Central Mali. For the commitment of the parties, the partial success the mission is having with the implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement shows the influence of the parties' commitment on the effectiveness because if the three parties to the Agreement had decided not to collaborate, there would have been no achievement in that region. Also, as the situation in Central Mali shows, the armed groups that are not signatories to a cease-fire or peace agreement keep bringing violence and imposing their own laws in the Malian territory, and do not show willingness to participate in such, hardening the work of MINUSMA towards its support on the execution of the stabilisation strategy for Central Mali. Finally, for the major powers interests, this study noted that MINUSMA is a mission where they seem to be more active than MONUSCO with countries like France interfering in Malian affairs and bringing their own operation before the establishment of a UN-led mission, and other such as China even deploying a considerable amount of troops – in MINUSMA there are more than 400 Chinese troops – and working in more ways than just through the UNSC in the mission. Therefore, for the case of MINUSMA this study believes that sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers have no effect in the effectiveness nor the work of the mission.

In sum, with the study on MONUSCO and MINUSMA this paper understands that the extent of the influence of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers can vary from mission to mission, but generally there is no direct impact. Firstly, there is the variation on the number of cases which indicates that the more cases there are, more likely it can affect a mission's effectiveness. Secondly, the occurrence is influenced by factors within the mission

– nationality of TCCs, implementation of Women, Peace, and Security agenda, and so on –
and within the host-country – such as the cultural behaviour of its population, and strength of
state institutions. Then, depending on the strategic priorities created for the mission, it may
occur that one will entail more communication between peacekeepers and the locals – which
can lead the peacekeepers to engage in sexual encounters by offering money or food for
individuals in vulnerable situations – then others, which have more communication between
peacekeepers and state defence and security forces rather than the vulnerable population.
Thus, the extent of the influence of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers varies not
just from one mission to another, but also within the mission because there are tasks more
susceptible to fail due to the number of SEA violations than others. As well, this study found
that such violations more likely affect the credibility and legitimacy of the mission – due to
negative scrutiny from outside actors. Overall, the cases of MINUSMA and MONUSCO
helped this paper to understand SEA violations as more of a consequence of peacekeepers'
presence in the host-country rather than a factor that has direct influence on the effectiveness
of a peace operation.

Finally, based on these findings, few implications should be addressed. As mentioned
in this paper, there is yet to be a concrete and widely common notion of what is effectiveness
and how it can be applied in a peace operation, therefore what this study said to be an
indication of an effective work, it might be seen differently in another research. Additionally,
due to the variety of peace operations still ongoing and that have already ended, it was not
possible to analyse all UN operations, thus the conclusion of this paper should be linked only
to both missions studied, MONUSCO and MINUSMA. That is, when other research focuses
on different missions, the results most likely will be different – especially taking into
consideration that every mission has a similar base but also have their own characteristics,
which influence on its outcomes. Furthermore, the other three factors chosen – nature of the
conflict, commitment of the parties, and interest of major powers – are key in a peace
operation, which is why they were chosen for the comparison. However, there are plenty
other factors that can affect a mission and will have different results.

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