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WPS and SEA in Peacekeeping Operations

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Abstract and Keywords

In the past fifteen years, despite the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security and the Secretary-General's Bulletin on Zero Tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by peacekeepers, abuse by interveners remains prevalent in peace operations. SEA is not only perpetrated by peacekeepers, but also aid workers, diplomats, private contractors, and others associated with interventions. This chapter maps the extent and main characteristics of SEA in peace operations, and investigates the ways the international community has attempted to prevent and hold individuals accountable for SEA. It provides an assessment of the weaknesses in the existing WPS framework regarding SEA, particularly in terms of its engagement with masculinities, capital, and other permissive factors that make SEA such a central feature of peacekeeping operations.

Keywords: sexual exploitation and abuse, SEA, peace operations, masculinities, conflict-related sexual violence, accountability

IN 2015, revelations emerged that peacekeepers from France, Chad, and Equatorial Guinea had regularly raped homeless and starving boys aged 8 to 15 in refugee camps in the Central African Republic, and that a French military commander had tied up and undressed four girls and forced them to have sex with a dog, after which one of the girls died (Aids Free World 2015; Deschamps et al. 2015). Although alarming, these revelations were not surprising: interveners in peace operations (including military and civilian peacekeepers, aid workers, diplomats, private contractors, and others associated with missions) have been implicated in the sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) of local women and children in nearly every UN peacekeeping operation (PKO) since the end of the Cold War.

According to the UN, *sexual exploitation* is "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,"