

BJIR

Brazilian Journal of International Relations

ISSN: 2237-7743 | Edição Quadrimestral | volume 5 | edição nº 2 | 2016

*Islands of Stability: new conception on the
use of force regarding the implementation
of Protection of Civilians*

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A Brazilian Journal Of International Relations (BJIR) está indexada no International Political Science Abstracts (IPSA), EBSCO Publishing e Latindex

ISLANDS OF STABILITY: NEW CONCEPTION ON THE USE OF FORCE REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

Graziene Carneiro de Souza¹

Abstract: This article proposes that the normative context of the use of force is being modified by a new way to implement the Protection of Civilians (PoC). Resolution 2098 of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) created a Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) with an unprecedented mandate to implement the use of force preemptively. In this context, the objective of this paper is to evidence that the FIB's offensive actions resulted in the emergence of the "Islands of Stability" concept, which represents a new method to implement the PoC. In order to elaborate this method, a review of literature, news papers and official documents was undertaken, as well as interviews with MONUSCO officials. Its outcome is a significant update, adaptation and evolution on the use of force in peace operations that aims to influence the general debate regarding military intervention and PoC.

Key Words: Use of force, MONUSCO, FIB, Protection of Civilians, Islands of Stability.

ILHAS DE ESTABILIDADE: NOVA CONCEPÇÃO DO USO DA FORÇA PARA A IMPLEMENTAÇÃO DA PROTEÇÃO DE CIVIS

Resumo: Este artigo propõe que o contexto normativo sobre o uso da força está sendo modificado por uma nova forma de implementação da Proteção de Civis (PoC). A Resolução 2098 do Conselho de Segurança das Nações Unidas criou uma Força de Brigada de Intervenção (FIB) com mandato sem precedentes para implementar o uso da força preventivamente. Neste contexto, o objetivo deste trabalho é evidenciar que as ações ofensivas da FIB resultaram na emergência do conceito de "Ilhas de Estabilidade", apresentando novo método de operacionalização da PoC. A fim de explanar este método, foi efetuada revisão de literatura, de matérias jornalísticas e de documentos oficiais, além de entrevistas com oficiais da MONUSCO. Verificou-se significativa atualização, adaptação e evolução do uso da força em operações de paz que influencia o debate geral sobre a intervenção militar e a PoC.

Palavras-Chave: Uso da força, MONUSCO, FIB, Proteção de Civis, Ilhas de Estabilidade.

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Introduction

Normative evolution is a legal rationalization of the modern state system's structure. Since the nineteenth century, more and more recognition of these rules have been codified in international law and regimes, and in official mandates of international organizations. The use of force against a member of international society, subject to the rules and regulations formulated mainly by the most powerful units, is tied to the normative context of each international order according to the interpretation of State duty. (Finnemore, 2004: p.2)

The United Nations peacekeeping operations (PKO), started in 1948, are within this context. The understanding of new State's responsibilities justified the implementation of the use of force to ensure human security, representing a different interpretation of how and why the force should be applied.

In this regard, the UNSC Resolution 2098 of March 2013 authorized the creation of the FIB in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo – MONUSCO. For the first time in the history of PKO under the edge of this organization, the use of force was allowed to neutralize armed groups. (Braga, 2010) The active engagement of FIB enabled the political, military, and humanitarian aspects of MONUSCO to be jointly adapted in order to influencing the operation of the PoC and contributing to further develop the concept of "Islands of Stability." If previously, as in the case of MINUSTAH (United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti), peacekeepers watched static the violations of human rights, in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the FIB started to employ robust actions preemptively to prevent these violations.²

Study of this issue is necessary as the application of the "Islands of Stability" may change the method in which PoC is implemented. Since the debate is ongoing in the UNSC, and with think tanks, specialists, and state members criticizing this method, it is appropriate to investigate the actions and mandate of the FIB and the application of the concepts of "Islands of Stability" and PoC.

This article aims to analyze how the PoC's implementation has been modified through Resolution 2098, the FIB and its unprecedented authorization to use force. To this end, this paper will be divided into three parts: first, it will outline the normative evolution of the use of force in the modern State's system; then, it will summarize the main features of the five generations of peace operations and the human security debate; and subsequently, it will

² Robust peacekeeping operations are peacekeeping missions conducting offensive military operations.

expose the concept of "Islands of Stability" taking into account the experience of MONUSCO and its influence on the PoC's application.

1) Normative evolution of the use of force in international relations.

New standards creation in the international system is a result of State's conduct changes in relation to sovereignty, individual, or the right to go to war. As reported by Finnemore, international relations normative process is directly linked to military intervention since international standards are not divorced from State's power and interest. On the contrary, "(...) rules about intervention are strongly if not entirely shaped by actions of powerful states that actually have the capacity to intervene (...)." Therefore, in the author's view, constant modifications in the regulatory context appoint alterations in military interventions. In this sense, international order in each period of the history of States system is set by a different regulatory framework, regarding to the right to intervene and to the interpretation of the principle of sovereignty. (Finnemore, 2004: p.5)

Within the limits of absolutism era, States sovereignty was related to the fact that states "acted however they pleased within their own jurisdictions." (Bellamy, 2009: p.8) In the nineteenth century, the construction and definition of intervention itself, as a category of military action distinguished from war, was adapted to the political changes and military behavior.³ In previous time of the League of Nations Pact, in 1919, to the conclusion of the Briand-Kellogg Pact of proscription of war of aggression, in 1928, and the very Charter of the United Nations, in 1945, sovereignty was understood as the practice in which States "enjoyed a right to go to war" based on *realpolitik*.⁴ (Finnemore, 2004: p.12) In the post-colonial period - after 1945 - sovereignty started to have a direct relationship with the statement that all people had the right to self-determination, right to determine their political status and their economic, social and cultural development, which meant that no power could deliberately intervene in a State considered weaker.⁵

In the late twentieth century, self-determination notion was relativized by the humanitarian idea. Based in the new interpretation of the State duty or the State's obligation to

³ "Intervention, as a nineteenth-century practice within Europe, was understood to be aimed at governments rather than territory and so provided a way of bringing about political change without disturbing the Vienna boundaries and territorial settlement that underpinned the entire European order of the period."

⁴ *Realpolitik* is a German term related to power politics. It emphasizes politics based on practical power over politics embedded on moral and ethical principles.

⁵ This understanding of sovereignty was an attempt to avoid reemergence of colonialism.

ensure security to its citizens, other standards were added to the international law, discussing what came to be known as humanitarian intervention. (Hoffmann apud Herz, 2010)

Humanitarian interventions are equally related to the normative transformation on the use of force in international politics. (Ricobem, 2010) Discussed mainly in the UN, the comprehension of military intervention is embedded in its Charter. According to Tardy, the United Nations Charter is the most detailed document that regulates the use of force in the modern State's system. The author defends that "after a few inconclusive attempts, such as the Treaty of Versailles instituting the League of Nations (1919) and the Kellogg–Briand Pact (1928), the UN Charter put forth the most detailed framework regarding the use of force." (Tardy, 2007)

Over time, humanitarian interventions, also known as peace operations, suffered progressive conceptual and practical changes in their nature; evolution proven in resolutions of the UNSC that legitimize the actions of multilateral military forces in the crises and conflicts' pacific or coercive solution.⁶ Employed as a tool for reactive actions of the international community, represented by the United Nations, peace operations serve as response to threats to international peace and security.

2) The five generations of UN PKO and the concept of PoC.

From its characteristics, Kenkel divided the UN PKO in five generations.⁷ (Kenkel, 2013: p. 125) The period between 1956 and 1987 was marked by the peak of peacekeeping operations defined as "classic", "traditional" or "first generation," most of them under mandates that aimed monitoring ceasefires, truces and armistices, patrolling borders and excluded military zones, supporting the withdrawal of troops and monitoring of negotiations for definitive peace treaties.⁸ (Taylor apud Baylis, Smith, 2006: p.412) After the Cold War, PKO were termed as "second generation,"⁹ (Malan, 1998: p.2) which in line with Mark

⁶ Multilateral means the active participation of troop contributing countries in operations since the UN does not have its own military force.

⁷ Conceptually, peace operations are divided in generations by expert scholars in the field. There is no consensus on how they are divided.

⁸ Traditional peacekeeping operations involve the establishment of a group of observers or a military peace force under the command of the UN, which should be unfolded and disposed between the parties of a conflict, usually after a ceasefire. In this case, the peacekeeping force employs its weapons only in self-defense, and it is only established with the host country's consent and, most often, it is not made with troops from major powers.

⁹ Unequivocal examples of the conception of these peacekeeping operations occurred in Namibia (UNTAG), Cambodia (UNTAC), Angola (UNAVEM I and II), El Salvador (ONUSAL) and in Mozambique (ONUMOZ). In these cases, the peace process was initiated with the establishment of a cease fire by certain large peace agreements, in which the troops for peacekeeping would be deployed to the affected areas with the consent of the

Malan, means peace operations developed in association with the order of the remaining conflicts of the Cold War, in which the UN, or other international organization, negotiates political solutions based on mutual opponents' commitment.

According to Michael Barnett, PKO and peace enforcement operations are the second phase of peace operations, given that they consider "internal security" and "domestic order" relevant for the maintenance of regional and international security. Barnett states that if the majority of peace operations before 1988 regards the transition from decolonization to legal sovereignty, almost all of them since then, concerns the transition from civil war to civil society, reflecting a shift in the conceptualization of how best encourage a stable peace system and the appropriate means to accomplish it. (Barnett, 1995: p.415)

After the second generation, the UN became involved with the completion of internal conflicts and the assignment of multidimensional peacekeepers troops' tasks, which usually include activities such as separation of combatants, disarmament of irregular forces, demobilization and transformation of regular and irregular forces into a unified army, assistance for the reintegration of ex-combatants into civil society, establishment of new systems of policing or police institutions, and monitoring of elections for new governments.

However, on same decade, still in 1992, Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali classified missions approved under Chapter VII as the "third generation" of PKO, multilateral and multidimensional, characterized by the involvement with protection of civilians and diversified mandates, related to the new wars' characteristics.¹⁰ (UNDPKO, 2013) Defined by the difficulties of traditional distinctions between victim and aggressor, public and private, war crime and crime, "the new conflicts have led to impasses related to the three guiding principles of PKO: the parties consent, impartiality/neutrality, and the use of force only in exceptional cases, which were "discussed later in the Brahimi report of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).

In recent decades, the "third generation" of PKO represented by consensus at the United Nations has developed as the main response to systematic violations of human rights

agreements parties. It is also part of this phase, the controversial operations in Bosnia (UNPROFOR), Somalia (UNOSOM I and II), and Rwanda (UNAMIR), which did not obtain the same level of consent and cooperation of the parties.

¹⁰ The United Nations defines "multidimensional" missions those operations "designed to ensure the implementation of comprehensive peace agreements and help to lay the foundation for sustainable peace." Unlike "traditional" missions, which only involve military tasks, multidimensional missions are complex operations ranging from the military apparatus to civilian organizations with the objective of "helping to establish governments, monitor compliance with human rights, ensure sectorial reforms, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants."

and threats to international peace and security.¹¹ The political effort to prevent humanitarian disasters, in order to protect the individual, within the recent perception that the human being and human rights should be valued in international politics, became commitment on the world stage and gave rise to the concept of "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P). (Weiss, 2004) Kenkel affirms that the combination of the extended use of force and the largest civilian capacity to work in operations and temporary mandates designated the fourth generation of UN PKO. (Kenkel, 2013: p.132)

In consonance with the author, the fourth generation of UN PKO differs from the second and third generations as it consists of robust reconstruction operations and combines the use of force with more intrusive civilian tasks on issues related to local autonomy. Once these missions have conceptual basis relatively prone to the use of force, this factor is a paradigm. The controversy here is related to the use of force and the reconstruction of peace, in this case, they are implemented by actors with different backgrounds, agendas and political goals.¹² (Kenkel, 2013: p.134)

The combination of these elements gave rise to what some international relations experts termed as "hybrid operation" or fifth generation of UN PKO. According to Kenkel, these operations provide troops and police under joint command of the UN and regional organizations. These operations are characterized by separate chain of command and segregated mandates.¹³ (Kenkel, 2013: p.134) In general, they reflect the current division of labor of the global system of peace operations involving humanitarian, political and military aspects, each one with their respective responsibilities in the peace reconstruction process.¹⁴

¹¹ In 1994, Boutros Boutros-Ghali announced that peacekeeping operations would become the United Nations priority, with about 70,000 troops in 17 operations around the world. In 2013, the DPKO stated that 117 countries contributed troops, a total of 97,157 personnel in 16 peace operations. Available from: http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/contributors_archive.shtml. Accessed in 5th October 2014.

¹² "According to Kenkel, peacebuilding operations, as noted above, combine a high potential level of use of force with a number of intrusive political tasks; indeed the same liberal paradigm that gives these missions their conceptual base appears to present a relatively high propensity towards the use of force for intervention. Here, as Richmond points out, one of the major problems is that the use of force and peacebuilding's civilian, non-military tasks are carried out by different actors with different origins, agendas, and political goals (Richmond, 2004, 84, 87)."

¹³ To Kenkel "what sets this type of mission apart is its hybrid character—these missions deploy troops and police personnel under mixed command, with both the United Nations and various regional organizations deploying troops to the same missions under separate chains of command and distinct forms of mandate. Differently from a Chapter VIII mission and its time-limited 'farming-out' of primarily peace-enforcement, high-use of force mandates, hybrid missions involve the simultaneous deployment of UN troops and those of a regional organization. These missions reflect a growing shift in the division of labor in the global system of peace operations."

¹⁴ The humanitarian, political and military aspects and their respective responsibilities in the process of peace building were highlighted in the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations report, titled "The New Horizon report."

UNAMID (African Union and the United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur), AMIS (African Union Mission in Sudan) and MINUSTAH (United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti) are characterized as examples of these types of missions.

Hybrid operations are the result of human rights and human security's debate in the 1990s. Concerns along the contributions inherited from these debates - formulated by Bernard Kouchner, Minister of Foreign Affairs of France from 2007 and 2010, and Tony Blair, British Prime Minister between 1997 and 2007 - emphasized the international community commitment to discuss how and when it should intervene and use force in cases of systematic violation of human rights.¹⁵ The fifth paragraph of UN Resolution 1296 of 2000 went further, noting that:

The deliberate targeting of civilian populations or other protected persons and the committing of systematic, flagrant and widespread violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in situations of armed conflict may constitute a threat to international peace and security (...) readiness to consider such situations and, where necessary, to adopt appropriate steps. (S/RES/1296, 2000)

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) stressed in its Human Development Report, 1994, that remote security policies diverge from traditional concept of "security by weapons" in order to focus attention on human security. Two human security concepts were proposed: the first one emphasized the protection from physical violence or "freedom from fear"; the second, a more general concept related to the possibility of threat to human dignity, adding "freedom from want", considered the security against poverty and the threat of war or violent conflict, and the population survival in which each individual should be respected. The report added further that "human insecurity is the violation of human rights perpetrated by States or non-State actors in cases of war or independent of it."

Nonetheless, critics argue that the generality of the human security concept and its association with development ideas make the first one analytically weak, especially due to the fact that any event could be declared a security problem. In this sense, if all challenging events can be perceived as a potential security problem, it would be almost impossible to prioritize what really means a threat. As stated by Thiago Rodrigues (2012),

the expansion of the security concept, thus, implied recognition of a new subject of security - the people - and a new more varied and extensive security object, combining threats that affect directly the individuals (eg, ethnic violence or genocides perpetrated by a State) or indirectly (such as scarcity of resources derived from environmental degradation).¹⁶ (Rodrigues, 2012: p. 16)

¹⁵ "In January 2008, 119 countries were contributing military and police to UN peacekeeping operations."

¹⁶ "A ampliação do conceito de segurança, portanto, implicou no reconhecimento de um novo sujeito de segurança - as populações - e de um novo objeto de segurança mais variado e extenso, combinando ameaças provocadas diretamente sobre os indivíduos (por exemplo, a violência étnica ou genocídios perpetrados por um Estado) ou indiretamente (como a escassez de recursos derivada da degradação ambiental)."

Human security concept application in PKO is seen in the PoC's implementation. PoC's definition has not yet been determined by the UN Security Council. However, in September 1999, the Council adopted Resolution 1265, which expressed the international community's will to consider taking appropriate measures and to respond to situations of armed conflict where civilians are being targeted or humanitarian assistance is being deliberately obstructed.¹⁷ The resolution also warned States to ratify threats to human rights and prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity and serious violations of international humanitarian law. Finally, the Council expressed its willingness to explore PKO mandates and to restructure the concept of PoC.

The Asia-Pacific Center's report for the Responsibility to Protect entitled "The Responsibility to Protect and the Protection of Civilians: Asia-Pacific in the UN Security Council" (2009), organized, in five specific issues, a list of necessary steps to apply the outlines action on PoC:

- 1) Provision of appropriate security arrangements.
- 2) Engagement in dialogue with belligerents.
- 3) Facilitation of humanitarian assistance development.
- 4) Humanitarian personnel safety and security.
- 5) Compliance with legal international obligations.

In April 2000, Secretary-General Kofi Annan's report on the PoC focused on its operational aspects in order to improve the ability of the forces in PKO for the protection of civilians. Along the UNSC's recommendations, these initiatives produced a memorandum on PoC, attached to the Council President's speech on March 15th, 2002, and updated by the Department for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in 2004. (A/63/677, 2009: para. 44)

In agreement with the UN DPKO and Department of Field Support (DFS) concept note, the PoC concept will last for a long time. It will be based on lessons learned and will provide general strategies for its application. In addition, the concept note stressed that the PoC's operationalization in peace operations is organized following three lines:

- 1) Protect through political process;

¹⁷ Specific descriptions of the emergency of the Protection of Civilians concept in the Security Council are available on the Security Council report entitled "Protection of Civilians," No. 2. 14th October 2008.

- 2) Provide protection of physical violence; and
- 3) Establish protected environment.¹⁸

Pursuant to Alex Bellamy and Paul Williams, UN documents cover two types of protection activities: those related to the military forces positioning between the civilian population and those that threaten them, in order to deter and respond to attacks; and second, those related to developed measures to eliminate or restrict the activities of armed groups that threaten civilians.¹⁹ (Bellamy, Williams, 2011: p.849)

According to the UN Peacekeeping Operations: principles and guidelines handbook's concept (2008), although the PoC's agenda requires coordinated and concentrated military action, its operation needs to be integrated into a joint implementation plan with NGOs and other agencies of the United Nations' system. It should encompass wide variety of activities related to the Security Council on measures agreed with Chapters VI, VII, and VIII of the UN Charter, as the activities related to other institutions, involving various government actors, organized armed groups, UN institutions and NGOs. (S/RES/ 1265, 1999)

In order to engage PoC under threat of physical violence, peace operations have a specific mandate based on the characteristics of each case. In every part of the world, regional organizations together with specialized UN bodies agree and establish plans and policies for PKO grounded in international law and endorsed by UN General Assembly and UNSC.²⁰

These plans and policies on PoC are detailed in the rules of engagement (ROE) of each mission. Currently, the most specific doctrine on these ROE was meticulously studied in a military planning handbook called Mass Atrocity Response Operations (MARO) of the United States of America's Department of Defense (JP 3-07.3), whose main objective is the debate on how civilians can be protected.²¹

¹⁸ Draft DPKO/FDS Operational Concept on the Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations.

¹⁹ "These guidelines have sketched two types of protection activities: positioning military forces between the civilian population and those that threaten them in order to deter and respond to attacks; and taking measures designed to eliminate or restrict the activities of armed groups that threaten civilians."

²⁰ This resulted in the need for the Secretary-General to regularly report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. The Security Council has since adopted four resolutions specifically noting the protection of civilians (1265, 1296, 1674, 1738). Resolutions on women (1325), children (1612), protection for humanitarian experts (1502), conflict prevention (1625), and sexual exploitation (1820), also include the protection of civilians in conflict.

²¹ MARO sketches ways 'to halt widespread and systematic use of violence by state or non-state armed groups against non-combatants' in contexts characterized by multiparty dynamics between victims, perpetrators and bystanders rather than traditional contexts between enemy and friendly forces; where the intervening force will inevitably be seen as siding with the victims against the perpetrators; and where there is a tendency for mass killings to rapidly escalate once begun.

More than protection against the threat of physical violence, most part of peace operations serves to facilitate the stabilization and consolidation of State authority, to collaborate in processes of DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration) and DDRRR (Demobilization, Repatriation, Reintegration and Resettlement); and to promote the reform of the security sector and perform related tasks, for example, the violation of human rights and sexual violence. Although the comprehension of the PoC concept remains the same in the case of MONUSCO, the creation of its FIB and the authorization to use of force began, we advocate here, a new approach in the protection of physical violence.

In sum, over the five generations of UN PKO, the Organization performance adapted to the context of new conflicts and wars. First generation aimed monitoring ceasefires, truces and armistices, patrolling borders and excluded military zones, supporting the withdrawal of troops and monitoring of negotiations for definitive peace treaties. Second generations meant peace operations developed in association with the order of the remaining conflicts of the Cold War, in which the UN, or other international organization, negotiated political solutions based on mutual opponents' commitment. Third generation, multilateral and multidimensional, was characterized by the involvement with PoC and diversified mandates, related to the new wars' characteristics. Fourth generation consisted of robust reconstruction operations and combined the use of force with more intrusive civilian tasks on issues related to local autonomy. Fifth generation or "hybrid operations" provide troops and police under joint command of the UN and regional organizations, characterized by separate chain of command and segregated mandates.

3) MONUSCO's case: the Force Intervention Brigade's originality in the protection of civilians.

The debate on humanitarian intervention is broad. According to Tardy, the UN PKO are the main conceptual ambiguity in the use of force and its Charter. (Tardy, 2007) It is widely known that PKO are not mentioned in the UN Charter. Nevertheless, they are "legally" understood between its Chapters VI, VII and VIII, conditioned to the UNSC approval. (Brownlie, 2008: p.747)

Throughout the process of PKO evolution, its three guiding principles (consensus, impartiality and minimum use of force) have been adapted to the needs of immediate responses to new threats and conflicts. In this context, UN operations as in the cases of Haiti (1990-1997), Somalia (1992-1995), the former Yugoslavia (1992-1995), Rwanda (1993-

1996) and Sierra Leone (1998-2005), despite planned to respond to different local contexts, they are examples of missions that initially had a non-coercive multidimensional mandate and, due to the escalation of violence, incorporated imposition elements to try to overcome worsening situations of aggression, crimes against humanity and human rights abuses.

The latest innovation and unprecedented UNSC response occurred in 2013, through Resolution 2098, which established the creation of the FIB in MONUSCO with a mandate to perform offensive operations.²² The resolution was an attempt to highlight the causes of conflict and ensure sustainable peace both domestically and in the region. (S/2013/131, 2013: para.5)

MONUSCO is authorized to use all necessary means to achieve and operationalize its mandate, highlighting, among other aspects, the PoC, humanitarian personnel and human rights officers, under threat of physical violence, as well to support the FARDC (Democratic Republic of Congo Armed Forces) and the DRC government in efforts to stabilize and consolidate peace. Resolution 2098 strongly condemned the March 23 Movement (M23), the Democratic Forces for Liberation of Rwanda (RDLR), the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and "all other armed groups and their continuing violations and abuses of human rights". (S/RES/2098, 2013) The FIB is controlled directly by the MONUSCO Force Commander and consists of three infantry battalions, one artillery, one special forces and one reconnaissance company all them based in Goma. It is responsible for neutralizing armed groups and aims to contribute for the reduction of threats posed by armed groups to State authority and civilians' security in eastern DRC. In consonance with the scenario of operation, FIB's mandate is responsible to:

Carry out offensive operations, either unilaterally or jointly with the FARDC, in a robust, highly mobile and versatile manner and in strict compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law (...) to prevent the expansion of all armed groups, neutralize the groups, and to disarm them (...). (S/RES/2098, 2013: para. 9)

FIB is the first offensive combat group created by the UNSC to conduct military actions against armed groups in the DRC. Some authors consider that, in the history of PKO under the auspices of the UN, the presence of forces with this type of conformation and mandate was used in the cases of Somalia and Haiti. (Blyth, 2013) However, according to

²² The Security Council Resolution 1925 of July 1st, 2010 renamed the MONUCO - Mission of the United Nations in the Democratic Republic of Congo to MONUSCO - United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in order to reflect the new phase of operation in the country. Although significant progress has been achieved in the Democratic Republic of Congo since the establishment of MONUSCO, the Great Lakes region continued threatened by the presence of international and Congolese armed groups, who used the vacuum of power and security in the eastern part of the country to illegal exploit natural resources, and by the interference of neighboring countries and widespread corruption.

Priscilla Fett, these two cases "do not serve as comparative basis" since both of them represent a stabilization mission model, not being "suitable to cope with the violence levels found in the African country." (Fett, 2013)

Within the UNDPKO, the debate on robust operations is not new. It enhances discussions about the legitimacy of offensive action and the use of force limits exerted by multinational operations. In the case of MONUSCO, the debate refers to the correlation between the three guiding principles of peace operations and the implementation of the FIB's mandate. In Resolution 2098, FIB was initially authorized under an exceptional basis, without creating any precedent or prejudice to the principles of UN PKO.

In line with the UN Capstone Doctrine, peace operations are deployed with the consent of the main conflict parties.²³ In the DRC, MONUSCO obtained consent of the Congolese Government, while, the other conflict party, namely "the illegal armed groups" were considered the main threat to the security of the population. In this sense, it was not convenient to seek their consent since those illegal armed groups were the "enemy" party. The UN Capstone Doctrine also elucidated that mandate's impartiality should be implemented without favors or prejudices to either party. In MONUSCO, the principle of impartiality/neutrality was emptied when the UN Security Council identified the conflict parties and decided "to authorize the FIB to use all necessary means to achieve and operationalize its mandate," supporting the State sovereignty and DRC Government in the efforts of peace stabilization and consolidation.

The very creation of the FIB interferes directly into the most controversial principle of peace operations, the use of force. In the DRC, the use of force in unilateral offensive actions or together with the FARDC, in a robust and versatile way to neutralize armed groups, causes changes in the three pillars' understanding. The principle of non-use of force, except in self-defense, date to the first deployment of UN armed peacekeepers in 1956. Nonetheless, throughout the evolution of peace operations, peacekeeping operations, as mentioned above, started to employ, occasionally, the use of force, as in Congo between 1960 and 1964, in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the period 1992-1995, in Somalia between 1993 and 1995, and recently in Haiti between 2007 and 2009. Although they follow the stabilization mission model and do not have the same levels of violence found in the DRC, the UNSC, in line with the principle of self-defense, allowed the use of limited force in those operations.

²³ The Capstone Doctrine is a document of the UNDPKO, produced in 2008, which contains the principles and general guidelines on UN peacekeeping operations.

In DRC, the UNSC observed the difficulty of its military component to anticipate to threats and to act proactively in order to reduce vulnerabilities and deter armed groups. Therefore, further update, adaptation and evolution were needed to achieve effective PoC. Composed by 3,069 soldiers from South Africa, Malawi and Tanzania, FIB's mandate changed the implementation of PoC. If earlier, the blue helmets watched static to human rights abuses, sexual violence and crimes against humanity; in the DRC, the FIB operationalized preemptive action in order to prevent such violations. The robust operations applied in consonance with intelligence and technological resources, such as drones, used for the first time in PKO, have enabled positive results in the PoC.

As reported by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations (SRSG), Martin Kobler, in its Declaration "Building on the momentum" to the UNSC on March 14th, 2014, important actions were developed. The defeat of the M23, the joint operations against the Democratic Forces of Rwanda - FDLR and the Allied Democratic Forces - ADF, and the return of security to the liberated territories have contributed to the emergence of "Islands of Stability" concept, which aims to gradually restore State authority in eastern DRC.²⁴

Offensive military actions performed by FIB indorsed a new approach on PoC. Although MONUSCO operates PoC within a new context, the mission follows the DPKO lines of action, protecting through the political process; providing protection of physical violence; and, establishing a protected environment for the civilian population.

The "Islands of Stability" concept was created by Martin Kobler to concentrate military, political and humanitarian efforts in a given area, based on the MONUSCO priorities: first, the protection and safety of civilians; second, the stabilization of conflict-affected areas; and third, the process of reform and implementation of peace, security and cooperation framework.

"Islands of Stability" is a process, initiated by robust actions of the military component. In its first stage, the PoC is related to the physical protection of people, pursued through FIB's robust operations and not only by the UN peacekeepers presence. The Military Force Commander, Brazilian Army Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, emphasized that the best PoC, regarding the physical protection, is related to the identification of the threat, their elimination or neutralization.

²⁴ Statement of SRSG Martin Kobler to the Security Council. Building on the Momentum. 14 Mar. 2014.

It is necessary to identify the violence that is not related to social dynamics, which is a police case and not a military strategy, but the one that is a consequence of social deformation and results on the formation of armed groups. An active approach is needed. The presence may cause deterrent, but alone, it is not effective. Presence and dynamic of actions are necessary. Our goal in MONUSCO is the protection of civilians through action, not just the presence. Presence follows the traditional model, and in this case, the military contingent is passive, it only responds and do not anticipate. This is not ideal. Long time without action, first, prevents the presence to be a deterrent because it is believed that the mission will not act. And second, it is a demoralizing process. The military contingent dissuades the aggressor when the last one believes the mission will act if he tries to do something. We want a mission that acts preemptively and has a dynamic of action before the problem emerges.²⁵

In the case of the “Islands of Stability” strategy, military actions dissuade armed groups and release dominated areas, allowing the return of civilian population and the restoration of State authority. This process is supported by NGOs, United Nations agencies and institutions working in peacebuilding. According to Martin Kobler, the overall goal of “Islands of Stability” is to avoid the immediate relapse of the communities involved in a cycle of violence after armed groups released a given area. The SRSB states that “robust protection and hard-won stability is the basis for building peace.”²⁶

In DRC, a set of actions enabled the State authority return to those areas previously dominated, they are: definition of the conflict’s causes, parties and threat identification, and robust actions against armed groups. This is the case of Kiwanja-Rutshuru, where advances have succeeded in installing police units supported by UNPOL (UN Police), in return of territorial administration and civil servants, in the rehabilitation of the justice, police, and administration buildings, and in the reopening of the city jail.

MONUSCO’s transformation in a field mission transferred its headquarters, formerly in Kinshasa, capital of DRC, to the east, in the city of Goma. It was an attempt to strengthen support to field operations in that part of the country. As a result, the establishment of the permanent presence of UN civilian personnel in the worst affected areas, such as in the cities of Rutshuru, Masisi and Walikale, confirms the new reconfiguration of the MONUSCO mandate interpretation and its influence on the PoC’s implementation.

²⁵ “É necessário identificar a violência que não está relacionada à dinâmica social, a qual é um caso policial e não uma estratégia militar, mas sim, aquela que é consequência da deformação social e que resulta na formação de grupos armados. É preciso uma postura ativa. A presença pode causar dissuasão, mas sozinha, ela não é efetiva. É preciso ter presença e dinâmica de ação. A nossa visão na MONUSCO é a proteção de civis através da ação, não só da presença. A presença segue o modelo tradicional, e neste caso, o contingente militar é passivo, só reagindo e não se antecipando. Isso não é o ideal. Longo tempo sem agir, em primeiro lugar, faz com que a presença deixe de ser dissuasória, porque não se acredita que a missão vai agir. E segundo, é um processo de desmoralização. O contingente militar dissuade o agressor quando ele acredita que a missão agirá se ele tentar fazer algo. Nós queremos uma missão que se antecipe e tenha uma dinâmica de ação antes que o problema aconteça.” Interview conducted by the author with the Military Force Commander of MONUSCO, Division Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, on September 4th 2014, in Goma, North Kivu, DRC.

²⁶ Statement of SRSB Martin Kobler to the Security Council. Building on the Momentum. 14 mar. 2014.

The joint effort in the whole process was mentioned by Martin Kobler. According to the SRSR, "the use of force alone does not achieve sustainable results if not embedded in a political context." Well defined in the motto of the Mission - "One Mandate, One mission, One force" - the political, military and humanitarian aspects concentrate efforts on one unique dynamic. The MONUSCO political action is committed to the pursuit of partnerships in the international community, legitimacy, UNSC support and closer connections with the DRC government in an effort to coordinate, especially the reform of the security sector, DDR and DDRRR process. The military component is committed to manage combined actions with the FARDC in order to perform promptly and ensure PoC. Humanitarian agencies works on issues such as human rights, sexual violence, poverty, education and health service delivery with immediate impact (Quick Impact Project - QIP).

Although robust actions have not caused side effects on the humanitarian aspect and its influence on PoC, MONUSCO's mandate has generated discussions about its duplication. MONUSCO is a peculiar mission, not only because it is authorized to use force against armed groups but also due to the way it is coordinated. The manner how its mandate is interpreted became, if not the most important factor, very influential on its results. The SRSR Martin Kobler, the Military Force Commander, Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz and the Deputy SRSR and UN Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator, and Resident Representative of UNDP Moustapha Soumaré, along with other Mission's coordinators, systematized a concise and cohesive interpretation on the three PKO aspects.

As stated in the DPKO Concept Note on PoC, the implementation of PoC should include "all activities related to protection in the mandate and envisioned for PKO, and allow enough flexibility to the diversity of contexts in which each mission operates."²⁷

The mandate's interpretation by MONUSCO's leaders helped to diversify PoC before the use of force. In the context of DRC, the concept of "Islands of Stability" could be created due to political arrangements between MONUSCO and the Congolese government. The identification of threat allowed the establishment of objectives, the decision to support the Congolese government permitted that these objectives were achieved promptly, and the use of force authorization to perform unilateral offensive attacks along with FARDC enabled the implementation of "Islands Stability".

Nowadays, there are ten UN PKO under aegis of mandates to protect civilians. It is important to recognize that the duplication of the MONUSCO's model could be very

²⁷ Draft DPKO/FDS Operational Concept on the Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations.

dangerous if regional and local political arrangements are not considered in each case. The positive results of FIB offensive actions are still recent. However, it is possible to observe similarities in the mandate of MINUSMA (United Nations Stabilization Mission in Mali). UNSC Resolution 2100 (April 2013) allowed MINUSMA to adopt offensive military objectives in order to stabilize population centers. The resolution consented hybrid military response, linking the international stabilization to French forces with multiple objectives, including the creation of safe environment for the humanitarian assistance passage. (S/RES/2100, 2013)

UNSC Resolution 2102 (May 2013) regarding Somalia aimed at aligning the UN personnel activities (UN country team) to UNSOM goals (United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia) and the Somalia Federal Government's activities to the PoC's implementation. (S/RES/2102, 2013) Similarly, UNSC Resolution 2155 (May 2014) on South Sudan modified the mandate of UNMISS (United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan), focusing on PoC's actions in order to solve humanitarian needs and security issues. (S/RES/2155, 2014)

These resolutions endorse the UN involvement in conflict under a new perspective. The UNSC Report on PoC in Armed Conflict analyzed the "strengths and weaknesses of the Council's engagement, recognizing that the complex security and political environment has made protecting civilians and finding a solution to the conflict extremely difficult." (UNSC, 2015) Considering the complexity of all elements surrounding peace operations, for example: the political will of Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs), the risks on active engagement, the efficiency of the military actions' results, the political, humanitarian and military effort and actions related to PoC, and the peace stabilization and reconstruction in the context of peace operations; it is possible to affirm that the "Protection of Civilians" has become a paradigm.

Final Considerations

Nowadays, peace operations are the main international community's response to crimes against humanity, genocide, ethnic cleansing, extreme violence and conflict. It reflects the importance that human equality and human rights gradually has had in international politics. As Finnemore affirms, this understanding has profound impacts on military intervention, modifying its justification and changing the debate on where and how to intervene. (Finnemore, 2004: p. 20)

The emergence of "Islands of Stability" is another example of this alteration. The new concept represents the PoC dynamic view, more flexible and adapted to DRC context and, in particular, to the threat posed by armed groups. As mentioned above, this new interpretation of PoC will influence not only the way peace operations are conducted, but also how humanitarian agencies operate and humanitarian assistance is managed.

Due to these update, adaptation and evolution, the three original guiding principles of peace operations started to be de-emphasized. Consequently, new understandings on parties consent, impartiality/neutrality, and the use of force must be identified. Specific studies on cases of MONUSCO, UNMISS, MINUSMA and UNSOM will be needed to cover the breadth and complexity of these conflicts and the necessity to use force in order to designate appropriate responses from the international community.

Many authors and specialists disagreed with the "Islands of Stability" concept introduced by Martin Kobler. The criticisms were focused especially on peace reconstruction, stabilization and restoration. These include critics of the civil-military relationship, the linking of humanitarian personnel to military operations, its ability to restore state authority, the limited capacity of FIB to achieve its goal and the difficulty of carrying out DDR and DDRRR processes. Moreover, comments on the lack of clarity regarding the ROE of the MONUSCO mandate, especially related to the PoC, were launched. (Ponthieu, Christoph, Derderian, 2014) Considering it is the first peace operation to have an authorized military unit to use force preemptively and that DPKO guides and strategies are built on lessons learned, ROE of missions' mandate such as MONUSCO will take some time to be solidified.

Although the use of force has been authorized by the UNSC in different cases, it is clear that it is not the solution to conflicts. Nevertheless, if it is approved on the basis of collective security, it is initially a way that allows deep-rooted problems in society find political, economic and social answers. In the case of DRC, PoC's implementation was adapted to the conflict reality. The legitimate use of force operationalized by FIB diversified the way that protection against physical violence is conducted. "Islands of Stability" recent concept promises evolution towards a new peace operation process. Moreover, it initiates a new ROE's stage and perhaps an original generation of peace operations.

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Recebido em: Julho de 2015;
Aprovado em: Setembro de 2015.