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Seminar report

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Brazil and United Kingdom: Current and future perspectives on peacekeeping



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Rio de Janeiro, 11 August 2016

The British Embassy in Brasilia and the Igarapé Institute co-hosted an informal event on current and future perspectives on United Nations (UN) peacekeeping. It was held in Rio de Janeiro, on 11 August 2016, attended by 13 professionals among diplomats, military and civil society (10 Brazilians and 8 women). Participants raised several topics on Brazilian participation in UN peacekeeping missions, and the conversation was organized around three informal sessions: (1) The future of peacekeeping; implementing the HIPPO report; and the London conference (2016); (2) Brazilian engagement in UN peacekeeping; and (3) Women, peace and security. The main ideas shared by the participants, including key challenges and opportunities for Brazil, are summarized in this brief.

The future of peacekeeping; implementing the HIPPO report; and the London conference

Participants raised key challenges for future UN peace operations. One major political/strategic concern is related to the primacy of politics at all levels: from defining and executing the UN regular and peacekeeping budgets, to the way the UN Secretariat is organized. This requires a change in the mindset, to effectively prioritize conflict prevention and mediation not only in peacekeeping but also in all the other UN efforts on international peace and security. It involves, for example, revising the budget dedicated to special political missions, instead of making more contributions to the peacekeeping budget even when they do not seem to be the most useful tool to respond to most international crises. Finally, it means allowing diverse actors to engage with negotiations and mediation processes, including women from local societies.

Moreover, there seems to be a legitimacy crisis in international order, which directly affects the peacekeeping system. Related, some participants suggested that a new mentality is also required in the way the UN leadership is chosen, which should not be based on politics, but on merits.

At the operational/tactical level, it was a consensus that peacekeepers are not ready to work with counter-terrorism, due to their character and preparation. Also, the UN does not have specific doctrine on counter-terrorism, although troops would be expected to react against any type of attacks (including those perpetrated by terrorists, following the terms of the mandate and the UN principles). Accordingly, the issue of bold mandates was also raised by participants as a key challenge, especially when the UN Security Council authorizes the use of force.

Representatives of both Brazil and the United Kingdom (UK) expressed satisfaction with the [report](#) launched in 2015 by the High-Level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations (HIPPO). The UK received it with a “3-P answer”: planning, pledges and performance. The country is hosting an event in London, in September 2016, to review the pledges made in 2015 during the Obama peacekeeping summit. The UK contribution to peacekeeping remains broad, as the sixth largest contributor to the peacekeeping budget and with support offered to train troops as well as parallel development work in countries where peacekeeping missions are present. The UK has also recently deployed troops to missions in Somalia and South Sudan. In recent years, the UK has also been engaged with the Women, Peace and Security agenda, particularly by providing gender advisors to several peacekeeping operations, supporting gender mainstreaming activities and projects that aims at preventing sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA).

Brazilian engagement in UN peacekeeping

Participants praised Brazil’s contribution to UN peacekeeping operations in the last few decades. It was noted that, until December 2015, Brazil had two Force Commanders (MINUSTAH/Haiti and MONUSCO/DRC) and the Commander of the only UN’s Maritime Task Force (UNIFIL/Lebanon), thus leading military troops in 3 of the 16 UN peacekeeping missions. This achievement is perceived as a strong recognition of Brazil’s efforts towards peacekeeping.

The current moment of Brazilian domestic politics was raised as a challenge for the country to remain engaged in peacekeeping. There is a need to think of “Brazil as a state”, where state institutions and state policies guide the country’s commitments to major processes in the international system. It was also mentioned that, despite its current political and financial crisis, there is a strong expectation that Brazil will remain engaged in peacekeeping with at least one battalion, even after its withdrawing from the UN mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). This, however, does not mean that Brazil will deploy to any operation. In fact, Brazil is not likely to deploy troops to missions that defy the traditional peacekeeping principles: consent, impartiality and the non-use of force (except for self-defense and for implementing the mission mandate).

It was also noted that, at the operational level, Brazil still faces a challenge related to raising intelligence on what is happening at the political, operational and tactical level in order to prepare

or feed their pre-deployment training modules. After deployment, one of the biggest challenges is to provide the logistics behind the rotation of large military contingents.

In terms of opportunities in the near future, it was a consensus that Brazil needs to deepen and expand its cooperation with Colombia in the post-conflict phase. Brazil has actively supported the demining mission in the country, coordinated by the Organization of the American States (OAS), and has provided training on peacekeeping to a small number of Colombian military. But there was a consensus that Brazil should engage with Colombia not only with the military, but also with civilian experts, who could be trained by CCOPAB. In fact, the UN Security Council has recently authorized the creation of a [special political mission in Colombia \(SPM\)](#), and the Secretariat and member states are still organizing the composition of the mission, which should be deployed soon. Despite the rule that neighboring countries should refrain from participating with military observers, Brazil is willing to contribute, in concrete terms, to the success of the Colombian peace process, including the SPM.

Women, peace and security (WPS)

Despite the many challenges for advancing the UN WPS agenda, participants argued that there have been several improvements in recent years, especially when it comes to international norms. There has been an increase in references to women in peace agreements, and more gender-responsive peacekeeping, with mandates increasingly accounting for problems that women and girls face in the field. Moreover, in 2015, three UN review processes raised important considerations and recommendations on the WPS agenda: the [Global Study on the Implementation of UNSC Res. 1325](#), the [HIPPO report](#) and the [Peacebuilding Architecture report](#). Although these are significant evolvments, they still face considerable implementation gaps. According to participants, this reveals the fact that WPS is still not a priority: there is an urgent need to change mindsets and behaviors.

At the domestic level, Brazil has considerably advanced its policies for women, which includes the elaboration of important laws on violence against women, and the creation of gender commissions in several ministries (including in the Ministries of Defense and External Relations). But they lacked a focus on peace and security. Despite Brazil's economic, political and social crises, the country is successfully drafting its [National Action Plan \(NAP\) on WPS](#), and will soon join the more than 60 countries who have launched their NAPs. In fact, it was recognized that these Plans are important tools that provide a roadmap on how states can implement the WPS agenda in their policies, programs and activities. The expectation of the Brazilian government is to launch the document by October 2016, upon the celebrations of the 16th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

Participants also added that Brazilian peacekeepers have no record of sexual exploitation and abuse. Among the 30,000 troops deployed to the UN Mission in Haiti between 2004 and 2014, there have been 44 inquiries, 5 of which became criminal processes with only one incrimination. And none of these investigations were related to sexual abuse. Further research could confirm, but these records could indicate that the military doctrine and pre-deployment training may play a key role in their performance and behavior in the field.



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Conclusions

The 3-hour event provided a short but significant space of interaction among key Brazilian and British experts on issues related to current and future peacekeeping. Participants shared their perspectives, identified shared interests and common anxieties, and were able to consider each other's expectations regarding future engagements by both Brazil and the United Kingdom. Despite their differences, there are areas for further collaboration between the two countries, the most evident being pre-deployment training and gender mainstreaming.



The Igarapé Institute is an independent think and do tank devoted to evidence-based policy and action on complex security, justice and development challenges in Brazil, Latin America, and Africa. The Institute's goal is to stimulate debate, foster connections and trigger action.