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THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS POLICE TO THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN SOUTH SUDAN

A contribuição da polícia das Nações Unidas para a proteção de civis no Sudão do Sul

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Introduction

On 8 July 2011, the Security Council established the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to consolidate peace and security, and to help implement conditions for development. On 15 December 2013, violence broke out in the capital Juba and spread to several other locations, resulting in a countrywide armed conflict. The crisis had disastrous consequences for human rights in many parts of the country, especially in areas of greatest military confrontation. During the hostilities, UNMISS estimates that thousands of people were killed. Both parties to the conflict failed to comply with international humanitarian and human rights law directing attacks on civilians based on their ethnicity. As a result, a large number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) sought refuge in UNMISS bases.

Humanitarian crises normally result in new types of settlement for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). For example, in the Balkans in the 1990s, humanitarian actors used pre-existing buildings such as schools and churches to provide assistance to IDPs. In Pakistan, following the 2005 earthquake, humanitarian actors set up tent villages to assist IDPs. More recently, since December 2013, the conflict in South Sudan created another kind of IDP settlement: Protection of Civilians (PoC) sites (LILLY, 2014, p. 31). PoC sites are not the same as the safe havens established in the 1990s in places such as Rwanda and Yugoslavia. PoC sites refer to situations in which IDPs seek refuge in existing United Nations (UN) bases during a conflict.

In South Sudan, currently, approximately 200,000 IDPs are distributed in seven PoC sites throughout the country. Even though this phenomenon occurred at one stage or another in most UN peacekeeping missions, the implementation of PoC sites on such a large scale at the bases of UNMISS is an innovation in

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UN history. Within PoC sites, the United Nations Police (UNPOL) are responsible for the safety and security of the IDPs, as well as to impose law and order. Nevertheless, UNPOL are limited to a maximum of 2,100 personnel, which is a relatively small number. In this context, how the United Nations Police have been contributing to the protection of civilians in South Sudan?

The purpose of this essay is to analyze the mission, structure, jurisdiction, and benefits of UNPOL in UN peace operations, particularly in UNMISS. Moreover, this paper will examine the performance of UNPOL as the law enforcement mechanism within PoC sites and how their employment has contributed to the protection of civilians in South Sudan. UNPOL's structure in UNMISS includes a wide range of police capabilities such as mentoring (advising) and training through UN police advisors, establishment of law and order through formed police units (FPUs), and engagement of local population through community police. For this reason, it is expected that UNPOL have been able to contribute to the protection of civilians by keeping the number of violent crimes among IDPs low, supporting the demobilization of former combatants, and establishing law and order within PoC sites. This is relevant because the Security Council, since its resolution 2155 (2014) of 27 May 2014, reinforced UNMISS and reprioritized its mandate towards the protection of civilians as the first priority (UNITED NATIONS, 2019).

Methodology and research strategy

This research focused on the role of the United Nations Police in South Sudan, as well as their contribution to the protection of civilians in the country, particularly within PoC sites. The research methods chosen for this study were both the quantitative and qualitative approaches.

The quantitative approach provided the numbers related to crimes committed within PoC sites since 2014, especially violent crimes such as homicide and rape. Through the qualitative approach, it was possible to understand and better explain the participation of UNPOL in UN missions over time and the existing scenario that they face in South Sudan. It also helped to understand the possibilities, limitations, and advantages of the use of UNPOL in the UNMISS context. The qualitative methods used in this study were bibliographic research and an interview with a former Brazilian UNPOL officer who was deployed in South Sudan.

The most used sources were journal articles (preferably peer-reviewed), books related to the South Sudanese conflict, United Nations websites, and United Nations documents and manuals. The publications were preferably recent since South Sudan became an independent state in 2011, UNMISS was created in the same year, and only in 2014 the United Nations Security Council reprioritized UNMISS mandate towards protection of civilians in South Sudan.

A theory that is helpful and explains well the dynamics of UNPOL within PoC sites is the community policing theory, which aims at reducing violent crimes and social disorder in a troubled environment. According to the community policing theory, these effects are achieved through the delivery of law enforcement, prevention, problem-solving, and community engagement. Community policing also represents a philosophy of full-time service, personalized policing in which a particular police officer patrols

and work in an area on a permanent basis, and a proactive partnership with citizens to identify and solve problems (YERO et al., 2012, p. 52).

The United Nations police in peacekeeping operations

Since 1992, civilian police have been a part of more than 20 peacekeeping operations around the world, with a total strength of approximately 13,000 police personnel. The complexity of current peacekeeping operations has required civilian police officers to be trained in a wide range of police skills, since their mission may vary from conducting street patrols and controlling traffic to rebuilding an entire national police service. Inside PoC sites, where the civilian police have full law enforcement powers, UNPOL face an ambitious challenge focusing on the protection of civilians under UN shelters.

In peacekeeping operations, the general goals of UNPOL are to contribute with the UN mission in creating a safer environment, protecting people and community, preventing criminal activities, and fighting criminal activities by impartial investigation based on the rule of law (HEEPEN; FREISLEBEN, 2008, p. 28). In order to fulfill the UN mission and the officer's duty, UN police officers must be provided with the following personal traits and skills: knowledge of the mission language (usually English, French, or Spanish), proper use of weapons, tension de-escalation techniques, physical and mental fitness, maturity, driving skills, and mastery of technology. Regarding culture and social relations, UN police officers are required to have cultural awareness, correct attitude, and respect for differences. UN police officers must also be able to overcome obstacles such as relocation, distance from the family, and different ethnic environment, which can generate a cultural shock (HEEPEN; FREISLEBEN, 2008, p. 33).

Focused on the development of the UNPOL formal doctrine, Rotmann (2011) analyzes the period between 2001 and 2006 and the key factors that have contributed to the success or failure of doctrine development processes. His article is based on published and unpublished sources, as well as several interviews with UN officials and external experts. In accordance with the author, the recognition of the need for doctrine for UN police operations dates to the year 2000, when Halvor Hartz of Norway was appointed Police Adviser and head of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations' (DPKO) Police Division. In the same year, the Police Division published a concise handbook entitled United Nations Civilian Police Principles and Guidelines. Nonetheless, the new law enforcement powers that had been given to UNPOL in East Timor and Kosovo went beyond the provisions of the Police Division handbook (ROTMANN, 2011, p. 87). For this reason, in 2003, the Police Division developed its first detailed and operational concept for the use of police forces (Formed Police Units or FPU) in peacekeeping operations (ROTMANN, 2011, p. 90).

Oswald and Bates (2010) describe the role played by police contingents in several UN peacekeeping operations since the 1960s, which gives a clear picture of UNPOL's capabilities. In 1960 in the Congo, UNPOL members assisted the Central Government of the Congo in the restoration and maintenance of law and order. They performed standard policing duties such as traffic control, investigations, street patrols, and riot control. They also conducted joint patrols with the Congolese police to help in their training and development

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86

(OSWALD; BATES, 2010, p. 378). In 1964 in Cyprus, the first UN police unit was deployed. There, UNPOL were tasked to liaise with Cypriot police, conduct patrols on the roads, establish police posts in sensitive areas, and conduct investigations.

Nevertheless, only in 1995, the UN recognized the strategic importance of UN international police. In the same year, UNPOL were deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina to assist national police to develop better policing and justice standards. In 1999 in Kosovo, the UN deployed FPU for the first time. FPU are specialized police such as border guards, serving as a police unit contingent. In the 2000s in Sudan, UNPOL were mandated to assist in restructuring the police service, to develop a police training and evaluation program, and to assist in the training of civilian police (OSWALD; BATES, 2010, p. 380).

Oswald and Bates (2010, p. 381) also describe the role played by UNPOL in the United Nations Mission Stabilization in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in the 2000s. The main tasks of UNPOL in the Caribbean country included assisting the Transitional Government in monitoring, restructuring, and reforming the Haitian National Police (HNP), assisting HNP with comprehensive and sustainable Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programs, assisting the restoration and maintenance of law and order, and supporting HNP and Haitian Coast Guard with their institutional strengthening and re-establishment of the correction system.

Moreover, the International Peace Operations Association (IPOA) analyzes the role of UNPOL in the last decades. The association stresses the impressing shift of tasks, from monitoring to mentoring, and from simple training to capacity building. The IPOA (2012, p. 22) also highlights the performance of UNPOL in Liberia, where the war took some 250,000 lives and stretched over 14 years. According to the association, the use of the FPU was key to success and stabilization of the country. Complementing the military contingent efforts, the FPU helped put out those disturbing civil unrest brush fires that could have led to larger disastrous effects. In addition to that, there was a whole female unit from India, which contributed to enforce the importance of women in peacekeeping operations.

On the other hand, throughout all these missions the UN has dealt with many problems involving international police officers. Grenfell (2011) draws attention to misconduct and violations carried out by UNPOL personnel. According to the author, the wide range of missions conducted by UNPOL demand very specific personal skills, which sometimes becomes an obstacle for UN police officers. These obstacles include little knowledge of the local language, culture, and legal system. In this often unfriendly environment, it is essential that the attitude of police officers contribute to the UN to be respected and have credibility among the local population. Hence, undisciplined UNPOL personnel are extremely harmful to the mission's mandate (GRENFELL 2011, p. 95).

Furthermore, Grenfell (2011, p. 103) states that it is very difficult for the United Nations to secure sufficient numbers of police, due to their lack of specific personal skills. In 2010, almost 3,000 officers short of the number of authorized UNPOL personnel had been approved to deploy by the Security Council. In addition to that, the lack of specialized police officers can also be explained by the fact that these

professionals are already in high demand within their home countries, facing domestic restrictions to apply for a UN mission.

Also critical of UNPOL, Hood (2006) analyzes the role played by the civilian police in the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) and the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET). In his article, the author criticizes poor leadership, negligible planning, and unqualified police contingents deployed in the country which contributed to create a local police force lacking strategic vision, coherent identity and institutional loyalty. Hood (2006, p.149) states that UNTAET trained and deployed as many police as possible in the shortest period of time, instead of prioritizing quality. Also, unqualified UNPOL contingents did not adopt a strategic approach towards building the local police.

Hood (2006) emphasizes that among the major mistakes made by UNPOL in East Timor were excessive confidence on former employees of the Indonesian police forces and use of Western procedures for determining candidates' suitability. The author also notes that the selection system was heavily biased towards those who spoke English, which he considers very strange since less than one percent of the total East Timorese population can speak the Anglo-Saxon language (HOOD, 2006, p. 149). As a result, in 2006 violence broke out in Dili and the East Timorese National Police (PNTL), which proved to be highly politicized and inefficient, collapsed in a matter of days (HOOD, 2006, p. 158).

Following Hood's line of thought, Wither (2012) affirms that a common challenge present in almost all UN missions is the development of the host nation police capacity. The author identifies and discusses reoccurring problems in transferring responsibility to local forces and assesses national and international efforts to make better use of foreign and host nation police assets. According to the author, effective policing helps to build confidence in the stabilization process and keeps violence at a manageable level. For this reason, the number of police personnel deployed in UN operations has dramatically increased during the last decades. However, despite the increase in activity, developing host nation police capabilities has frequently been problematic. Wither (2012, p. 40) mentions the example of Afghanistan, in which a rapid expansion, inadequate training, and insufficient resources created a national police that lacked capability, legitimacy, and integrity. Also, the Afghan National Police (ANP) was plagued by problems of corruption, high desertion rates, illiteracy, and drugs abuse.

On the other hand, Wither (2012) encourages the use of FPU, especially what he calls the Stability Police Unit (SPU). SPU are paramilitary police units such as the French *Gendarmerie* or the Italian *Carabinieri,* which can deal with public order problems, tackle violent criminals, assist and strengthen local police forces. However, FPU/SPU do not represent a comprehensive solution to the objective of achieving a police primacy because capacity-building of local police is not their core task. Hence, mentoring of local police forces remains the responsibility of individual police advisors (WITHER, 2012, p. 48).

The south sudanese environment

The context of the African continent helps the understanding of the South Sudanese background and independence challenges. Zambakari (2012) examines colonialism in Africa and provides a historical analysis of the ethnic divisions that threaten to undermine the process of nation building. He also explores the capabilities of South Sudan to accommodate internally displaced persons, migrant workers, and refugees. On a continent which has experienced 80 successful coups d'état, 108 failed coup attempts, and 139 reported coup plots between 1956 and 2001, the greatest threat to Africa in the current century continues to be political violence. The author explains that the reality in South Sudan is the same as most of Africa: the institutional legacy of late colonialism created a series of events that led to the numerous failures to reform the political post-colonial systems. For example, every African state deal with the question of building a plural society and managing diversity within an inclusive framework. Failures in the accommodation of the many ethnicities result in the proliferation of ethnic violence/cleansing in those countries (ZAMBAKARI, 2012, p. 519).

Johnson (2013) examines the Sudanese post-colonial period and the referendum that conferred independence to South Sudan. The author describes the history of the independent Sudan and criticizes the outcome of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which instead of strengthening and unifying Sudan, divided the country in two without resolving the roots of the conflict. According to Johnson (2013, p. 142), in 1946 Britain conceded Sudan the right of self-determination. In the independent Sudan, federalism was chosen to become the political system, and Southerners would have an autonomous government. Nonetheless, in 1957 the Sudanese parliament refused the federal system. The increased tensions paved the way for the Southern insurgency and the First South Sudanese War, which lasted from 1957 until the creation of the Southern Regional Government in 1972 (JOHNSON, 2013, p. 144).

However, this new political arrangement proved to be completely subordinated to Khartoum. In 1983, backed by the Socialist Ethiopia, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) was created in Southern Sudan, which fueled the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983-2005). In the 1990s, the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) countries (Djibouti, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia) became involved in peace negotiations without significant success. In 2002, the United States of America decided to directly engage in Sudan, which resulted in the establishment of the CPA in 2005 and self-determination for South Sudan (JOHNSON, 2013, p. 147). Johnson (2013, p. 150) states that the CPA was supposed to correct the imbalances of the past. On the contrary, reconciliation with the North failed and the objective of CPA supporters became the independence referendum.

The independence process, which started with the CPA in 2005 and consolidated with the referendum in 2011, was painful for both South Sudan and Sudan. Copnall (2014) describes the background and analyzes many aspects concerning the first years of South Sudan as a sovereign country. According to the author, both Sudan and South Sudan are made up of many different ethnic groups, often forced together by circumstance and outside intervention. A relevant difference between both countries is that while most Sudanese perceive themselves as Arab Muslims, South Sudanese consider themselves black Africans. Nonetheless, there is no

strong collective identity between the several different peoples. For decades, South Sudanese people were united to face Sudan, which was a common enemy (COPNALL, 2014, p. 10).

In this context, the independence celebrations on 9 July 2011 marked the high point of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement's popularity in the newly created and united South Sudan. After decades of war, and an even longer time being treated as second-class citizens in Sudan, the long and bloody struggle had come to a promising end. However, in a very short time euphoria became frustration with the ruling class. Only two years after the dreamed independence, most of the population believed that their country was headed in the wrong direction. Issues such as jobs and services being allocated according to ethnic ties, food shortages, poverty, and insecurity were evidence that South Sudan was about to collapse (COPNALL, 2014, p. 73).

The two main characters in South Sudan are President Salva Kiir, an ethnic Dinka, and the First Vice-President Riek Machar, an Ethnic Nuer. Dinkas and Nuers are the two largest tribes in South Sudan. While Salva Kiir is the head of SPLM/A, Riek Machar leads the majority of Sudan's People Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO). These movements/armies are the two major parties within the complex South Sudanese conflict (RADON; LOGAN, 2014, p. 150). Their size and composition are in constant change depending on their bargaining power at the moment, since dozens of ethnic-centered militia groups migrate from SPLA to SPLA-IO and vice-versa, based on temporary alliances.

On 15 December 2013, a violent civil war broke out in South Sudan. President Salva Kiir accused his Vice President Riek Machar of attempting to overthrow him in a coup. It is still not clear if the coup would really take place, which did not avoid the conflict to take over Juba and spread beyond the capital city. It is also questionable the role of ethnic groups in initiating the conflict, since half of the politicians arrested by the government for planning the coup were Dinka, the same ethnic group of the President. Furthermore, the dispute over the control of the oil-rich region in the northern part of the country seems to have greatly contributed to the outbreak of hostilities. Nevertheless, regardless the low influence of ethnic groups in triggering the conflict, violence became increasingly ethnic, putting Dinkas against Nuers (RADON; LOGAN, 2014, p. 150).

Among the international actors, the IGAD countries have played a prominent role in facilitating the dialogue between the two main parties to the conflict. Ethiopia, in particular, has held important regional meetings in an attempt to stabilize the region. While the conflict continues, the humanitarian situation in South Sudan has been quickly deteriorating. Currently, more than 1.5 million people are displaced in South Sudan, forced to flee their homes. Moreover, at least five million people are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance in South Sudan. Starvation deserves special attention there since the war has prevented South Sudanese people to cultivate their crops (RADON; LOGAN, 2014, p. 163).

Lilly (2014, p. 31) also examines the outbreak of violence that started in Juba in 2013, as well as its consequences, stressing that the hope for a better future became a true nightmare. In a few days, the country as a whole was immersed in a civil war. Civilians were targeted in most areas of military confrontation, causing

a massive humanitarian crisis. In six different locations throughout the country, UNMISS opened its gates and sheltered thousands of IDPs inside PoC sites.

About two years later, in July-August 2015, Ylönen (2017, p. 330) states that an agreement was reached between Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, mainly due to intense pressure by external actors. However, SPLA and SPLA-IO continued to spread violence and disrespect basic human rights. Clashes between them resulted in gang rapes, sexual slavery, forcible recruitment of children, and attacks on villages, hospital, and churches. Despite violations of the agreement on both sides, Riek Machar, who had been in exile since the 2013 conflict, returned to Juba in 2016 as the First Vice-President.

Once in Juba, Riek Machar and two thousand soldiers occupied cantonment sites in the outskirts of the capital. A few months later, another violent conflict erupted in Juba between SPLA and SPLA-IO. Roach (2016, p. 1343) describes the consequences of the Juba conflict, affirming that nearly 300 people died during a four-day period in July 2016, including peacekeepers who lost their lives in an attempt to protect civilians and stop the warring parties. As a result, the UN Security Council approved a Resolution increasing the number of the peacekeepers in the mission. Furthermore, the IGAD mediated an agreement to send 4,000 regional troops to Juba to prevent further fighting between SPLA and SPLA-IO. Today, in accordance with Security Council Resolution 2327 (2016), the mission comprises up to 17,000 troops (UNITED NATIONS, 2019).

Luedke and Logan (2018, p. 106) examine human rights violations during the South Sudanese conflict. The authors argue that UN agencies have rightfully been spotlighting the massive amount of sexual violence in the country committed by regular and irregular armed groups. In addition to UN agencies, human rights organizations and media outlets have reported the use of sexual violence as a "weapon of war" and a "terror tactic". In this chaotic scenario, both SPLA and SPLA-IO should be held accountable for these atrocities, as well as numerous other active armed militias.

In this complex South Sudanese environment, in which millions of civilians are victims of both warring parties and their various affiliated militia groups, the international community has an essential role to play through the United Nations. For this reason, the UNMISS has become such a robust multidimensional peacekeeping operation, focused on the protection of civilians and composed of thousands of personnel distributed in civilian, military, and police pillars.

The role of UNPOL in UNMISS

Police protection has proven to be a mechanism that decreases the number of civilian deaths in UN peacekeeping operations. Even after the establishment of the buffer zone by military forces, indiscipline and violent raids in regions outside the conflict zone normally result in atrocities. By patrolling areas behind the conflict line, peacekeepers increase the protection of vulnerable populations. According to Hultun, Kathman, and Shannon (2013, p. 880), the most important tasks performed by UNPOL behind the conflict line are patrolling population centers, gathering information, escorting humanitarian aid, and providing security to internally displaced persons.

In South Sudan, the mandate of UNPOL (individual police officers and FPU) is to provide public safety and security within PoC sites, which are very particular arrangements and differ from traditional IDP camps. The primary difference between IDP camps and PoC sites is the time frame of each one. While IDP camps are permanent settlements, PoC sites have a temporary character. Thus, Lilly (2014, p. 32) explains that in theory PoC sites should only provide refuge for civilians under the threat of physical violence and not to those who are forced from their homes due to the conflict. However, in reality, there is little difference between the IDPs settled in PoC sites and those in other kinds of settlement. Within South Sudanese PoC sites, the activities carried out by UNPOL to maintain public safety and security include control of the access to PoC sites, search operations, patrolling, community policing, and first response to any critical incidents.

Canuto was deployed in Juba as a UNPOL officer in 2016, during the second outbreak of hostilities between SPLA and SPLA-IO in the capital city. In the mission, he worked as a PoC site Team Leader, Deputy PoC Coordinator, and Community Police Team Leader. Canuto (2017) explains that the term UNPOL refers to international police officers (IPOs) and formed police units (FPU). Currently, UNMISS is composed of nearly 900 IPOs and 1,200 FPU. Within PoC sites, UNPOL general tasks are to provide security, conduct search operations, ensure maintenance of peace and order by detaining IDPs who engage in security threats against persons or property, and gather information in support of UNMISS early warning mechanism. The IPOs are responsible for supporting UN Security regarding the access control to PoC sites, patrolling, community policing, and searching narcotics, weapons, ammunition, and other military equipment. In support of IPOs, FPU provide quick reaction teams (QRT) to be deployed at short notice when there is a potentially dangerous threat. FPU are also requested when there is a need for patrols, armed support, and a safe environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance (CANUTO, 2017).

In South Sudan, a major challenge for UNMISS is maintaining the civilian character of PoC sites, since a large number of people seeking protection are former combatants, who have just surrendered or hidden their weapons and uniforms to become eligible for protection. Normally, when the fighting breaks out it is not uncommon that these individuals rejoin their armed groups. Also, since a large number of ethnic groups share the same PoC site, internal security becomes a very serious issue (LILLY, 2014, p. 32).

As well as Lilly, Canuto (2017) admits the presence of former combatants within UNMISS PoC sites, which poses a threat to the protection of civilians. He explains that the process to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate these former combatants is very complex and depends on the cooperation of the community leaders. UNPOL control the entry and exit points and conduct searches for firearms, ammunition, and other military equipment and uniforms. Nevertheless, community leaders (in association with humanitarian agencies and mentored by the community police) are the ones who play a key role in integrating the former combatants to the local community or removing them from PoC sites when they are not willing to participate in the process (CANUTO, 2017).

Moreover, Canuto (2017) stresses that the presence of UNPOL in PoC sites is a very positive factor since it helps reduce the number of violent crimes to a negligible value. For example, in the first six months

of 2016, there had been no murder, no tribal clash, and only one reported case of sexual abuse within all PoC sites in South Sudan. He also states that FPU are an effective mechanism to maintain law and order among IDPs. However, there is a language barrier for FPU in South Sudan, since a considerable part of them come from Nepal and most of their personnel do not speak English, which is the mission language. In addition to that, Canuto (2017) explains that FPU in South Sudan lack proactivity and are highly dependent on the guidance of IPOs.

Futhermore, Canuto (2017) asserts that the tasks performed by UNPOL (IOPs and FPU) in South Sudan significantly contribute to the protection of civilians within PoC sites. He considers that the frequent searches, foot and mounted patrols, and the mentoring of community leaders by the community police are key UNPOL contributions to maintain law and order and ensure the safety of IDPs in the country.

The official numbers of crimes within PoC sites in South Sudan corroborate Canuto's arguments. In a country devastated by conflict, the rate of violent crime is extremely reduced among the approximately 200,000 IDPs living under UN protection. For instance, the average number of homicides per year within PoC sites is 6.4 from 2014 to 2018, which represents only about 3.2 homicides per 100.000 people (UNITED NATIONS, 2018). This rate is lower than the annual homicide rate in the United States and approximately eight times lower than the Brazilian homicide rate. Concerning violent sexual crimes such as rape and attempted rape, in this same period, the average annual number is 17.2, which is also a small figure (UNITED NATIONS, 2018).

Finally, the United Nations (2018) indicates an improvement in the performance of UNPOL within South Sudanese PoC sites throughout the years. Only in Juba, house to approximately 40,000 IDPs, the total number of crimes have drastically reduced from 953 in 2016, to 623 in 2017, and to 356 in 2018. Considering all PoC sites in the country, the total number of crimes decreased from 3,257 in 2016, to 2,301 in 2017, and to 1,861 in 2018.

Final Considerations

After examining academic research, it is possible to verify that UNPOL have been able to effectively contribute to the protection of civilians in South Sudan. In a country in which sexual violence and human rights violations have been trivialized and used as a "weapon of war" in a continuous and bloody conflict, PoC sites have proved to be relatively safe places for civilians. Despite their limitations, the tasks performed by UNPOL within PoC sites have been essential for the maintenance of law and order, as well as for the reduction of violent crimes among IDPs to a very low level.

The community policing theory helped explain the strategy used by UNPOL in South Sudan. In accordance with the theory, UNPOL have established a full-time presence, personal approach, and proactive partnership with community leaders within PoC sites in order to reduce violent crimes and social disorder. Thus, the comprehension of the community policing theory is a very relevant tool in order to understand the tasks performed by UNPOL in South Sudan.

As a result, it is possible to conclude that UNPOL play a key role in the protection of civilians in South Sudan, in special the 200,000 IDPs who live in UNMISS PoC sites. The environment within PoC sites is very tense and complex, since many ethnic groups are forced to live together in the same community. In addition to that, a significant part of the IDPs are former combatants, who are not integrated to the civil society and may disturb the community or even rejoin their armed groups as soon as conflict erupts. In this context, UNPOL (IPOs and FPU) ensure a safe environment for civilians by controlling access to PoC sites, providing security, conducting search operations, detaining IDPs who engage in threats against persons or property, and gathering information. The outcome of UNPOL engagement is the very reduced number of violent crimes and the maintenance of law and order within PoC sites, which is essential for the safety of the hundreds of thousands of IDPs under the UN protection.

This study does not exhaust the knowledge on the use of UNPOL as a valuable mechanism for the protection of civilians in South Sudan. Although the paper highlights the significant contribution of UNPOL in South Sudan, the engagement of the international civilian police is basically restricted to the PoC sites. Thus, more studies concerning the restructuring, reforming, training, and mentoring of South Sudanese National Police to improve the safety conditions of the population outside PoC sites would efficiently complement this paper.

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94

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95

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RESUMO

O Sudão do Sul tornou-se um Estado independente em 2011, após uma longa guerra civil contra o Sudão. No mesmo ano, a Missão das Nações Unidas no Sudão do Sul (UNMISS) foi estabelecida para consolidar a paz, a segurança e o desenvolvimento. Em 2013, uma sangrenta guerra civil, que estourou e permanece até os dias atuais, mudou o país e a natureza da missão da Organização das Nações Unidas (ONU), a qual tornou-se mais robusta e passou a abrigar cerca de 200.000 pessoas em locais de proteção de civis (PoC sites). Neste violento e complexo cenário, a Polícia das Nações Unidas (UNPOL), que é um importante componente dentro da UNMISS, enfrenta um desafio substancial na proteção dos civis em todo o país. Desta forma, este artigo examina a performance da UNPOL como o mecanismo de imposição da lei dentro dos PoC sites e também como seu emprego tem contribuído para a proteção de civis no Sudão do Sul. Assim, após uma pesquisa bibliográfica, uma entrevista com um policial brasileiro veterano da UNPOL, e a análise da taxa de crimes dentro dos PoC sites, foi possível verificar que a UNPOL exerce um papel fundamental dentro da UNMISS, assegurando um ambiente seguro para os deslocados internos que se encontram sob a proteção direta da ONU.

Palavras-chave: Polícia das Nações Unidas; Missão das Nações Unidas no Sudão do Sul; Sudão do Sul.

ABSTRACT

South Sudan became an independent state in 2011 after a long civil war against Sudan. In the same year, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) was established to consolidate peace, security, and development. In 2013, a bloody civil war that erupted and remains today has changed the country and also the character of the United Nations (UN) mission, which became more robust and had to shelter about 200,000 people in the protection of civilian (PoC) sites. In this complex and violent environment, the United Nations Police (UNPOL), an important component within UNMISS, face a substantial challenge in order to protect civilians in the country. Thus, this paper examines the performance of UNPOL as the law enforcement mechanism within PoC sites and how their employment has contributed to the protection of civilians in South Sudan. The research methods chosen for this study were both the qualitative and the quantitative approaches. Hence, after bibliographic research, an interview with a former Brazilian UNPOL officer, and the analysis of the crime rates within PoC sites, it was possible to verify that UNPOL play an essential role within UNMISS, ensuring a safe environment for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) who are under the direct protection of the UN.

Key-words: United Nations Police; United Nations Mission in South Sudan; South Sudan.