



## **Confidential: Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Case Files, MINUSCA**

**September 13, 2017** — A UN source has provided the Code Blue Campaign with roughly 90 case files from the United Nations mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) labeled “Keepers.”

Of the 90 cases, 14 of them detail sexual exploitation and abuse complaints made against military peacekeepers deployed in the CAR from a total of nine different countries: Pakistan, Zambia, Congo-Brazzaville, Burundi, Morocco, Egypt, Cameroon, Gabon, and Niger.

All of the 14 fact-finding inquiries were conducted in 2016, although one is a secondary inquiry into misconduct stemming from complaints originally made in 2015.

In eight of the 14 cases, fact-finders did not interview the alleged victim or victims. See cases #2, #3, #5, #9, #10, #11, #12, and #13. Note: In cases #3 and #12, local police conducted interviews with the alleged victims but the UN did not.

In at least two cases, the alleged victims were interrogated in hostile settings that were not conducive to impartial fact-finding. See cases #1 and #7.

In at least four of the cases, fact-finders were inclined to believe the accused peacekeepers were the true victims in the incidents. See cases #1, #3, #7, and #9.

In three cases, fact-finders used the word “girl” or “girls” to describe alleged victims who were in fact adult women. See cases #6, #7, and #13.

In one case, fact-finders used the phrase “sexual harassment”—which is typically reserved for verbal or physical transgression of a sexual nature in a workplace or professional setting—to describe acts of sexual assault and attempted sexual assault. See case #8.

In two cases, fact-finders were inclined to discount complaints lodged against peacekeepers attached to units that were religiously observant or had “a very good record with regards to SEA [sexual exploitation and abuse] issue.” See cases #1 and #9.

In four cases, the UN did not commence a fact-finding inquiry until reports about misconduct appeared in local media. See cases #3, #6, #9, and #12.

In eight cases, the UN did not begin a fact-finding inquiry until at least a week after the alleged incidents occurred. See cases #1, #2, #3, #5, #7, #8, #10, and #13.

In two of those cases, the fact-finding inquiry did not begin until at least a month after the alleged incidents occurred. See cases #2 and #8.

Just four of the 14 cases appear to be listed in the database of the Conduct and Discipline Unit, which

is responsible for the public dissemination of allegations—substantiated or not—against UN peacekeeping personnel. See cases #2, #3, #4, and #14

Of the remaining 10 cases that don't appear on the UN website, the files indicate that at least four were referred for investigation. It is unclear what happened with these cases. See cases #1, #6, #8, and #13.

In the final six cases, UN fact-finders either recommend no further action or suggested administrative sanctions for the accused peacekeepers. See cases #5, #7, #9, #10, #11, and #12.

Below are brief narrative summaries of each of the 14 cases. In order to protect the privacy of the individuals named in the files, any identifying details have been excluded.

## CASE SUMMARIES

CASE #	Investigators did not interview victim	Victim interviewed in a hostile setting	Investigators used the word "girl" to describe adult women	No investigation until media reports appeared	At least a week lapsed before investigation began	At least a month lapsed before investigation began	Case listed on UN's misconduct website	Cases in which perpetrators were criminally punished
1	–	✓	–	–	✓	–	–	–
2	✓	–	–	–	✓	✓	✓	–
3	✓	–	–	✓	✓	–	✓	–
4	–	–	–	–	–	–	✓	–
5	✓	–	–	–	✓	–	–	–
6	–	–	✓	✓	–	–	–	–
7	–	✓	✓	–	✓	–	–	–
8	–	–	–	–	✓	✓	–	–
9	✓	–	–	✓	–	–	–	–
10	✓	–	–	–	✓	–	–	–
11	✓	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
12	✓	–	–	✓	–	–	–	–
13	✓	–	✓	–	✓	–	–	–
14	–	–	–	–	–	–	✓	–

## **#1 – Title of File: “alleg of SEA against PAKBATT in Ndele”**

Three Pakistani peacekeepers chased a 31-year-old woman. One grabbed her in an attempted sexual assault. She screamed, attracting the attention of a number of villagers. All three peacekeepers ran off.

On the following day, the woman reported the incident to local government authorities, who informed UN officials.

Two days after the incident, local authorities visited the scene, where they found used condoms.

Later on the same day, the alleged victim underwent questioning by five men—a collection of local authorities and UN officials—none of whom were criminal investigators. One of the UN officials noted that local authorities “were either replying on her behalf or trying to feed replies to her.” Despite what the official saw as interference, the interrogation session was allowed to continue.

A two-man fact-finding team (a UN Military Police officer and a representative of the Pakistani Battalion of UN peacekeepers) arrived on the scene two weeks later. They conducted interviews with the alleged victim, military personnel from the UN peacekeeping base, a local civil affairs officer, and UN officials from the area.

Three sentries of the UN peacekeeping base said they saw and heard nothing on the night in question. “I have been listening lectures (sic) on the strict punishment on SEA [sexual exploitation and abuse] cases and cannot even think to do something bad to any lady,” said one.

The fact-finders appeared to make no attempt to locate and interview the villagers who were said to have heard the alleged victim’s screams. They instead noted that the woman “could not present any witnesses to support her argument.”

A UN official told the fact-finders that “such incidents of vague allegations by locals” hampers the UN mandate and hurts the morale of UN peacekeepers.

The fact-finders concluded that the allegation “lacks sufficient evidence and necessary clarity to be considered a genuine case.” They further noted that the peacekeeping base was equipped with a good lighting system, and its personnel had a “very good record with regards to SEA or any other misconduct.”

Also, “no link could be established” between the used condoms and the Pakistani peacekeepers.

Although the case was referred for “further action,” it is not recorded on the website of the UN’s Conduct and Discipline Unit (CDU).



## #2 – Title of File: “Allegation of SEA in Ouanda Djelle Against Zambatt”

A rumor circulated in an isolated community about a woman who was gang-raped by an unknown number of UN peacekeepers from Zambia.

Zambian authorities—known as national investigation officers or NIOs—reached the community more than a month after the alleged incident, “slightly late due to non-availability of flights.”

The woman, according to second-hand stories heard by employees of a local NGO, was raped by a group of soldiers and left on the side of the road with 10,000 Central African francs in her hand, the equivalent of about US \$18. She “could not manage to walk on her own.” A man on a motorbike picked her up and carried her to a nearby town.

The NIOs questioned the victim’s brother-in-law, who claimed the rape didn’t occur. A medical clinic official said he had heard the rumors but hadn’t treated a victim. A local police official had only heard that Zambian troops were improperly interacting with locals. A local mayor said “no one had ever complained to him,” the investigators wrote. The soldiers’ commander said he knew nothing.

The NIOs claimed to have interviewed “troops” but provided no names, dates, or details.

The alleged victim and her husband were not interviewed “as they were both reported to be out of the village.” The man on the motorbike was “not interviewed because he was reported to be out of the village.”

h. The alleged victim and her husband were not interviewed at a time of investigation as they were both reported to be out of the village.

The gang-rape allegation, the NIOs wrote, was “unproven because all the statements obtained were based on hearsay and contradictory.”

The NIOs recommended measures to prevent Zambian troops from coming into unnecessary contact with locals.

The case appears to be listed on the CDU website. Zambian authorities concluded that a rape allegation against six Zambian peacekeepers was “unsubstantiated” because of “insufficient evidence.” Under the category of “final action,” the website states “action closed.”

### **#3 – Title of File: “Alleg of SEA against CongoBatt in Boda”**

Two media outlets published stories about a gang rape allegedly committed by Congo-Brazzaville peacekeepers.

After the articles were published, a fact-finding inquiry was ordered. The fact-finding team—two UN Military Police officers and a representative of the Congo-Brazzaville Battalion of UN peacekeepers—began its inquiry more than a week after the incident was said to have occurred.

Although the fact-finders didn’t interview the alleged victim, they learned she was walking about 100 meters from a peacekeeping base when accosted by a group of Congo-Brazzaville soldiers. She was blindfolded, gagged, undressed, and raped by an unknown number of them.

On the following morning, the alleged victim visited a local prosecutor and provided a statement of what occurred. She was then taken to a hospital. A doctor examined her and signed “a medical certificate attesting her physical and sexual aggression [sic].”

On the same morning, some locals protested in front of the peacekeeping base, outraged by the alleged behavior of the troops.

One suspect was identified. He was a cook at the base who was seen searching the crime scene on the morning after the attack. It was believed he was looking for a sandal that was left behind.

When questioned, the cook claimed he was innocent but did not have an alibi witness. (He said he was sleeping at the time of the alleged incident.) He also said the sandal wasn’t his.

### **Photograph of the incident site**



Local officials and peacekeeping personnel claimed that Congo-Brazzaville peacekeepers were innocent of all charges because they “are not allowed to go out at night even for patrols.”

The fact-finders noted, however, “soldiers can get out without being noticed by guards ... due to the porous/open nature of camp perimeter.”

A local official claimed the alleged victim was drunk on beer and palm wine, which made her too “tired” to recognize her rapists.

The case appears to be listed on the CDU website, which indicates one perpetrator rather than the several that the victim described. After an investigation, Congo-Brazzaville authorities concluded that the rape allegation was “unsubstantiated” because of “insufficient evidence.” Under the category of “final action,” the website states “action closed.”

#### **#4 – Title of File: “WHQ-IR-12 Allegation of attempted SEA against COGBATT soldier Mambelle”**

A Congo-Brazzaville peacekeeper offered a woman a sum of money to become his “girlfriend.”

On the following day, the peacekeeper approached the woman for a second time. She fled in fear.

Accompanied by her sister’s husband, she filed a complaint with UN officials. Eleven days after the original incident, a UN Military Police officer arrived on the scene.

He interviewed both the woman and the soldier.

The soldier didn't deny his interactions with the woman.

The officer found "the accusation of sexual exploitation and abuse ... can be seen to be substantiated."

The peacekeeper was "reportedly sanctioned 14 days of duty by his hierarchy," the officer wrote.

It is unclear whether this case is reflected on the CDU website. There is an allegation of sexual exploitation against a Congo-Brazzaville peacekeeper—"soliciting transactional sex"—but the entry says the allegation was reported to the UN in November 2016, two months after the case described above was initially reported to authorities. According to the website, an investigation into that case by Congo-Brazzaville authorities and the UN's Office of Internal Oversight Services is listed as "pending."

#### **#5 – Title of File: "Report Berbérati case with COGBATT"**

A Congo-Brazzaville peacekeeper was allegedly spotted leaving his base, going to a local woman's house, and remaining there until the following morning.

Eleven days later, a UN Military Police officer arrived to determine whether the soldier had committed a "grave" breach of "discipline with possible sexual exploitation and abuse ramifications."

The officer spoke to a local NGO official, who had reported the peacekeeper's suspicious movements.

A UN security official alleged that the NGO official is "not a trustable person among the local population."

When interviewed, the peacekeeper denied any interaction with the woman.

The UN Military Police officer did not speak with the woman nor provide an explanation for why he didn't.

The peacekeeper was "properly" sanctioned by his command for leaving the base without permission, the officer wrote. But a sexual relationship "cannot be substantiated by the information obtained from various sources."

The case is not recorded on the CDU website.

#### **#6 – Title of File: "IR-28 SEA BURBATT Final"**

A newspaper published a story about a Burundian peacekeeper arrested nine days earlier by local police for attempted rape.

A UN Military Police officer began his work on the day after the article appeared.

The officer learned that two Burundian peacekeepers slipped out of the base without permission and visited a bar, where they met two women. “At the closure of the bar, the soldiers and the girls [sic] agreed to search for rooms for sexual relations,” the officer wrote.

After they failed to find hotel rooms, the two peacekeepers “insisted to have sex with the girls [sic] in open air but the girls [sic] denied.” An argument ensued and the soldiers began to physically assault the women, which eventually attracted a crowd of locals and the police. One of the Burundian soldiers escaped. The other was arrested. He spent a night in jail before being released to the UN.

The UN Military Police officer—who spoke to both women—concluded that the two soldiers “fraternized with the two local girls [sic] and tried to sexually exploit them first and eventually attempted to rape after the girls [sic] denied to have sexual relation [sic] in the public place.”

The attempted rape allegation against the two soldiers “was founded,” he wrote.

The soldiers’ commander admitted he did not make a report to UN leadership after learning of the incident on the morning after its occurrence.

The officer advised that “appropriate disciplinary measures” be taken against the two soldiers and the soldiers’ commander be admonished “for not timely reporting the incident.”

The case was recommended for “further action” but it is not recorded on the CDU website.

#### **#7 – Title of File: “Allegation of SEA against Moroccan Battalion soldier in Obo”**

A 26-year-old woman was walking toward a village when a Moroccan peacekeeper on a reconnaissance patrol “touched her intimate parts and tried to undress her in order to rape her.”

The woman, a resident of an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp, reported the incident to local officials, who accompanied her when she filed a complaint with the UN.

A two-man team—which included a UN Military Police officer and an officer from the Moroccan Battalion of UN peacekeepers—arrived at the scene thirteen days after the alleged incident.

The adult woman—described as a “girl” in the file—was asked to recount the incident while seated in a room with nine men, including the two fact-finders, other UN officials, local police, and local authorities.





During the meeting, “the girl [sic] willingly signed a statement which explained that the rape attempt allegation against the Moroccan peacekeeper was false,” the UN Military Police officer wrote.

The allegation was “fabricated” by a local mayor, the officer believed, to discredit the UN mission and “to get some compensation.”

The case does not appear on the CDU website.

### **#8 – Title of File: “Alleg of Sexual Harassment in Bangassou”**

A Moroccan peacekeeper was accused of committing a series of sexual assaults and attempted sexual assaults against women and girls.

A UN Military Police officer didn’t begin a fact-finding inquiry until nearly a month after the allegations were first reported to the UN.

After arriving at the scene, he conducted interviews with two adult women and two minor females.

One of the women described how the peacekeeper tried to pull off her clothes after she refused to have sex with him for money. The other woman said the peacekeeper chased her when she spurned the same offer. A 14-year-old girl described how the peacekeeper “started to search inside the houses to find me” after she refused his advances. A 12-year-old girl said she was able to run away from him but her pregnant sister couldn’t. The peacekeeper “touched on different body parts of my sister and harassed her,” the 12-year-old said.

**Photographs of Incident site/Harassment area (PK 9 Bangassou)**



The peacekeeper’s colleagues—Moroccan and Cambodian peacekeepers on a road-repairing project—all said they saw and heard nothing.

The UN Military Police officer discovered that the perpetrator had likely been rotated out of the area. “Now everything is good,” one of the witnesses said.

The file describes the acts committed by the Moroccan peacekeeper as “sexual harassment,” a phrase normally reserved for verbal or physical transgression of a sexual nature in a workplace or professional setting.

The case does not appear on the CDU website.

**#9 – Title of File: “Sea Allegation EGYBATT”**

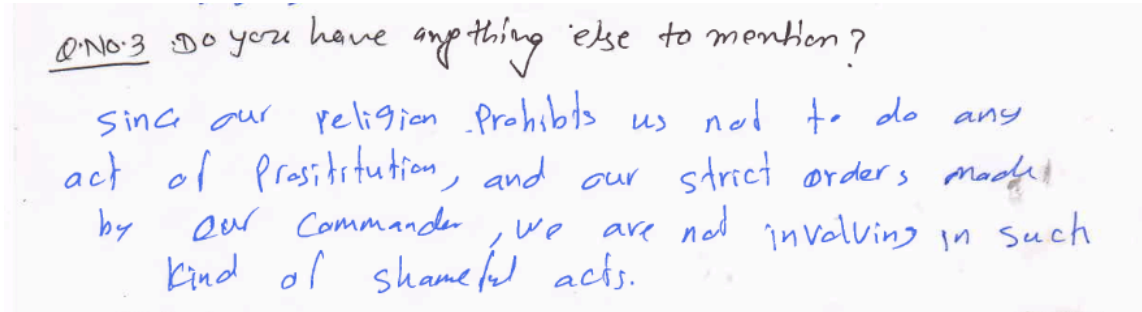
A newspaper published an article about Egyptian peacekeepers consorting with sex workers.

On the following day, a UN Military Police officer began an inquiry.

Egyptian peacekeepers from the accused unit insisted they were closely monitored to prevent unnecessary interaction with locals and sensitized (particularly by religious leaders) to avoid sexual exploitation and abuse transgressions.

“Some people are trying to hinder our great job by pretending [sic] false allegations against our troops,” said one peacekeeper.

Another told the officer “our religion prohibits us not to do any act of prostitution.”



Q No. 3 Do you have anything else to mention?  
Since our religion prohibits us not to do any act of prostitution, and our strict orders made by our commander, we are not involving in such kind of shameful acts.

The “Mosque Imam warns the troops against the bad consequences of committing SEA,” the officer wrote. “Every Friday, they are organizing activities to show how their religion prohibits SEA.”

The UN Military Police officer concluded that the allegation “is not substantiated.”

The newspaper article, he believed, was an “act of revenge” against the Egyptians for protecting Rwandan peacekeepers from a mob action by locals.

The case is not recorded on the CDU website.

### **#10 –Title of File: “Memo Alleg Involvement in SEA”**

An irate husband and his four brothers attacked a Cameroonian peacekeeper in a marketplace. The peacekeeper fled back to the base in terror, his shirt torn from his body.

A UN official in a nearby town reported the incident to UN leadership.

Ten days after the incident, a UN Military Police officer arrived at the scene.

He learned that the angry husband had accused the Cameroonian peacekeeper of attempting to rape his wife. “The man started calling his brothers for them to do away with him using their hands,” a witness said. The accused peacekeeper “struggled and ran away leaving his dress (upper wear) in their hands.” An angry group of locals gathered in front of the base in the wake of the incident. A local mayor “intervened to calm down the situation.”

On the day after the incident, the officer learned, the irate husband informed the peacekeeper’s commander that he had made a mistake. The Cameroonian peacekeeper, the husband now claimed, *hadn’t* attempted to rape his wife. The husband begged forgiveness for the false accusation.

When interviewed, the accused peacekeeper denied he had “any relation with the lady.”

The peacekeeper's commander was outraged that the allegation reached UN leadership. He said the charge was "without any proofs." He demanded that the UN official who informed UN leadership "be sanctioned."

The UN Military Police officer determined that the peacekeeper was "not ... guilty of SEA." But he concluded that the peacekeeper left the base "without authorization of his hierarchy and interacted in a very suspicious way with the local woman."

The officer made no attempt to interview the woman in the case.

The peacekeeper was disciplined for violation of the non-fraternization policy.

The case does not appear on the CDU website.

### **#11 – Title of File: "IR17 GABBATT"**

Two Gabonese peacekeepers were caught by a UN patrol "suspected of indulging in interactions with civilians presumed to be prostitutes."

The peacekeepers were drunk. They refused to cooperate with the UN patrol, declining to show identification or take breathalyzer tests.

Three days later, a UN Military Police officer interviewed the two soldiers. They denied any contact with sex workers.

The officer found that the entry gate of the peacekeeping base was "not properly controlled." Perimeter fencing and lighting were also inadequate.

It was recommended that disciplinary measures be taken against the peacekeepers and a blame letter be sent to the peacekeepers' commanders.

The case does not appear on the CDU website.

### **#12 – Title of File: "Allegation of Torture of Local Boy by Gabbat"**

A radio station reported that a boy was tortured by Gabonese peacekeepers.

Two days later, a UN Military Police officer began his work.

He learned that a 24-year-old man—not a boy—was beaten by three Gabonese peacekeepers because he was suspected of stealing a laptop from the base. The accused thief sustained multiple traumatic wounds on his back and arms, according to a medical report.

The 24-year-old told local police that he was beaten not because he stole the laptop but because he found the peacekeepers "having sex with a local lady," whom he identified.

The local police interviewed the woman, who “denied such happening” with the Gabonese peacekeepers.

The UN Military Police officer did not conduct an independent interview with the woman to determine the accuracy of the local police report.

The officer also did not ask any of the three peacekeepers whether they had sexual relations with the “local lady.”

In the meantime, a militia leader from the area returned the laptop, claiming the 24-year-old didn’t steal it. He handed another suspect over to local police.

The officer suggested it was now “doubtful about who really stole” the laptop.

The three peacekeepers were “proposed for repatriation on disciplinary grounds” for physically assaulting the 24-year-old. The investigator suggested that Gabonese troops receive a refresher course on detention, arrest, and human rights.

No further investigation of the sexual misconduct allegation was recommended.

The case does not appear on the CDU website.

### **#13 – Title of File: “SEA against CMRBATT in batangafo and Kabo”**

A UN report described how Cameroonian peacekeepers were “maintaining relationships with girls” in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps in two towns.

A three-member team—led by a UN Military Police officer—began a fact-finding inquiry nine days after the allegation was received.

The word “girls” apparently does *not* refer to minors. “No case of children ... was reported,” the UN Military Police officer wrote.

In one town, the team learned that Cameroonians from a “previous contingent” maintained relationships with as many as nine adult women. Of the current contingent, at least five Cameroonians were alleged to be involved in relationships with adult women.

The fact-finders did not identify or conduct interviews with any of the women involved.

In the other town, they could find no evidence of relationships between Cameroonian peacekeepers and IDPs.

The fact-finders concluded that civilians in both locations were vulnerable to acts of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeeping forces. The bases were located in abandoned administrative buildings without adequate fencing.

Although the case was recommended for investigation, it does not appear on the CDU website.

**#14 – “Title of File: NIG SIG CORRUPTION OF VICTIMS”**

Four peacekeepers from Niger were accused of committing sexual assault against two child victims.

The file contains no details on the alleged incident or incidents, which occurred in the summer of 2015.

Instead, the actions of two peacekeeping officers—superiors of the four accused peacekeepers—were the subject of a UN Military Police fact-finding inquiry in February and March 2016.

One officer was accused of making contact with the two victims and offering them a large sum of money to recant the allegations.

The officer used two intermediaries—militia fighters from the area—to deliver the funds. Instead of the agreed amount, the intermediaries delivered a lesser sum. When the victims expressed dissatisfaction and promised to “reveal everything,” the militiamen threatened the girls with death.

The other officer was accused of posing as a national investigation officer (NIO) from Niger in order to prevent the four Niger peacekeepers “from being identified and sanctioned.”

The first officer—the one who attempted to silence the victims with cash—was recommended for disciplinary sanctions.

The second officer was not recommended for reprimand because the allegation that he was impersonating an NIO was a “misunderstanding.”

The CDU website appears to have an entry that refers to the original incidents, i.e., the sexual assault allegations lodged by the two child victims against the four Niger peacekeepers in the summer of 2015. The website lists “Interim action” by Niger authorities as “pending ID of personnel involved.”