

**Country: Republic of Korea**

**Issue: Forming a Convention Governing Accountability for UN Peacekeepers**

**Committee: United Nations Department of Peace Operations**

**ISSUE AND POSITION:** United Nations Peacekeeping Operations face a crisis of legitimacy due to persistent sexual exploitation, abuse, and other crimes committed by peacekeepers. The Republic of Korea asserts that the underlying cause of this failure lies in the inability to hold peacekeepers accountable. Structural impunity results in a loss of faith among civilian populations, hinders successful recovery from post-conflict circumstances, decreases the confidence of multilateral states, and impedes progress on SDGs 5, 10, and 16.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** Systemically, misconduct of UN peacekeepers began to emerge in the late 1990's and early 2000's, as a result of large-scale deployments to post-conflict areas in the Balkans, West Africa, and Central Africa. Investigations uncovered a pattern of sexual exploitation, trafficking, abuse of minors, and transactional sex. Consequently, the victims are subject to long-term trauma, social stigma, and economic marginalization. Some victims have experienced abandonment as a result of their relationship with peacekeepers (i.e., "peacekeeper babies"). In the interim, the UN has implemented measures to hold peacekeepers accountable, including: zero-tolerance policies, the appointment of a Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and the establishment of the Trust Fund for Victims. However, even with these measures, accountability is still impeded by functional immunity and the continued transfer of prosecutorial authority to troop-contributing countries; these countries often fail to take action against peacekeepers for political and/or reputational reasons. As a result, support to victims is indirect and does not provide direct restorative justice. Successfully achieving the SDGs 5 (Gender Equality), 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), and 10 (Reduced Inequalities) requires confronting the failure to hold accountable those responsible for this process.

**PROPOSED ACTION ON THE ISSUE:** The Republic of Korea introduces its LIFT (Legal Enforcement, Investigation, Fiduciary Transparency) Plan. Under LIFT, the troop-contributing countries retain prosecutorial rights; however, they will be required to provide updates on their progress to the United Nations Peacekeeping Oversight Board (UNPOB) at specified intervals. The UNPOB holds 2 representatives from each member state, specializing in law, security, or human rights. If the troop-contributing country does not take action, the matter will be referred to the International Peacekeeper Accountability Tribunal (IPAT), with independent judges selected by the UN General Assembly. Host nations have jurisdiction over the conduct of UN peacekeepers within their borders if they have the capacity to exercise such jurisdiction and have consented to its exercise by authorizing Independent Mission Integrity Units (IMIUs). The IMIUs are entities established within each UN peacekeeping mission under laws, treaties, and rules of engagement. They preserve evidence, document events, conduct interviews, and assist host authorities. The IMIUs work under secure subpoena powers and function as mutual legal assistance channels. Their training is provided by the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). IMIUs are funded by contributions weighted by GDP, troop numbers, and mission budget. Member states that do not comply with IMIU obligations face increased fiscal penalties, starting with a written warning and progressing to the loss of observer status. Progress is measured through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), such as the percentage of cases initiated for prosecution, completion of investigations, delivery of reparations, etc., all reported biannually to the UNPOB. Victims shall be provided with direct cash payments, medical assistance, legal assistance, and economic reintegration support. LIFT measures UN accountability, rebuilds civilian trust, deters misconduct, ensures mission fulfillment, and supports SDGs 5, 10, and 16.

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