

Accountability of Peace Operations

Are peace support operations under the auspices of the United Nations sufficiently accountable?

Introduction

Peace Support Operations (PSOs) have been viewed in the past as a positive force since they have often managed to do quite a lot of good for the region they have been sent into (Wheeler, 2003). However, in recent times there have been calls for creating a level of accountability of peace operations for two primary reasons. First, the number of peace operations has risen quite dramatically and second, the nature of peace operations is often questioned by one party or another (Ehrenreich, 1998). Undoubtedly, there have also been cases where peace operatives have been guilty of violating the peace and even committed crimes against humanity (Zwanenburg, 2005). However, the United Nations certainly faces a lot of issues in bringing such violators to justice and making them accountable for their actions.

To give a real answer to the problems of accountability of Peace Support Operations which is posed in the question, we must first examine the evidence which suggests that violations of international law and human rights have been made. After that we can take a look what has been done about those violations by the United Nations or other international bodies which will give us a measure of the level of accountability that has been adopted by the UN (Akbar, 2005). Finally we can discuss what 'sufficient' accountability is and discuss some of the recommendations made by experts on the idea of accountability for PSOs.

Peace Support Operations

The problem associated with the definition of peace support becomes multiplied when we consider the various terms that have been associated with different operations. For example while one operation may be undertaken on the basis of humanitarian intervention to bring peace to a country, another might be conducted to prevent a war from spilling into neighbouring regions (Akbar, 2005). Still others may be required for rebuilding and reconstruction of the civilian infrastructure after the ravages of war. In fact, the military forces can even be called in to keep the peace after a natural disaster has struck a region such as a Tsunami in coastal regions or an Earthquake in any part of the world.

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