

Accountability for Serious Crimes against United Nations Peacekeepers – Key Policy and Operational Aspects

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Abstract

Accountability for crimes committed against United Nations peacekeepers remains a serious challenge. While a clear policy and legal framework is in place, impunity remains largely the norm. At the same time, significant progress was made in the past five years thanks to a new momentum from Member States and the Secretariat of the United Nations. Continued engagement at the political, operational and technical levels is required to ensure the investigation, prosecution and adjudication of these cases by countries hosting United Nations peacekeeping operations, in line with Security Council resolution 2589.

Introduction

On the evening of 25 May 2015, two young military peacekeepers from Bangladesh assigned to the United Nations Organisation Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), were driving their vehicle toward the Mission's base in Bamako. While the city's situation remained tense then, most of the attacks against MINUSMA had occurred in the northern part of Mali. Suddenly, an attacker fired at the vehicle at close range while another assailant kept watch. The driver managed to return the vehicle to the MINUSMA base, where both victims received first aid. Sadly, one of the peacekeepers

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died and the other suffered serious injuries as a result of this terrorist attack.

Unfortunately, this incident is not unique. Between 1948 and 05 February 2023, 1060 personnel serving in United Nations peacekeeping operations have been killed and several thousand injured as a result of malicious acts.¹ This includes 323 killed since 2013. Very few of those responsible for such crimes have been brought to justice. This unacceptable impunity remains largely the rule. Beyond the blatant injustice to the victims and their families, the United Nations has recognised that the lack of response to such crimes encourages hostile elements “to attack peacekeepers, meaning that there is a direct link between the failure to implement operations to hold attackers to account and fatalities”.² As such, impunity over crimes against peacekeepers constitutes a driver of conflict and instability in the countries where missions are deployed. While there is a clear legal basis under national and international law to investigate and prosecute crimes against United Nations peacekeepers, only limited political attention has been given to this issue in past decades. The problem tends to be exacerbated in host countries in which national institutions have been weakened by active or recent conflict.³

Legal and Policy Basis

Fundamentally, the basis for the prosecution of perpetrators of crimes against United Nations peacekeepers is the national legal framework of the country hosting the mission. As such, national law enforcement, prosecutorial and judicial institutions hold primary responsibility for seeking justice, as reflected in the status-of-forces and status-of-mission agreements signed between the United Nations and host state upon establishment of the peacekeeping operation.⁴ Of note, under the United Nations model status-of-force agreement, the government of the host country “[...] shall ensure the prosecution of persons subject to its criminal jurisdiction who are accused of acts in relation to the United Nations peacekeeping operation or its members which, if committed in relation to the forces of the government, would have rendered such acts liable to prosecution”.⁵ This legal and policy framework is informed by:⁶

- the reports of the Secretary-General on the scope of legal protection under the Convention on the Safety of

United Nations and associated personnel and on the prosecution of crimes against peacekeepers;

- the annual resolutions of the General Assembly on “Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel”;
- the relevant recommendations of the General Assembly’s Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations on safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers and the legal protection framework, and the General Assembly resolutions endorsing such recommendations; and
- relevant resolutions and Presidential Statements of the Security Council.

It should particularly be noted that under the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and associated personnel, State parties have committed to submit such cases without undue delay to their competent authorities for the purpose of prosecution in accordance with the law of the concerned State, except in cases of extradition.⁷ However, very few of the countries hosting or having hosted United Nations peacekeeping operations are parties to this instrument.⁸

Declaration of Shared Commitments on Peacekeeping Operations

On 28 March 2018, the Secretary-General of the United Nations launched his ‘Action for Peacekeeping (A4P)’ initiative in response to the increased political and operational challenges faced by peacekeeping operations. This resulted in the Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operations launched on 16 August 2018; the Declaration constitutes a set of mutually agreed principles and commitments between Member States and the United Nations Secretariat to ensure that peacekeeping operations ‘are fit for the future’.⁹ Under paragraph 11 of the Declaration, Member States condemned “[...] in the strongest terms all acts of violence against UN personnel, as well as any attempts to commit such acts, which may constitute war crimes” and “[...]to take all appropriate measures to bring to justice perpetrators of criminal acts against UN personnel”.¹⁰ More than 150 Member States have endorsed principles, including almost all currently hosting peacekeeping operations.¹¹

In March 2021, the Secretary-General launched the ‘Action for Peacekeeping+ (A4P+)’ initiative with a view to focuses on key priorities that are designed to be catalytic and enhance the missions’ impact.¹² One of the seven priorities under this agenda is accountability to peacekeepers, with one result aimed at the prevention, investigation, and prosecution of crimes against peacekeepers. This objective is informed by two key strategic and measurable deliverables in this regard and three indicators for the period 2021-2023.¹³

Security Council Resolution 2589

On 18 August 2021, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2589 on strengthening accountability for crimes committed against peacekeepers. This landmark document, adopted by the Council under the presidency of India, was the first resolution of this body dedicated to this issue. Sponsored by 84 Member States, and unanimously adopted by the Council, the resolution calls for a renewed focus on measures to bring to justice the perpetrators of acts of violence against United Nations personnel serving in peacekeeping operations.

In this document, the Council specifically called on “Member States hosting, or having hosted United Nations peacekeeping operations, to take all appropriate measures, in accordance with their national law and international law, as applicable, to bring to justice perpetrators of the killing of, and all acts of violence against United Nations personnel, including, but not limited to, their detention and abduction”.¹⁴ The Council also recognised “[...] the need to enhance support to Member States hosting United Nations peacekeeping operations, as appropriate, for the implementation of effective and efficient investigation and prosecution measures, including through technical and logistical support, to address impunity and ensure accountability for such acts”.¹⁵ It also called for the establishment of a comprehensive online database of cases related to the killing of, and all acts of violence against, United Nations personnel serving in peacekeeping operations, as well as for enhancing the partnership between the United Nations and regional as well as subregional organisations, to provide capacity building assistance to host States in this regard.

Operational Aspects

While the above-mentioned legal and policy framework makes it abundantly clear that accountability for these crimes is a legal and moral obligation for the international community, there are several significant constraints on the achievement of this objective. There is no detailed information available at this stage on progress made in the investigation, prosecution and, adjudication of such cases, except specifically in instances of fatalities resulting from malicious acts in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Mali since January 2013. Those three missions account for more than 80 per cent of all such fatalities across peacekeeping operations in the past 10 years.

In terms of convictions by national courts, overall results in these three countries since 2013 can be summarised as follows: six individuals convicted in the Central African Republic in January and February 2020 in relation to the killing of 12 peacekeepers; nine individuals convicted in March 2021 in Mali for the killing of one peacekeeper and another individual in January 2023 in relation to the killing of three peacekeepers; and 50 individuals convicted in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in relation to the killing of two United Nations experts.¹⁶ Overall, convictions have been secured in only 15 cases of fatalities resulting from malicious acts, since January 2013, in the three countries (i.e. approximately 6 per cent of the 271 fatalities for this period¹⁷). Unfortunately, impunity remains the norm. At the same time, significant progress has been made since 2019 in the form of increases in the number of alleged perpetrators identified and detained in the three countries in question and in the percentage of cases with confirmed national investigations.¹⁸ The number of convictions is, therefore, also expected to increase significantly in the future.

While the data beyond that on fatalities as a result of malicious acts since 2013 in these three missions is currently lacking, the Secretariat is undertaking a phased comprehensive assessment in this regard as part of the establishment of the comprehensive online database mandated under Security Council Resolution 2589. The ultimate objective is to retain detailed information on all cases related to the killing of, and all acts of violence against, United Nations personnel who served in peacekeeping operations since the inception of such missions in 1948.

Key Challenges

There are significant political and operational challenges to ensuring accountability for the killing of, and other serious crimes against, peacekeepers. The first challenge has always been the lack of political focus on this issue by the United Nations and Member States. As discussed above, this has changed remarkably in recent years but maintaining the momentum remains a challenge in the midst of several other strategic and operational priorities. In some circumstances, it may also be difficult to bring perpetrators to justice given internal political dynamics and possible conflict of interests in certain contexts.

Secondly, such crimes are often committed in areas where the authority of the State may be limited and national law enforcement personnel may be absent. For example, many attacks against peacekeepers in Mali where 52 per cent of all peacekeeping fatalities as a result of malicious acts have occurred since 2013¹⁹ took place in the northern region of Kidal, where national law enforcement agencies are not present. Attacks also regularly occur against supply convoys in remote conflict-affected areas of the country, where the presence of State institutions is severely constrained and illegal armed groups are active. There are similar dynamics in place in other contexts, notably the eastern regions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo where such attacks typically occur. The absence or limited presence of law enforcement, prosecutorial, and judicial institutions - or their limited capacities - often create serious challenges for the security of witnesses as well as for the collection and preservation of evidence. The execution of arrest warrants in areas that are not fully in control of the State also proves difficult, if not impossible.

Thirdly, individuals are often not apprehended due to the nature of the attacks and the limited availability, or delays in the collection, of physical evidence. For example, most attacks against peacekeepers in Mali have involved the use of improvised explosive devices against convoys or indirect fire from mortars or missiles against military bases. In these circumstances, arresting suspects or securing material evidence has proven challenging. The situation is exacerbated in some contexts, such as in Mali, by the number of attacks carried out within a relatively limited period of time.

Fourthly, the capacity of State institutions is often limited due to the lack of adequate resources or training for the investigation and prosecution of complex criminal cases. This includes specific technical areas such as: investigation planning; interviewing techniques for victims, witnesses, and suspects; the methodology for gathering and safeguarding evidence; the use of forensic tools; the preparation of evidence for prosecution; and protection programmes for victims and witnesses.²⁰ From a material perspective, support to national authorities is often required for infrastructure, including buildings, information and communications systems, vehicles, office equipment, forensic equipment and materials, and other equipment required for the investigation and prosecution of crimes.²¹ Missions are also often called upon to provide direct logistical support, including for the transportation of law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, and judges to the field and related security support.²²

Fifthly, the rotation of mission personnel, who should otherwise be available to testify as victims or witnesses, and their subsequent availability once they are repatriated can also be problematic. More than 90 per cent of all victims of fatalities as a result of malicious acts since January 2013 have been military and police personnel deployed as part of national contingents which are subject to regular rotations. From a practical point of view, it may be difficult for contingent members to testify once they have left the host country. Furthermore, in some instances, there may be legal impediments for them to testify, given their national status or the need for them to have their privilege and immunities waived for the time of their service as United Nations personnel.

Initiatives from Member States

As noted above, there has been an increase in interest from Member States since 2018 on the issue of accountability for crimes against peacekeepers, as demonstrated by the fact that more than 150 Member States endorsed a specific commitment on this issue under the 2018 Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operations. This political commitment was reinforced through the adoption of Security Council Resolution 2589, which was co-sponsored in 2021 by 84 Member States, and earlier through Security Council Resolution 2518.²³ This issue has also been considered by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping

Operations of the General Assembly as part of the annual briefings of the Secretariat, and in its annual reports since 2018.

In December 2022, more than 40 Member States launched the Group of Friends to Promote Accountability for Crimes against Peacekeepers. This mechanism, which is co-chaired by Bangladesh, Egypt, France, India, Nepal, and Morocco, is expected to serve as a key mechanism for promoting accountability and facilitating capacity-building and technical assistance to host State authorities. The Group of Friends is expected to actively engage and share information with the Secretary-General, and serve as an informal platform at the United Nations for exchanging information, sharing best practices, supporting initiatives, and mobilising resources directed at facilitating accountability for crimes committed against peacekeepers. The Department of Peace Operations serves as the Secretariat of the Group.

Initiatives of the United Nations Secretariat

Since 2018, the Department of Peace Operations has taken a lead role within the Secretariat in addressing the issue of accountability for crimes against peacekeepers. Starting in June 2018, specific guidance has been provided to missions that are most at risk. Extensive consultations have also taken place with Member States in New York, including representatives of host countries, key troop and police contributing countries, and potential donors, in order to generate political, operational, and technical support with a view to bringing perpetrators of such acts to justice. Specific standard operating procedures, endorsed by the Principals of all six key United Nations entities involved in these issues, were adopted in December 2020.²⁴ Planning documents of the Department of Peace Operations have further emphasised the issue²⁵, despite the lack of specifically approved resources for this purpose at United Nations Headquarters.

A Working Group on Accountability for Serious Crimes against Peacekeepers was also established by the Department of Peace Operations in 2019. In addition to this Department, the Working Group comprises the Department of Operational Support, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the United Nations Organization Stabilisation Mission

in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Office of Legal Affairs (OLA), and the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS). The mechanism has played a central role in the exchange of information and the coordination of activities on this issue between these stakeholders, including in respect of policy and operational developments. Given the number of fatalities occurring in the past 10 years in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Mali, the activities of the Working Group have been largely focused on developments in these three countries. The importance of the mechanism has been generally well-recognised. In its 2021 report, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations of the General Assembly specifically encouraged “[...] cooperation between the working group on accountability for serious crimes against peacekeepers and Member States in order to drive progress on combating impunity” and “[...] requested the working group to provide regular briefings to the Committee to update it on the investigations and prosecutions of the perpetrators of crimes against peacekeepers”.²⁶

The Office of Information and Communication Technology (OICT) and the Department of Peace Operations also initiated, in 2022, the development of a comprehensive online database on accountability for crimes against peacekeepers, as mandated under Security Council Resolution 2589. This was done in partnership with the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, OLA, OHCHR, MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, and UNDSS.

The online database consists of a mechanism to import approved malicious act records from an existing database and functionalities, and allow authorised United Nations users to add new cases, or add and edit information. The database will provide a centralised and secure platform to serve as a key tool that enables the recording and tracking of progress of cases. Its associated reporting functionality will allow for the consistent and transparent application of the requirements set forth under Security Council Resolution 2589 and ensures that this critical information is kept in a single, secure location. Its limited views will be accessible to Member States. This important tool is expected to be formally launched in 2023.

MINUSCA, MINUSMA and MONUSCO

MINUSCA²⁷ has provided significant assistance to the authorities of the Central African Republic for the investigation and prosecution of cases. This was done by prioritising a limited number of cases for support, including through technical and logistical assistance. Mission-specific standard operating procedures on support for investigations and prosecutions, and the collection and management of evidence, were issued in June 2021.

MINUSMA²⁸ also prioritised a limited number of cases for support to Malian authorities. The focus of this support has been on a national specialised judicial unit dedicated to counter-terrorism and organised crime.²⁹ Additionally, Mission issued internal standard operating procedures on evidence collection and management, and established an internal working group to coordinate Mission activities.

In Mali, achieving criminal accountability for the large number of crimes committed against peacekeepers remains a major challenge. This is mainly due to the nature of the attacks concerned, especially through landmines, which render the identification of the perpetrators a difficult task. A number of actions have already been taken in this regard by MINUSMA such as issuing and ensuring the effective implementation of the mission's standard operating procedures for the collection, analysis, management and transfer of evidence and/or information; improving the length, quality, and procedures for the disclosure of the information provided to the concerned authorities; and, enhancing the promptness and availability of the United Nations' response to requests for assistance on investigations from authorities.

MONUSCO³⁰ prioritised cases through its support to Congolese military justice authorities, who have primary jurisdiction in instances of attack against peacekeepers. Technical and logistical assistance was provided to Congolese stakeholders, and specific guidance and training was given to Mission personnel in the context of detention operations.

The Way Forward

On 24 March 2021, a Malian court convicted nine individuals for the attacks against the two Bangladeshi peacekeepers in Bamako

in 2015. MINUSMA provided technical and logistical assistance to Malian authorities as part of their efforts to bring these perpetrators to justice. This case illustrates that it is possible to address impunity, even in such challenging circumstances.

The key priorities on the way forward were clearly articulated by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations in a statement delivered at the official launch of the Group of Friends to Promote Accountability for Crimes Against Peacekeepers in December 2022.³¹

First and foremost, it is critical for countries hosting such operations to bring the perpetrators of these crimes to justice in accordance with their international obligations. It should be recalled that this responsibility is outlined in status-of-force or status-of-mission agreements, in addition to other instruments.

Secondly, the international community's support is indispensable to achieving success. This can take the form of political support as well as assistance to host countries through the provision of technical and material assistance, based on national plans and priorities. Missions have an important support role in this regard, within their mandated responsibilities, but support from other Member States is essential. This includes the deployment of specialised personnel who can assist national authorities in the investigation and prosecution of these cases, or in the provision of transport, communication, or forensic equipment to facilitate those processes. Such initiatives should be considered in particular by troop and police contributing countries as part of their deployments to peacekeeping operations. The establishment of stand-by teams of investigation and prosecution experts capable of providing prompt support to a host country, bilaterally or through the concerned peacekeeping operation, should be considered. In addition, future status-of-force or status-of-mission agreements should include the possibility of the deployment of such experts, including as part of joint investigations conducted with the host country.

Thirdly, Member States' advocacy at United Nations Headquarters is essential. The Group of Friends to Promote Accountability for Crimes against Peacekeepers will have a critical role in this regard. The Group of Friends could serve as a key mechanism for promoting accountability and facilitating capacity-

Finally, it is critical for concerned missions to have sustained programmatic funding and human resources to assist national authorities in the investigation and prosecution of crimes against peacekeepers.

¹ Based on official records of the United Nations. Fatalities include 959 military, 60 civilians and 41 police personnel. See: *NOTICAS Peacekeeper Fatality Dashboard* at: <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrljoiMjc3NmU3NTEtNTQyZC00ZTI0LTlmNzMtNDFiNzM3NzliZmRiliwidCI6IjBmOWUzNWwILTU0NGYtNGY2MC1iZGNjLTViYTQxNmU2ZGM3MCIsImMiOiJh9&pageName=ReportSection>.

³ United Nations, *Standard Operating Procedures: Prevention, investigation and prosecution of serious crimes committed against United Nations personnel in peacekeeping operations and special political missions* (New York: United Nations, 2020), Ref. DPO 2020.18, paragraph 8. These procedures also cover important preventive measures that are beyond the remit of this paper i.e. measures that seek to reduce the risk of serious crimes against United Nations personnel by addressing identified risk factors. Missions are encouraged within their mandates and capacities “to help improve socio-economic conditions in regions where such crimes are likely to occur by building on the initiatives, expertise and commitment of community members and local authorities” (paragraph 24). This done with a view to “a) reducing opportunities to commit such crimes; b) increasing likelihood of being apprehended; and c) minimizing benefits that may be associated with attacks against United Nations personnel. overall aim” (paragraph 28).

⁴ Idem, paragraph 16.

⁵ United Nations, *Report of the Secretary-General: Model status-of-forces agreement for peace-keeping operations* (New York, United Nations, 1990), A/45/594, paragraph 45. It should also be noted that the country of jurisdiction of the victim may have a jurisdiction over the case, as well as other national and international justice mechanisms.

⁶ United Nations, *Standard Operating Procedures: Prevention, investigation and prosecution of serious crimes committed against United Nations personnel in peacekeeping operations and special political missions*, paragraph 18.

⁷ United Nations, *Convention on the Safety of United Nations and associated personnel* (New York, United Nations, 9 December 1994, paragraph 14.

⁸ Among countries currently hosting peacekeeping operations, only three out of 12 were parties to this instrument as of 20 January 2023.

⁹ See: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/action-for-peacekeeping-a4p>.

¹⁰ United Nations, *Declaration of Shared Commitment on UN Peacekeeping Operations* (New York, United Nations, 2018).

¹¹ List available at: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/action-for-peacekeeping-a4p>.

¹² See: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/action-peacekeeping>

¹³ Those deliverables for the period 2021-2023 are the implementation of: 1) Security Council resolution 2589; and 2) the Standard Operating Procedures: Prevention, investigation and prosecution of serious crimes committed against United Nations personnel in peacekeeping operations and special political missions. The indicators are: 1) # of cases of crimes against peacekeepers investigated by authorities of host states out of total # of cases of crimes against peacekeepers reported, in line with national and international criminal justice and human rights standards; 2) # of alleged perpetrators of crimes against peacekeepers detained, in line with national and international criminal justice and human rights standards, out of total # of alleged perpetrators of crimes against peacekeepers identified; and 3) # of alleged perpetrators of crimes against peacekeepers convicted in line with national and international criminal justice and human rights standards out of the total # of individual cases of alleged perpetrators of crimes against peacekeepers brought before the courts of the host state. See: United Nations, *Action for Peacekeeping+ Plan* (New York, United Nations, 2021) and United Nations, *Action for Peacekeeping + - Overview for November 2021 to April 2022* (New York, United Nations, 2022), 2.

¹⁴ United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 2589 (2021)* (New York, United Nations, 18 August 2021), paragraph 2.

¹⁵ Idem, paragraph 3.

¹⁶ United Nations, *Action for Peacekeeping + - Overview for November 2021 to April 2022* (New York, United Nations, 2022), 2. Of note, in some instances, individuals were sentenced to death however in all cases a national moratorium on the death penalty was in place. On this specific issue, the general principle is that “the UN will neither establish nor directly participate in any tribunal that allows for capital punishment”. See: United Nations, *Guidance Note of the Secretary-General: UN Approach to Rule of Law* (New York, United Nations, April 2008), page 2. Assistance

¹⁷ As of 9 February 2023.

¹⁸ Idem.

¹⁹ 169 out of 324 fatalities as a result of malicious acts across all peacekeeping operations, as of 5 February 2023. See: *NOTICAS Peacekeeper Fatality Dashboard* at: https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiaWJc3NmU3NTEtNTQyZC00ZTI0LTlmNzMtNDFiNz_M3NzliZmRiliwidCI6IjBmOWUzNWRiLTU0NGYtNGY2MC1iZGNjLTVI_YTQxNmU2ZGM3MCIslmMi_Ojh9&pageName=ReportSection.

²⁰ United Nations, *Standard Operating Procedures: Prevention, investigation and prosecution of serious crimes committed against United Nations personnel in peacekeeping operations and special political missions*, paragraph 38.

²¹ Idem.

²² Idem.

²³ United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 2518 (2020)* (New York, United Nations, 30 March 2020). Under paragraph 3 of this resolution the Security Council called “on all Member States hosting peacekeeping operations to promptly investigate and effectively prosecute those responsible for attacks on United Nations personnel”.

²⁴ United Nations, *Standard Operating Procedures: Prevention, investigation and prosecution of serious crimes committed against United Nations personnel in peacekeeping operations and special political missions*.

²⁵ For example, see: United Nations, *Proposed programme budget for 2023, Part II Political affairs, Section 5, Peacekeeping operations Programme 4, Peacekeeping operations* (New York, United Nations, 14 April 2022). Under paragraph 5.55 of this document, the Secretariat has committed to “...support the implementation of Security Council resolution 2589 (2021) through enhanced support to host countries for the investigation and prosecution of cases, including through enhanced implementation of standard operating procedures and development of a comprehensive online database to monitor cases related to the killing of, and all acts of violence

against, United Nations personnel serving in peacekeeping operations, and will undertake political advocacy, establish a group of friends and develop public information initiatives". The performance measure in this regard is the number of "confirmed investigative measures in MINUSCA, MINUSMA and MONUSCO as of October of each year (cumulative)" (Idem, paragraph 5.56).

²⁶ United Nations General Assembly, *Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations 2021 substantive session (New York, 15 February–12 March 2021)* (New York, United Nations, 2021), paragraph 165.

²⁷ 51 fatalities as a result of malicious acts between 1 January 2013 and 5 February 2023 (15.8% of such cases across all peacekeeping operations for this period).

²⁸ 169 fatalities as a result of malicious acts between 1 January 2013 and 5 January 2023 (52.3% of such cases across all peacekeeping operations for this period).

²⁹ This specialized investigation and prosecution cell was created in 2013 and has been operational since 2017, with support from MINUSMA and UNODC. This Unit has exclusive national jurisdiction on terrorism, transnational organized crime, and since 2019, international crimes including war crimes and crimes against humanity - it has thus the competence to investigate on crimes committed against peacekeepers. Support is provided through capacity-building and technical assistance to improve the skills of its magistrates and investigators in undertaking and leading investigations and conducting crime scene management. Investigating and prosecuting prioritized emblematic cases, including those committed against peacekeepers, is currently being addressed through the implementation of the newly adopted criminal policy and prosecution strategy for serious crimes, which was developed by the Malian Ministry of Justice and Human Rights with MINUSMA support. Source: Consultations between the Chief of the Justice and Corrections Section of MINUSMA and the author in January 2023.

³⁰ 50 fatalities as a result of malicious acts between 1 January 2013 and 27 January 2023 (15.5% of such cases across all peacekeeping operations for this period).

³¹ See: <https://media.un.org/en/asset/k16/k16o9mon3l>.