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# Brazil's rising profile in United Nations peacekeeping operations since the end of the cold war

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## Executive summary

Brazil's engagement in United Nations (UN)-mandated peacekeeping operations dates from 1956. Since then the country has participated in 46 of 65 UN peacekeeping operations, deploying 11,669 personnel in total. Yet until 2004-05, with the UN's peacekeeping mission in Haiti, Brazilian contributions to such operations were mainly symbolic, military based and concentrated in Portuguese-speaking countries. Recent changes in the size, type and geographical distribution of Brazil's participation in peace operations echo the reorientation of the country's foreign policy in its search for a more globalised political influence, especially under Lula da Silva's presidency. In particular, peacekeeping under UN aegis has enabled Brazil to showcase its perceived added value in terms of its expertise on stabilisation, track record on development and conflict mediation, and advocacy for the Global South. Aspiring to become a world power, Brazil has assumed a role in peace and security that is more consistent with enhanced international responsibility. Yet, as this report highlights, this transformation has been characterised by dilemmas that are a product of the country's simultaneous legitimation and contestation of the international power structures in which it operates.

## Introduction

This report analyses Brazil's participation in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations[1] since the end of the cold war, which coincides with the country's democratic transition from dictatorship (1964-85) to democracy and its opening to and projection onto the world stage, focusing in particular on the evolution of Brazilian engagement in international peace and security activities during Lula da Silva's presidency (2003-10).

The choice of this particular period for analysis stems from the apparent reorientation of Brazil's foreign policy guidelines since the end of the 1990s, which added the search for more global political influence to its historical regional focus. With President Lula's coming to power in 2003 and as a result of the country's unprecedented economic growth during that period, this endeavour became more explicit and was translated into more direct actions, namely vocal demands for UN reform and the pursuit of a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, as well as the growing regularity of Brazil's participation and leadership roles in UN peacekeeping operations (e.g. MINUSTAH in Haiti and UNIFIL in Lebanon[2]).

The report specifically discusses Brazil's increasingly important role in peacekeeping as a pillar of the country's international status as an emerging power. In particular it analyses how Brazil has become caught between the legitimation of the existing international power structure and its contestation and reconfiguration. Indeed, despite signalling a willingness to play a more active yet distinct role in international security and peace issues, Brazilian participation in peacekeeping operations in the last decade shows considerable ambivalence. Although perceived as a growing leader in the area of civilian expertise, an advocate for the Global South, and a legitimate and regionally established authority opposed to Western-based military intervention agendas, in several instances the country appears to have slid into a traditional power politics stance in its engagement with both large powers and developing

1 We use the UN definition of a peacekeeping operation as a "technique designed to preserve the peace, however fragile, where fighting has been halted, and to assist in implementing agreements achieved by the peacemakers" (DPKO, 2008: 18).
2 A full list of UN peacekeeping operations from 1948 to 2013 giving both their abbreviations/acronyms and full names is obtainable at <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/operationslist.pdf>.

countries, as the 2004 intervention in Haiti illustrates. These ambiguities seem to suggest an increasing overshadowing of normative claims by political and economic priorities since President Cardoso's second term in office (1998-2003).

## Coming of age: Brazil's historical participation in UN peacekeeping

Brazil's participation in UN peacekeeping operations dates back to 1956, when the country sent an infantry battalion to the First UN Emergency Force (UNEF I) in the Sinai Peninsula. In the following years Brazil participated in missions in the Congo (ONUC), Western Guinea (UNSF), Cyprus (UNFICYP), the Dominican Republic (DOMREP) and India-Pakistan (UNIPOM) – i.e. in six out of the ten UN peacekeeping operations established between 1948 and 1972 (DPKO, 2013). With the exception of the large UNEF I contingent, the country's involvement in peacekeeping throughout this period was regular yet limited in numerical terms.

While Brazil was under a dictatorship between 1964 and 1985 its diplomacy distanced itself from multilateral forums and ceased its contribution to UN peacekeeping operations altogether, which led to its non-participation in UNEF II, UNDOF and UNIFIL (DPKO, 2013), and its withdrawal from the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations in 1977.

Brazil's 1988 constitution symbolises the country's internal break with authoritarianism, constitutes an important framework for its foreign policy in the post-cold war period, and lays down the main guidelines for its behaviour in the international arena, i.e. the promotion of human rights, non-intervention, self-determination, peaceful conflict resolution, diplomacy and multilateralism.

Between 1990 and 2002, under the first democratically elected presidents since the demise of the military regime, Brazil participated in 20[3] of the 42 then-established UN peacekeeping operations, mostly second-generation ones (DPKO, 2013; SIPRI, 2013). Moreover, during this period Brazilians led the military observer contingent in UNAVEM (headed by Péricles Ferreira Gomes, 1991) and the troops contingent in ONUMOZ (Lélio Gonçalves da Silva, 1993-94), while also assuming the role of the special representative of the secretary general and transition manager in UNTAET (Sérgio Vieira de Mello) and leader of UNTAET's military contingent (Sérgio Rosário) (DPKO, 2013).

Nonetheless, in keeping with a historical (and regional) political stance favouring non-intervention[4] (Kenkel, 2010), Brazil was reluctant to support Chapter VII engagements, privileging instead those based on Chapter VI, which authorise limited use of force. In fact, in 1994 this position led it to refuse, as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, international interventions outside Chapter VI during the Rwandan genocide and the political turmoil in Haiti (Diniz, 2007).

Its decision to join the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) in 1999 and the UN Mission of Support to East Timor (UNMISET) in 2002 signalled a first rupture with Brazil's foreign policy tradition of non-intervention, which was significantly deepened with the country's participation in MINUSTAH.[5] President Cardoso justified this decision in terms of the cultural and linguistic proximity between Brazil and Timor-Leste and the fact that the hostile parties consented to these missions (Cardoso, 2002). With the exception of UNEF I, UNOMOZ, UNAVEM and UNTAET,[6] contributions during this period remained at token level (under 100 personnel deployed) and consisted mainly of military observers and civilian officers. For the most part Brazilian troops engaged in non-combat roles, namely medical assistance, in keeping with the limited engagement rules of UN Chapter VI operations (Kenkel, 2010).

In contrast to first-generation operations, Brazil's engagement in second-generation missions was concentrated in Portuguese-speaking countries (i.e. Mozambique, Angola and Timor-Leste), Central American countries and the South Atlantic region. This geographical focus, although narrower than the one observed until 1989, is evidence of Brazil's new political and economic approach to international affairs, anchored on "participation and integration, not isolation" (Cardoso, 1999). Nonetheless, the nature of the country's contributions was further diversified with the inclusion of civilian elements (police and experts) and the undertaking of peacebuilding tasks such as election monitoring, judicial reform oversight, human rights support and economic rehabilitation (IPEA, 2010: 44).

Moreover, the 1990s witnessed the creation of several political-institutional arrangements that were meant to structure the country's engagement with and support for peacekeeping, such as the publication of the 1996 National Defence Document and the establishment of the Ministry of Defence in 1997, a move expected to improve coordination among the army, air force and navy in their actions abroad. These institutional arrangements were, however, insufficient to solve the under-institutionalisation of the decision-

3 UNAVEM I, II, III and MONUA (Angola); UNOMOZ (Mozambique); UNOMUR (Uganda-Rwanda); UNOMIL (Liberia); UNAMIR (Rwanda); ONUCA (Central America); ONUSAL (El Salvador); MINUGUA (Guatemala); UNPROFOR, UNCRO, UNPREDEP, UNTAES and UNMOP (in countries of the former Yugoslavia); UNTAC (Cambodia); INTERFET, UNTAET and UNMISET (Timor-Leste) (DPKO, 2013; SIPRI, 2013).

4 Interventions under Chapter VII were seen as a violation of the key principle of non-intervention, which was regionally perceived as responsible for keeping the peace in South America over the last 150 years and freeing the region from external influence.

5 This historical feature has a few exceptions, however. During military rule Brazil joined an Organisation of American States-mandated mission endorsed by the U.S. to oust the democratically elected president of the Dominican Republic, Juan Bosch, in 1965.

6 Brazil's contribution to UNEF I (1959-67) comprised a 600-strong battalion; in UNOMOZ, Brazil's contingent included 200 military personnel, 26 observers, 67 police officers and medical units; in UNAVEM between 1995 and 1997 Brazil deployed an 800-personnel contingent; and, finally, in Timor-Leste, the country sent a large police contingent to UNTAET (Diniz, 2007).

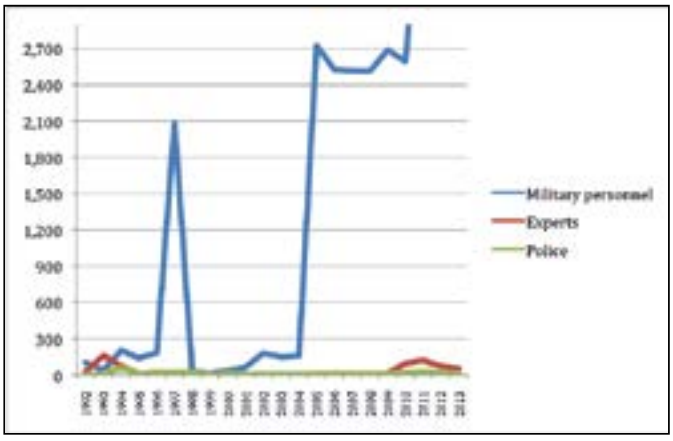
making process, which was characterised by incipient or non-existent public and legislative debate on peace operations, and the lack of effective links among the Presidency, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kenkel, 2010).

With the exception of the engagement in Timor-Leste, throughout most of the 1990s and early 2000s Brazil's participation in UN peacekeeping remained low key. Change would occur with the Lula da Silva presidency, with a shift of engagement modes and motivations.

## The turning point: Lula da Silva's presidency and the rising profile of Brazil's peacekeeping engagement

When Lula da Silva came to power in 2003 Brazil was involved in two UN operations, UNMA (Angola) and UNMISET Timor-Leste). Between 2003 and 2010 the country participated in six of the eight UN missions established during that period.[7]

**Figure 1: Evolution of Brazil's participation in UN peacekeeping operations, 1992-2013 (number of personnel contributed)[8]**




Source: UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) statistics, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/contributors.shtml>

As Figure 1 shows, 2005 – one year after the start of the Haiti mission, MINUSTAH – appears to be a turning point in Brazil's peacekeeping profile, signalling its increasing importance as a contributor to peacekeeping operations (from 83 to 1,367 personnel deployed), followed by a further substantial increase in 2010 (from 1,287 to 2,190 personnel deployed). During this period, although Brazil's financial contributions to DPKO increased, they remained rather variable,[9] suggesting that the country applied the labour division when contributing to UN peacekeeping operations by matching the personnel contributions of least-developed countries,[10] as opposed to developed countries, which tend to contribute financially. Overall, however, Brazil has been a regular rather than a major personnel contributor to peace operations.

Concomitantly, the establishment of two training facilities for civilians and the military in peace operations – the army's Centro de Instrução de Operações de Paz (CIOpPAZ) in 2005 and the navy's Escola de Operações de Paz in 2008 – further confirmed Brazil's increasing investment in peacekeeping operations. The 2008 National Defence Strategy further confirms this stance, emphasising the need to promote armed forces training and participation in UN-led peacekeeping operations or regionally mandated missions (MoD, 2008: 17) and the willingness to turn CIOpPAZ into a regional training institution in the field of peace and humanitarian missions (MoD, 2008: 62).

Since MINUSTAH, with the rise of the participation of experts and police and the extension beyond Portuguese-speaking to other African and Asian scenarios, the type of contribution and the geographical scope of operations have also changed. The transformation of the objectives of and justification for Brazil's engagement was also a novelty. Indeed, involvement in Haiti was explained through the sharing of a common ethnic and cultural history stemming from an "African heritage" (Lula da Silva, 2004) – a justification with some similarities to the common thread used to validate peacekeeping contributions in Lusophone and South American countries (Amorim, 2006). Additionally, Brazilian engagement was justified by the need to participate, both individually and regionally, in international decision-making and no longer simply follow decisions taken by the great powers:

> Brazil was experiencing excellent international projection and this was an opportunity. ... Hitherto, actions in Haiti had been led by the major powers, usually the United States. ... But no Latin American country or specifically a South American country had ever led such an operation. The U.S. difficulty in engaging militarily created the opportunity for Brazil and other South American countries to participate (Amorim, 2011: 41).

7 UNMIL (Liberia), UNOCI (Côte d'Ivoire), MINUSTAH (Haiti), UNMIS (Sudan), UNMIT (Timor-Leste), MINURCAT (Central African Republic-Chad). Brazil did not participate in ONUB (Burundi) and UNAMID (Darfur). During the period 2003-10 Brazil also contributed to MINURSO (Western Sahara) from 2007 onwards, and UNMEE (Ethiopia and Eritrea) from 2006 to 2008, but these participations are not included here since the missions were established in 1991 and 2000 respectively, i.e. before the start of Lula da Silva's term (DPKO, 2013).

8 Data from 1992 to date refers to the month of January every year. Data from 1990 and 1991 was not included, since available statistics only present total aggregated numbers by mission in the categories of "police" and "military". Country-disaggregated data is not available. Troops and military observers are included in the category of military personnel. Data on civilian personnel includes police and experts. Civilian observers are not included because the UN does not publish this data.

9 In 2004-06 Brazil contributed 0.3% of the DPKO budget; in the following three years it was responsible for 0.17%, while in 2010-12 it increased its contribution to 0.32%, ranking 28th among contributors (UNGA, 2009, regarding fiscal years 2011/12). In the 2009 secretary general's report and addendum to implement Resolutions 55/235 and 55/236, Brazil remains classified as a Level I country, in spite of its gross domestic product per capita rising from $4,797 to $6,708 (UNGA, 2009).

10 Among the G4 countries – i.e. the countries bidding for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council (Germany, Brazil, India and Japan) – Brazil ranks 20th in terms of troop contributions, while India ranks third, Germany 44th and Japan 82nd (Junior & Góes, 2010: 23).

In fact, MINUSTAH was the first peacekeeping mission where the majority of personnel came from Latin American nations. Participation in Haiti enabled closer political and economic coordination among South American countries, including among the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) countries (Diniz, 2007). Since the onset, Brazil has been the main provider of personnel to the mission. Before the earthquake of 2010 Brazil kept a contingent of 1,300 personnel in Port-au-Prince; later a second contingent followed comprising army and navy personnel, including an engineering team to assist infrastructure rebuilding in Haiti. According to the Brazilian Ministry of Defence (MoD, 2012: 163), the country spent $1,850 million in Haiti up to June 2012. One of the most important aspects of Brazil's engagement with MINUSTAH, however, was the country's unprecedented military command of a UN-led mission.

Lula's government emphasised many of the same principles espoused by the previous administration, yet he went beyond the traditional tenets in a move to gain leadership status in South America and reach out to countries outside Brazil's traditional priority areas, i.e. India, South Africa, China and other countries in the Global South. One of the key innovations of Lula's foreign policy was the introduction of the principle of non-indifference, which was coined by Celso Amorim, the former minister of foreign affairs. Non-indifference is defined as "active solidarity" (Amorim, 2005) and is presented as being "as important as the non-intervention [principle]" in an attempt to avoid accusations of interference in the internal affairs of other states. Its first known usage dates from the Brazilian decision to join MINUSTAH in February 2004 (Amorim, 2005), but its current application also frames and supports other foreign policies, such as those of providing development aid and encouraging South-South cooperation (IPEA, 2010; ABC, 2009). In the context of Brazilian-African cooperative relations this principle has provided a platform for deepening contacts in Africa in the light of international competition over mineral resources, consumer markets and political support.

In particular, Brazil's engagement in MINUSTAH was contentious from the onset not only because it contravened the principle of non-intervention inscribed in the Brazilian constitution, but also – and especially – because the mission was perceived by some as complicit with U.S. and French plans to oust President Aristide of Haiti. Despite this, Brazil justified its participation by emphasising that the mission was "endorsed by the UN" and was "consistent with the interests and directives of Haiti's authorities" (Lula da Silva, 2005). The government's leader in the Brazilian Congress at the time justified the decision by claiming that "it is a singular opportunity for Brazil to continue bidding for a permanent seat in the United Nations that led our country not only to send troops to Haiti, but to command them as well" (Gauthier & de Sousa, 2006: 1). The decision to join and lead MINUSTAH is also connected to Brazil's military agenda, i.e. the prospect of training the national armed forces for future international and domestic deployments (the latter in Brazil's larger cities) and furthering the links between this agenda and that of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Hirst, 2007).

The Brazilian equation of "peace as social justice", rooted in the claim that "social and economic inequalities produce war and violence"; the emphasis on the link between "security *and* development" (Amorim, 2004); and the importance of strengthening the development mandates of peacekeeping operations were unequivocally articulated by Lula's administration. Brazil repeatedly called for the reinforcement of MINUSTAH's mandate in the fields of humanitarian assistance, state reconstruction and particularly long-term development promotion. In light of these, Brazil has in fact connected its military participation in MINUSTAH with engagement in bilateral and regional development aid initiatives in the country, especially in the fields of poverty reduction, health promotion and agricultural innovation (ABC, 2014). However, despite the centrality of development and security in its discourse and activities, compared to the previous government, the Lula administration was responsible for a record increase in arms sales to developing and conflict-ridden countries.[11]

## Time for consolidation: the Rousseff administration and the continuing peacekeeping engagement

When Dilma Rousseff took office in 2011 Brazil was engaged in eight peacekeeping missions, ranking 11th in terms of military and police contributors. It maintained its participation in these missions and contributed anew to UNFICYP (Cyprus) and UNIFIL (Lebanon). In total, 2,263 personnel were deployed, the majority of whom were uniformed. Since February 2011 Brazil has led the UNIFIL maritime task force, which patrols the Lebanese coast to deter weapons smuggling (*Diálogo*, 2013), becoming the first non-NATO country to assume this role.

As of April 2013 Brazil had 1,977 personnel participating in eight operations of a total of 17 UN-led missions, two of which were recently established: UNISFA (Abyei), established in 2011, and UNSMIS (Syria), a short-lived operation that lasted only for four months in 2012. Both numerically and substantially, the newly elected president made very few alterations to Brazil's policy regarding UN peacekeeping operations. In terms of priorities, Brazil's engagement reflects the ongoing interest in its traditional foreign policy

11 While the U.S. was the main destination of the 187% rise in arms sales observed during this period, countries like Yemen and Paraguay were among the top five targets of these flows (*Folha de São Paulo*, 2013; Pública, 2012a; 2012b). Data from the Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers (NISAT, 2013) indicates that in the first decade of the 21st century Brazil also sold small arms to other developing and conflict-ridden countries such as South Africa, Angola, Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Republic of Congo, Senegal, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

areas of focus (Central and South America; Portuguese-speaking countries) and newer areas in the African continent. Furthermore, Brazil's contribution to the financing of peacekeeping operations will increase in the period 2013-15 to 0.5868% of the DPKO budget (UNGA, 2012).

These indicators of continuing commitment to peacekeeping are thus consistent with Brazil's post-2000 international behaviour, align with its search for emergent-power status that is apparent in its more assertive bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, and reinforce the country's relations with Southern powers, i.e. India, South Africa (through IBSA[12]), China (through BRICS[13]) and South American countries (MERCOSUR), especially through its commercial initiatives.

Brazil's recent move towards norm creation in the field of civilian protection in conflict is a testament to this proactive approach in the international realm. After previous overtly critical engagement in debates on the so-called "Responsibility to Protect", Brazil presented its concept proposal on "Responsibility while Protecting" at the UN, underlining the international law principles that should guide external interventions in order to effectively protect civilians (Hamman, 2012).

## Brazil's dilemma: between legitimation and contestation

In the post-cold war period Brazil's presence on the international stage has consistently been explained in terms of a normative commitment to the principles of respect for non-intervention and sovereignty, the peaceful resolution of conflicts, development, and the non-use of force. Yet the country's recent foreign policy reorientation, reflected in its search for an increased role in peace and security, has led it to espouse contradictory pledges of non-indifference and then to become involved in controversial external interventions. In particular, peacekeeping operations provide a vantage point from which to appreciate the dilemmas this "emerging power" has hitherto encountered.

Brazilian participation in UN peacekeeping missions has undergone meaningful changes in terms of size, nature and geographical scope when compared to the country's engagement prior to the Lula administration. Nevertheless, Brazil remains neither a major personnel nor financial contributor, choosing instead to have a symbolic presence in a large number of UN missions, while assuming leadership roles in operations closer to its particular foreign policy interests. Furthermore, a closer analysis suggests an emerging power struggling to carve out its own space in the world of large powers, presenting itself as an advocate for the Global South and endorsing a peace and development agenda, while simultaneously facilitating the interests of traditional powers and often conforming to their vision of the world. Enhanced international responsibility has thus seen the rise of Brazil's influence in political-institutional arrangements (such as the UN Peacebuilding Commission, which Brazil was recently elected to chair, and the UN Security Council[14]), its participation in several debates on international intervention in vulnerable states (Permanent Mission of Brazil to the UN, 2014), the deepening of relations in South America, and the strengthening of ties with least-developed countries outside the country's traditional areas of interest. Increased participation in peacekeeping operations has also offered greater opportunities to train and provide experience to the Brazilian armed forces and forge greater regional cooperation in the field of defence. On the other hand, however, we are yet to see a transformative impact of Brazil's supposedly distinct participation in traditional modes of international peace and security.

In this move towards an increasingly assertive presence in world affairs, Brazil appears to be caught between the simultaneous legitimation and contestation of the international power structure. The current president's stance has naturally still to be revealed in the coming years, but so far it appears Brazil might follow the same path as other emerging powers before it.

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12 India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum.
13 Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa.
14 Together with Japan, Brazil has been elected more times to the Security Council than any other UN member state since 1945, and twice in the last decade (2004-05; 2010-11).

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