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Cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union in the fields of peacekeeping and crisis management in unpredictable times

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**Cooperation between the United Nations
and the European Union in the fields
of Peacekeeping and Crisis Management
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Abstract: *The United Nations and the European Union have been working together since 2003 in the areas of peace operations and crisis management. They cooperate in regions such as the Western Balkans, Africa, and the Middle East. As the main representatives of the most important global and regional organizations, the UN and the EU aim to deploy efficient and fast responses to different types of crises such as: civilian, political, or institutional. In September 2018, they identified eight priorities to be addressed in the framework of the UN-EU Strategic Partnership on Peacekeeping and Crisis Management for 2019-2021, stressing especially the importance of women for peace, and security. Then, two years later, in September 2020, during the 75th session of the UN General Assembly, they signed the Framework Agreement on Mutual Support in the context of their respective missions and operations in the field. In this working paper, we use primary sources such as official documents, interviews, and declarations to look at how this relationship has developed, and to assess the main implications of the partnership for the parties concerned and its main beneficiaries.*

Keywords: *UN; EU; peacekeeping; crisis management; cooperation.*

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Introduction*

As the experience of the last two years has shown, today's globalized world faces challenges that can gravely affect the lives of citizens around the world, as well as the activity of international or regional organizations and institutions, and can rapidly rewrite their priorities. However, the COVID-19 outbreak did not shut down all channels of cooperation, although the first reaction after the start of the pandemic has been to close the borders and to prioritize national policies. During this period, both the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU) have shown that multilateralism is still relevant for policymakers, and continued their collaboration in a number of sectors.

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has underlined the importance of cooperation and communication in the current times. The health crisis has disproportionately affected the people in conflict zones or areas already under high pressure following different phenomena, such as famine, earthquakes, or civil wars. At the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, has asked for a global ceasefire in order to ensure that all the resources would be used to fight the effects of the disease¹. During the spring of 2021, the official has mentioned on many occasions the effects the virus has had on the people who live in violent zones, with high inequalities and poverty². The pandemic has also shown how unpredictable the international environment can be for all states. Today, political, economic, environmental, and health threats pose a challenge to many, if not all, actors around world.

The UN and the EU are the most well-known supranational structures emphasising cooperation, at the global and European levels, so it is not surprising that they are the frontrunners in finding solutions to these problems. In this paper we will analyse the interaction between the two organisations, show why this is important and relevant in finding better solutions to some of today's main security problems, and propose methods to improve and expand their cooperation.

* The author would like to thank Ionuț-Mircea Marcu, Iulian Oneașcă, Ana-Maria Anghelescu and Mihai Sebe for their constructive feedback on earlier versions of this working paper.

¹ United Nations, Global Ceasefire, '*Now is the time for a collective new push for peace and reconciliation*', <https://www.un.org/en/globalceasefire> (accessed 02.09.2021).

² United Nations, Secretary General, '*Secretary-General's remarks to UN Security Council Open Debate on Peace and Security in Africa: "Addressing root causes of conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery in Africa"*' (19 May 2021), <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2021-05-19/secretary-generals-remarks-un-security-council-open-debate-peace-and-security-africa-addressing-root-causes-of-conflict-while-promoting-post-pandemic-recovery-africa> (accessed 08.09.2021). Recent research suggests that military conflicts increased during the pandemic in the Middle East and decreased in Southeast Asia and the Caucasus, see: Mehrl M, Thurner PW, 'The Effect of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Global Armed Conflict: Early Evidence'. *Political Studies Review*, 2021, 19(2), pp. 286-293. doi:10.1177/1478929920940648 (accessed 06.09.2021).

United Nations–European Union the legal framework of cooperation

We begin this analysis by outlining the ways in which the UN and the EU's relation has evolved during the last two decades, through the study of official documents and primary sources. In this analytical approach, there are two main lines of investigation. Firstly, the chronological one, focusing on the time when the first negotiations started, when the main documents were signed etc. Secondly, there is the principled dimension, the significant part of the discussion, referring to the elements constituting the common points of reference for the two organisations, which will be discussed in the following section.

The EU describes its relation with the UN as one between 'natural partners'³, and emphasise their relation as being based on their activity, one in which they are the 'defenders of a multilateral and rules-based global governance system', and where solutions for today's problems should be built on 'cooperation and coordination based on universal values and rules'⁴.

Thus, they share the same values, propose the same kind of solutions and responses, and aim for the same goals. According to the Consolidated Versions of the Treaty on European Union and of The Treaty Establishing the European Community, the EU aims at: 'reinforcing the European identity and its independence in order to promote peace, security and progress in Europe and in the world'⁵, while article 11 underlines that the Union's common foreign and security policy aims:

'to safeguard the common values, fundamental interests, independence and integrity of the Union in conformity with the principles of the United Nations Charter; (...) to preserve peace and strengthen international security, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter, as well as the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the objectives of the Paris Charter, including those on external borders'⁶.

³ EEAS, 'EU Relations with the United Nations (UN)' (10.06.2020) https://eeas.europa.eu/diplomatic-network/united-nations-un/2342/eu-relations-united-nations-un_en (accessed 01.09.2021). This expression has been widely used to describe the two organizations. For a discussion about their cooperation in the area of crisis management, see also: Tardy, T., UN-EU Relations In Military Crisis Management: Institutionalisation And Key Constraints, *Studia Diplomatica* Vol. LXII, (3), 2009, p. 44, [https://www.ies.be/files/private/30\)%20Tardy%20-%20UN-EU%20Relations.pdf](https://www.ies.be/files/private/30)%20Tardy%20-%20UN-EU%20Relations.pdf) (accessed 01.09.2021).

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ European Union Consolidated Versions Of The Treaty On European Union and of The Treaty Establishing The European Community (2002), *Official Journal of the European Communities* (2002/C 325/01), p. 9, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12002M/TXT&from=EN> (accessed 01.09.2021).

⁶ *Ibidem*.

In its 2016 new Global Strategy for foreign and security policy, the EU underlined, as one of its principles, the mission to: ‘promote a rules-based global order with multilateralism as its key principle and the United Nations at its core’⁷. According to the Strategy, the UN and NATO are the partners with which the EU should cooperate the most⁸, both of them representing the transatlantic community and their shared vision regarding the international order, based on common values. The Strategy has been completed by other actions and declarations, as F. Mogherini underlined that the European defence is based on three pillars: the Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy (thus, the legal framework), the cooperation with the partners – the UN and NATO especially –, and the European defence industry⁹.

Another significant document which mentions the importance of the UN for the EU and for the stability of the globalized world is the EU Security Union Strategy for 2020-2025. Mentioning the topic of counterterrorism, the Strategy stresses that:

‘The EU will also continue to promote multilateral cooperation, working with the leading global actors in this field, such as the United Nations, NATO, the Council of Europe, Interpol and the OSCE.’¹⁰

As for the UN, according to its Charter, article 1, its goal is ‘to maintain international peace and security’¹¹, while article 24 mentions that:

‘In order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, its Members confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf.’

We can see that multilateralism and rules agreed at international level are some of the key words used in this interaction, and that they have the same importance for the actors

⁷ EEAS, European Union Global Strategy Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe a Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy, p. 18 https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf (accessed 03.09.2021).

⁸ Council of the European Union, Brussels, 14 November 2016. Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, 14392/16, p. 2 <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/22460/eugs-implementation-plan-st14392en16.pdf> (accessed 06.09.2021).

⁹ EEAS, “Remarks by the High Representative Mogherini on the adoption of the European Defence Action Plan” (30.11.2016) https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/common-security-and-defence-policy-csdp/16164/remarks-high-representative-mogherini-adoption-european-defence-action-plan_en (accessed 10.09.2021).

¹⁰ European Commission, EU Security Union Strategy, COM(2020) 605 final, p. 17 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0605&from=EN> (accessed 10.09.2021)

¹¹ United Nations, United Nations Charter (full text) <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text> (accessed 03.09.2021).

involved in this process of cooperation. For the EU representatives, the UN is at the core of the international system, ‘the central institution for effective multilateralism’¹². Their view is that the cooperation between different types of actors should be based on rules and terms discussed, negotiated, and accepted in the international area by legitimate actors. Therefore, in terms of peace and security, the EU is following and mirroring the UN’s principles. We notice that this legal framework encourages the cooperation between the two and makes them the actors most involved in finding peaceful solutions for today’s vital issues.

However, in order to have a complete and more realistic image of the topic, it is necessary to mention that the EU does more than just recognize on paper the importance of the UN. The EU and its Member States are the leading contributors to the budget of the UN system, with almost 30% of the UN budget, and more than 31% for the peacekeeping budget¹³. This shows that the EU is acting in order to effectively support the UN actions, although there are many other issues that demand the EU’s attention, including its own domestic problems. The EU has also raised some main topics on the UN public agenda, and, in 2020, it announced that its six priorities in relation to UN were:

‘Championing multilateralism and a strong and effective UN that delivers for all; Building a fair globalisation; Advancing human rights and gender equality; Accelerating the global transition towards sustainable and climate-neutral future; Promoting peace and security; Leading the transition to a new digital world’¹⁴.

Their goals are therefore in harmony, and their actions seem to also be following this pattern. As we can see they include, first of all, the shared values that the UN and the EU have: respect for human rights, gender equality, and support for peace. The EU sees the UN as a factor that facilitated its own creation and functioning, and that its own principles are ‘embedded in the United Nations Charter and international law’¹⁵, since for the EU ‘The promotion of human rights and democracy is a key aspect’¹⁶. Therefore, the UN system is a major point of reference for the EU because it was, at least in part, the guide it followed for its own activities and

¹² Matussek, T. (2007) ‘A Special Partnership with the UN: A European Perspective’, *UN Chronicle* <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/special-partnership-un-european-perspective> (accessed 03.09.2021).

¹³ EEAS, ‘EU Relations with the United Nations (UN)’ (10.06.2020), https://eeas.europa.eu/diplomatic-network/united-nations-un/2342/eu-relations-united-nations-un_en (accessed 01.09.2021).

¹⁴ EEAS, ‘How does the EU work at the United Nations’ (September 2020), https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/unga_factsheet_2020_09-v2.pdf (accessed 01.09.2021).

¹⁵ European Parliament, *Fact Sheets on the European Union*, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/chapter/213/the-eu-s-external-relations> (accessed 02.09.2021).

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

existence. This is a deeply normative-infused worldview, probably one of the strongest things they have in common, although the EU seems somehow more inclined to also act according to these goals.

Today's world is far from offering stability, gender equality, and respect for human rights all around the globe. Therefore, we notice that both institutions aim to act in order to ensure that a better world is possible and closer to all of us. As the situation is constantly changing, some parts of the world are better off now than they were at the end of the Cold War, for example Central and Eastern Europe, while other regions still face challenges, like is the case with the disproportionate impact of the pandemic. Because the possible discussion regarding the cooperation and the relationship between the two international organisations is very complex, and the space we have for this brief analysis is limited, we will only look in more detail at the relation between them in the fields of peacekeeping and crisis management.

Practical aspects on the EU-UN cooperation in the fields of peacekeeping and crisis management

The UN and the EU have started their cooperation in the fields of peacekeeping and crisis management in times of changes for both of them. Thierry Tardy points that, for the EU, a major change was represented by the dawns of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), while for the UN this turning point was the start of the reorganisation of its peace operations¹⁷. On the side of the EU, the Saint-Malo French-British Summit of 1998, the European Council of Nice in 2000, the June 2001 European Summit of Gothenburg, and the Laeken Declaration were important early steps in consolidating the UN-EU cooperation¹⁸.

The first formal contacts in this field between the two organisations were initiated twenty years ago, during the Swedish Presidency of the EU Council of Ministers in 2001¹⁹. At that time, both the EU and the UN were underling the need for reforms within their structures, and that change of direction facilitated their new partnership in the fields of peacekeeping and crisis management. In the summer of 2003, during the Italian Presidency of the Council of the

¹⁷ Tardy, *op. cit.*, p.4.

¹⁸ Novosseloff, A. (2011) Options for Improving EU-UN Cooperation in the Field of Peacekeeping, *GGI Analysis*, 3/2011, Brussels: Global Governance Institute, pp. 2-4, <https://www.ies.be/files/documents/JMCdepository/Novosseloff,%20Alexandra,%20Options%20for%20Improving%20EU-UN%20Cooperation%20in%20the%20Field%20of%20Peacekeeping.pdf> (accessed 03.09.2021).

¹⁹ Novosseloff, A. (2004). EU-UN Partnership in Crisis Management: Developments and Prospects, *The International Peace Institute*, p. 3 https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/eu_un_partnership.pdf (accessed 02.09.2021).

European Union, the EU General Affairs Council decided to make crisis management a priority for the EU-UN cooperation²⁰.

The next institutional step took place in September 2003, when following their cooperation in the Balkans and in Africa, the two organisations signed a *Joint Declaration on UN-EU Co-operation in Crisis Management* which constitutes the main document for their partnership²¹. It is important to note that, after the legal basis identified in the UN Charter and the EU's Treaties, this is the most important document that institutionalizes their relation. The Declaration highlights the link between the EU and the UN, and their shared mission, an element also found in other subsequent official documents: 'The United Nations and the European Union are united by the premise that the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security rests with the United Nations Security Council, in accordance with the United Nations Charter.'²² Consequently, this implies that they are both responsible for actively promoting ways to maintain peace and international security. This sense of responsibility can be understood as a guiding principle of their mutual actions and the intention to integrate and coordinate their actions.

According to this Declaration, the EU and the UN decided to create a joint consultative mechanism for coordination of their actions in four areas: planning, training, communication, and best practices, therefore providing more technical and practical details for their future interaction. Thus, these steps represent the consequence of this shared sense of political responsibility, as A. Novosseloff mentions discussing the successful transfer between the UN and EU Missions in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Democratic Republic of the Congo: 'effective partnership first depends on the political will of the member states of both organizations and on a good relationship at the working level'²³. The area identified as the focus for both was crisis management. Moreover, the two EU member states with permanent seats in the Security Council, the United Kingdom (then still a Member State of the EU) and France, proposed, in the autumn of 2003, several steps to help the UN in managing different crisis, which resulted in the EU Council decision of December 2003 to create battlegroups²⁴.

²⁰ Novosseloff, A., (2004) *op. cit.* p. 6. See also: European Commission (2003), '2522nd Council meeting - External relations - Brussels, 21 July 2003' (21.07.2003) https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/PRES_03_209 (accessed 02.09.2021).

²¹ European Commission, 'Joint Declaration on UN-EU Co-operation in Crisis Management', C/03/266 (24.09.2003) https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/PRES_03_266 (accessed 02.09.2021).

²² *Ibidem*.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 4.

²⁴ Novosseloff, A (2004), *op. cit.* p. 7. The author provides an in-depth analysis of the EU missions in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the beginning of the EU-UN cooperation in the field of crisis management.

As both the EU and the UN are international organizations, with the UN being more experienced in this sector, they already have the institutional capacity to implement such complex joint initiatives. After the adoption of Joint Declaration of 2003, a Steering Committee was established, with the aim of facilitating communication and coordination in the political and technical areas between the organizations, through its biannual meetings²⁵. Although the EU is a younger organization, it is the most sophisticated and complex regional actor that can be involved in helping the UN in the areas of peacekeeping and crisis management. In addition, as we have shown in this text, it has the will to do so.

However, in order to be able to enforce the goals agreed upon in the official documents, practice and pragmatic methods are needed. This is where the EU has had the capabilities to support the UN missions and respond to the needs on the field²⁶. The EU managed to respond to these requests and to open a strong cooperation relation with the UN. The EU-led mission in Congo, the first one outside Europe, and the first independent mission, the so-called Operation Artémis (European Union Force (EUFOR)²⁷, was launched following a request by the UN²⁸. The success of the mission – a transitional national government was negotiated and started its activity²⁹ – proved that the EU could act coherently outside the continent, in areas where its activities have been absent: defence, and peace enforcing.

This relation continued to deepen, and became more specific with a *Joint Statement on UN-EU cooperation in Crisis Management*. The document emphasises the importance of developing more interaction, dialogue and communication between the UN and the EU, especially in crisis situations, involving the UN Secretariat officials as well as the Political and Security Committee of the EU, the UN-EU Steering Committee³⁰. In this document, the African continent is mentioned as an area where cooperation should be enhanced, while recommending more support for the African Union. Other areas are also underlined, such as: Afghanistan, Georgia, and Darfur. One can notice that, more than a decade later, many of these zones –

²⁵ Novosseloff, A (2011), *op. cit.*, p. 6.

²⁶ Matussek, T., *op. cit.*

²⁷ In June 2003, acting in accordance with ‘the Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1484 (30 May 2003) the Council adopted the Operation Plan and the Decision to launch a Military Operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)’ with the goal to stabilize the situation in Bunia, Congo. The Operation took place between June-September 2003. European External Action Service, Artemis/DRC https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/csdp/missions-and-operations/artemis-drc/index_en.htm (accessed 03.09.2021).

²⁸ Novosseloff, A (2011), *op. cit.*, p. 5.

²⁹ The New Humanitarian (17.09.2003), ‘EU calls Artemis operation "a big success" <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2003/09/17/eu-calls-artemis-operation-big-success> (accessed 03.09.2021).

³⁰ European Parliament, Council of the European Union Joint Statement on UN-EU cooperation in Crisis Management (07.06.2007) https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/170/170707/170707eu-unstat_en.pdf (accessed 02.09.2021).

notably Afghanistan, and Georgia – are still in a sensitive, unstable situation. After the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, the 2012 EU ‘*Plan of Action for CSDP. Support to UN peacekeeping*’ helped pave the way for two major dimensions for this relation: planning, and training³¹.

In 2015, the UN Secretariat and the European External Action Service (EEAS), and the EU Political and Security Committee, discussed and identified seven priorities for 2015-2018, aiming at strengthening the UN-EU strategic partnership on peacekeeping and crisis management³². The African continent (Mali and Central African Republic) and the Western Balkans were regions of high priority for the EU’s involvement in crisis management. Pietz and Tardy argue that the main institutional actors involved in the process of planning the cooperation, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), and the European External Action Service (EEAS), are rather different, because DPKO has more autonomy than the EEAS. However, this can be explained in terms of institutional factors, as the EEAS had just been established in 2011, while DPKO is a much older structure³³.

Regarding the training, the EU established the programme ENTRi – Europe’s New Training Initiative for Civilian Crisis Management, which functioned between 2011 and 2019. Its mission was to train civilians working or were going to work in crisis management missions for organisations such as: the European Union (EU), the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the African Union (AU)³⁴. The initiative can be considered a proof for the strong engagement of the EU on the path of becoming a more visible and relevant actor in the field of crisis management.

The EU’s support to UN missions in Africa

In the following section, we focus on the EU’s missions and collaboration with the UN on the African continent. We chose to discuss this region because it is considered very relevant for the EU’s security. For example, two consecutive High Representatives of the Union for

³¹ Pietz, T. Tardy, T. ‘The EU and the UN: together for peace’, *European Union Institute for Security Studies*, No. 54 (18.12.2014), https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Alert_53_EU_UN.pdf (accessed 08.09.2021).

³² European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), ‘Follow-up to the 2015-2018 Priorities on Strengthening the UN-EU Strategic Partnership on Peacekeeping and Crisis Management’, p. 2 <https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/EU-UN%20Note%20de%20cadrage.pdf> (accessed 06.09.2021).

³³ Pietz, T. Tardy, T. ‘The EU and the UN: together for peace’, *European Union Institute for Security Studies*, No. 54 (18.12.2014), https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Alert_53_EU_UN.pdf (accessed 08.09.2021).

³⁴ ‘ENTRi – Europe’s New Training Initiative for Civilian Crisis Management’, *Centre for European Perspective* <https://www.cep.si/crisis-management/entri-2/> (accessed 08.09.2021).

Foreign Affairs and Security Policy underlined the importance of the EU's engagement outside its borders. Federica Mogherini said: 'security inside Europe can only be built if we invest in security outside of the European Union', while Josep Borrell added that 'our security starts very far away from our borders; what happens in Sahel, what happens in Somalia affects directly our security, (...) we have to engage'³⁵. The EU-UN partnership yielded positive results on the African continent, probably more than in any other place, because it was one of the places prone to conflicts, which can have an effect on the European security as a source of potential instability for the EU.

The EU's relation with Africa and its instrumental role in stabilizing conflict zones and helping cooperation has been sometimes viewed with scepticism. The interaction is defined as significant not only in political, but also in institutional terms, because we have an Africa-EU Partnership, signed in 2000, and also a Joint Africa-EU Strategy, adopted in 2007. The Peace and Security sector includes three dimensions: the Early Response Mechanism (ERM), African-led Peace Support Operations (PSOs), and support for capacity building in the areas of peace and security. All three of them are financially supported by the EU through the African Peace Facility (APF), in order to provide additional resources and incentives for more stable societies, which then can promote stability and cooperation³⁶. This multidimensional intervention to the current or potential crises in Africa justifies an approach aimed at addressing the main causes fuelling and sustaining a conflict or violent situations if the goal is to diminish the crises and their effects in Africa. Consequently, the importance of the connection between armed violence and development has been acknowledged by more than 100 states that have signed, since 2006, the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development the most well-known document of this type which address the problem of armed-violence in different conflicts³⁷. Additionally, it is worth mentioning that, in 2017, the EU, together with France and Germany, has launched the Sahel Alliance, aimed at stabilizing, and developing the region³⁸.

³⁵ Ideas expressed during the EEAS, Debate *The EU in a changing world – Staying on course in troubled waters* https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/89786/eeas-10-%E2%80%93-europe-worldwide_en (accessed 15.09.2021).

³⁶ The Africa EU Partnership, <https://africa-eu-partnership.org/en/financial-support-partnership-programme/african-peace-facility> (accessed 08.09.2021).

³⁷ *** The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development (2006) <http://www.genevadeclaration.org/fileadmin/docs/GD-Declaration-091020-EN.pdf> (accessed 08.02.2022). The document mentions explicitly the goal of improving human security around the world Romania signed the document in 2008.

³⁸ EEAS, 'Alliance for the Sahel will reinforce EU work for stability and development of key region (14.07.2021)' https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/common-security-and-defence-policy-csdp/29876/alliance-sahel-will-reinforce-eu-work-stability-and-development-key-region_en (accessed 10.09.2021).

Nonetheless, other authors do not support this involvement of the EU in Africa. For example, Alfredo Tjiurimo Hengari argues that an increased EU involvement may erode Africa's possibilities to resolve its own problems, as well as its capacity to build agency and find solutions to its complex security problems³⁹. Hengari mentions that a more visible activity on the part of the EU can block the actions of the African Union (AU), and its ability to develop useful tools for fighting insecurity⁴⁰. However, the EU has tried to strengthen the role of the African Union on the African continent, for example in the Darfur crisis.

Throughout the past decades, the EU has assisted the AU with three major tools. Firstly, the financial assistance provided by the EU was through the African Peace Facility (more than 1 billion euro for capacity building, peace support operations and an early warning mechanism, including humanitarian assistance), Contributions to the Ceasefire Commission (CFC), and the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), the last one at the explicit request of the AU until the end of the mission, in 2007⁴¹. The second method was the EU's backing for ending impunity and holding accountable the perpetrators of the violence, with the EU being the main supporter of the UN Security Council Resolution 1593, which referred the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court. Lastly, the third tool employed by the EU was the active political support for the peace process⁴², while also supporting AMIS with capabilities⁴³. However, some political figures, for example Joschka Fischer, asked for a more targeted approach to sanctions against the perpetrators in Darfur⁴⁴.

At the same time, the EU-UN relations had also some more difficult moments, especially during the mission in Chad and Kosovo, because it was difficult to implement the planned activities⁴⁵. The UN had been in a difficult position in the late 2000s regarding its lack of

³⁹ Hengari, Alfredo Tjiurimo. (2011) 'EU-UN partnership in military conflict management', *AJCR* 2011 (1), <https://www.accord.org.za/ajcr-issues/eu-un-partnership-in-military-conflict-management/> (accessed 03.09.2021).

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁴¹ EEAS, 'EU Support to AMIS (Darfur)' https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/csdp/missions-and-operations/eu-support-amis-darfur/index_en.htm (accessed 06.09.2021).

⁴² EEAS, 'European Union response to the Darfur crisis (July 2006)' https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/csdp/missions-and-operations/eu-support-amis-darfur/pdf/01072006_factsheet_eu-support-amis-darfur_en.pdf (accessed 06.09.2021).

⁴³ Since 2007 AMIS became The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur UNAMID. Its mission ended at the end of December 2020. UNAMID is in the process of transferring its assets to United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS). See: United Nations, Security Council, Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan 1 March 2021, S/2021/199, p. 11, https://unitams.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s_2021_199_march1_e_0.pdf (accessed 06.09.2021).

⁴⁴ Fischer, Joschka (2007), 'The European Union Must Act in Darfur', *Crisis Group*, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/sudan/european-union-must-act-darfur> (accessed 06.09.2021).

⁴⁵ Tardy, Thierry. Gowan, Richard. (2014) Building EU-UN Coherence in Mission Planning & Mandate Design, Policy Briefing (nob. 2014), https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/PolicyBrief_EU-UN_Tardy_Gowan_02.pdf (accessed 08.09.2021).

capabilities, because it did not have sufficient resources to meet all the requirements they received for assistance. The EU became involved in Kosovo in order to help the United Nations, but also because it had the necessary capabilities to get involved in the mission i.e. the police forces⁴⁶. The missions on the African continent are much more demanding at the political and logistic levels it involves greater coordination of the actors involved in this endeavour. However, after 2014 we notice an ongoing transition from the rather strained relations to more involvement between EU and UN.

Discussing the African experience is relevant for this paper's scope, not only in strategic terms, but also because it shows that, when the perception of policy makers is in harmony with the capabilities they have, many (political) goals can be accomplished.

The current state of EU-UN cooperation in other parts of the world

Beside Africa, other areas where the EU is involved as an important actor is the Middle East. Together with other partners the EU is a visible actor in the Quartet, a format established in 2002 to facilitate the negotiations in the Middle East, help improve Palestinian economic development, and to create the Palestinian institutions, which can be involved in the state-building process⁴⁷. The other members of the Quartet are the United Nations, Russia, and the United States. The participation of the EU in this initiative can be interpreted as an action adding a layer of clarity to the EU's foreign policy, making it a more articulated actor on the world stage and in a very specific situation.

In 2014, following the illegal annexation of the Crimea peninsula, the Eastern Neighbourhood became a potential source of increased security risks to the EU. The fact had important effects on the way in which the policymakers saw their own security and defence, especially the Eastern members of the Union. Russia's actions were a direct attack on the rules-based order of the post-Cold War world, and, in Europe specifically, of the 'OSCE principles and commitments'⁴⁸. This has shown how fragile the stability of this region is in fact.

⁴⁶ Deutsche Welle, 'EU Takes Over in Kosovo, But Won't Commit to Congo' (09.12.2008), <https://www.dw.com/en/eu-takes-over-in-kosovo-but-wont-commit-to-congo/a-3858631> (accessed 14.02.2022).

⁴⁷ The Quartet – About Us, The Office of the Quartet <http://www.quartetoffice.org/page.php?id=4e3e7y320487Y4e3e7> (accessed 08.09.2021).

⁴⁸ Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and Neil Bush 'Seventh anniversary of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea: UK statement' (04.04.2021) <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/seven-years-of-illegal-occupation-of-crimea-by-the-russian-federation-uk-statement> (accessed 10.09.2021). The remark about the impact of the Crimea crisis was also mentioned here: Forti Daniel, (2018), 'European Contributions to UN Peacekeeping Operations: Lessons Learned and the Way Forward', *International Peace Institute*, Meeting Note August 2018, p. 2 https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/1808_Vienna-Seminar_European-Contributions.pdf (accessed 10.09.2021).

The Lisbon Treaty has brought many changes to the area of the EU's foreign policy and has provided the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) with more coherent working tools (such as the European External Action Service – EEAS), leading to a reconfiguration of the EU-UN relations. After its establishment in 2011, EEAS became the main instrument for institutional interaction with the UN, representing the EU's interests. In the past decade of cooperation, two main timeframes were discussed and implemented by UN and EU: for 2015-2018 and for 2019-2021.

The institutional framework *'Strengthening the UN-EU Strategic Partnership on Peacekeeping and Crisis Management: Priorities 2015-2018'* emphasised the continued support of the EU to UN, within the scope of CSDP, identifying six priority areas:

'rapid response of the CSDP operations in relation to the UN peacekeeping forces; support to the African Peace and Security Architecture – underlying the potential of trilateral cooperation between UN, EU and AU; facilitating EU Member States' Contributions to UN Peacekeeping; Cooperation in Rule of Law and Security Sector Reform (SSR), including in the area of Defence Sector Reform (DSR), Cooperation in Support and Logistics, finalize and implement a framework agreement on support issues; enhanced information and analysis exchange; follow up the Implementation of the 2012-2014 EU Plan of Action'⁴⁹.

The UN and the EU identified several priorities for 2019-2021, rooted in the guiding principles of their two-decade long cooperation: multilateralism, and rules-based order in accordance with 'the human rights and fundamental freedoms, and with International Humanitarian Law, and the Women, Peace and Security agenda'⁵⁰. The latest framework provides consistency with the previous main directions, among which we mention: the role of the EU Member States within the UN, the need for technical support, the strategic importance of Africa for the European security. The areas of cooperation, endorsed by the UN Security Council through the Resolution 1325, make the agenda of Women, Peace and Security a top priority:

'1. Women, Peace and Security. 2. Cooperation between missions and operations. 3. Planning and execution of transitions. 4. Facilitate EU Member States' contributions and support to UN

⁴⁹ Council of the European Union, Brussels, 27 March 2015, 'Strengthening the UN-EU Strategic Partnership on Peacekeeping and Crisis Management: Priorities 2015-2018', p. 3, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7632-2015-INIT/en/pdf> (accessed 10.09.2021).

⁵⁰ United Nations Peacekeeping Reinforcing the UN-EU Strategic Partnership on Peace Operations and Crisis Management: Priorities 2019-2021 25.09.2018 <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/reinforcing-un-eu-strategic-partnership-peace-operations-and-crisis-management-priorities-2019-2021> (accessed 08.09.2021).

peace operations. 5. Support of conflict prevention and political processes. 6. Cooperation on policing, the rule of law and SSR. 7. Support to African-led peace operations. 8. Cooperation on training and capacity building.’⁵¹

The role of women in ensuring peace and security has received more attention in the latest framework of cooperation⁵², the partners stressing the need to implement UN’s Security Council Resolution 1325, aimed at increasing the representation of women in the decision-making process at all levels, to take into account the special needs of girls and women aiming to ensure a better gender representation, and to safeguard of women’s rights⁵³. These changes reflect the UN’s capacity to continue to be relevant in today’s world.

As the main global organization responsible to maintain international peace and security, the UN instruments expanded to include new tools for action in these domains, from the first generation of peacekeeping missions to preventive diplomacy and mediation and to peacebuilding to countering terrorism and disarmament⁵⁴. This can be seen as another effect of the end of the Cold War, and the increased role of peace enforcement operations, placing more emphasis on human security rather than state security⁵⁵. Women are some of the beneficiaries of this widened security agenda, with the acknowledgement of their experiences in conflicts and wars. The previous absence of this relevant perspective of crisis management and peace operations aspect has been a notable shortcoming. In many conflict zones, women are targeted by fighters from different groups, and the cultural norms can pose significant challenges in working with men from peace operations. Children are another vulnerable segment of civilians affected by conflicts who require special attention. Increasing the number of women who

⁵¹ United Nations Liaison Office for Peace and Security |UNLOPS, ‘UN-EU Steering Committees on Crisis Management’ Newsletter Issue 17, https://unlops.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/unlops_newsletter_edition_december_2019.pdf (accessed 08.09.2021).

⁵² This recommendation has been highlighted in the meeting: *** ‘The Future of the UN-EU Strategic Partnership’, International Peace Institute, p. 2 <https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/UN-EU-Partnerships.pdf> (accessed 10.09.2021).

⁵³ UN Women, ‘UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women and peace and security (2000)’ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/docs/2000/10/un-security-council-resolution-1325> (accessed 10.09.2021). This resolution has been followed by other seven resolutions on women, peace and security: *** UN Women 2015: <https://wps.unwomen.org/resolution/> (accessed 08.02.2022).

⁵⁴ United Nations Maintain International Peace and Security <https://www.un.org/en/our-work/maintain-international-peace-and-security> (accessed 08.02.2022).

⁵⁵ This approach has led to an overlap of different aspects of the UN actions: peace-making, peace enforcement, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and peace enforcement. Peace-making aims to bring the hostile parties to negotiations and may include diplomatic measures; peace enforcement may include the use of military measures, after the other measures have failed (based on the explicit consent of the Security Council); peacebuilding aims to support the national capabilities to avoid another conflict; peacekeeping (with the parties’ consent) supports the implementation of the peace agreement etc. See: United Nations Peacekeeping, Terminology: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/terminology> (accessed 08.02.2022).

participate in peace operations and crisis management will benefit the civilians involved or victims in those conflicts. These new priorities, supported also by the Council of the EU⁵⁶, emphasise the need to protect these groups, and to increase the role given to the International Humanitarian Law in the partnership.

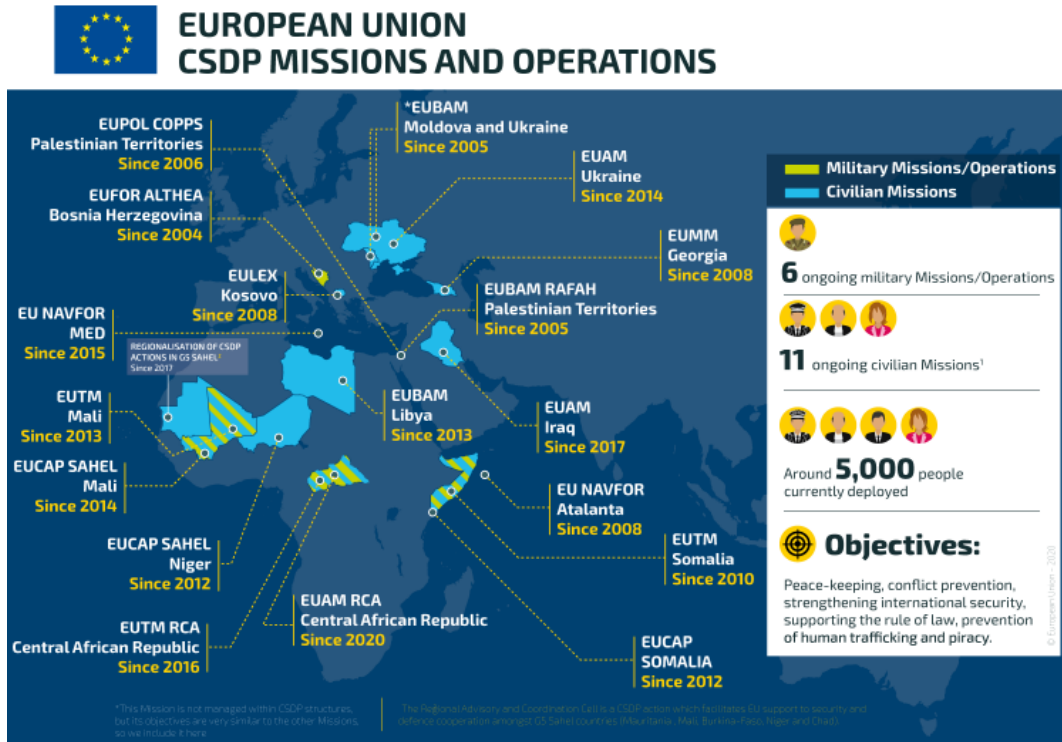
We should also mention that the UN and the EU cooperate in other fields related to the international security, such as counter-terrorism and, more specifically, the potential of nuclear terrorism. In April 2019, *'The UN-EU framework on Counter-Terrorism'* was signed, and the joint project on *'Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT)'*⁵⁷ was launched. However, these initiatives go beyond the scope of this analysis, but we wanted to underline that the UN and the EU can identify many other topics where a joint coordinated effort has more chances to succeed in finding better solutions.

Today, the EU has 17 missions around the world (11 civilian and 6 military) in Africa, in the Middle East, the Western Balkans, and Eastern Europe (*Map 1*); they prove its global commitment, capabilities and political will to assume a more visible role on the world stage. The increase is significant, as compared to the beginnings of the first missions in 2003: a policing mission in Bosnia Herzegovina, and a military operation in the Republic of North Macedonia.

⁵⁶ Council of the European Union, Brussels, 18 September 2018, 'Council Conclusions Reinforcing the UN-EU Strategic Partnership on Peace Operations and Crisis Management: Priorities 2019-2021', p. 4 <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/36432/st12264-en18.pdf> (accessed 10.09.2021).

⁵⁷ EEAS, Framework on counter-terrorism between the United Nations and the European Union (24.04.2019), https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/61408/framework-counter-terrorism-between-united-nations-and-european-union_en (accessed 10.09.2021); United Nations Liaison Office for Peace and Security, Newsletter April 2019 – December 2019, p. 4 https://unops.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/unops_newsletter_edition_december_2019.pdf (accessed 10.09.2021).

Map 1. EEAS, Military and civilian missions and operations (05.03.2019)



Source: EEAS, Military and civilian missions and operations⁵⁸

Nevertheless, there is another element which makes the landscape even more relevant for the European activity: EU's capacity to transform its long-term animosities in sources of cooperation, stability and economic prosperity for its citizens. The territory of the European Union has known peace for more than 75 years now, the longest period in its history⁵⁹, and many political leaders support the parallel between the European experiences in crisis management and institutions building as a possible lesson that can be learned, emulated and used in other parts of the world.

The role of Romania in the EU-UN partnership

In the past 20 years, Romania has been an active actor, engaged in different international missions. The main institutions involved in this activity are: the Ministry of National Defence and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The staff of the Ministry of National Defence has

⁵⁸ EEAS, Military and civilian missions and operations (05.03.2019) https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/430/Military%20and%20civilian%20missions%20and%20operations (accessed 14.09.2021).

⁵⁹ Matussek, T. *op. cit.*

participated in seven missions under the aegis of the European Union, with a total of 142 people, and in six missions under the aegis of the UN, with a total of 22 people⁶⁰.

Romania has 32 officers and gendarmes of the Ministry of Internal Affairs deployed in UN missions, which makes it the first state in the EU in terms of police participation to the UN peacekeeping missions⁶¹. Additionally, the Protection and Guard Service is actively involved in international missions with the goal of ensuring the protection of the dignitaries carrying out missions in Sudan and Afghanistan. The partnership is based on a Memorandum signed by the UN Department of Security and Safety and the Protection and Guard Service⁶². These actions prove Romania's commitment to be an active actor at regional and international levels and its support for a multilateral approach to crisis management.

The topic of multilateralism and its strong relevance for Romania's foreign policy is mentioned in a number of official documents. According to Romania's new National Defence Strategy (NDS) for 2020-2024, "*Together for a safe and prosperous Romania in a world marked by new challenges*", strengthening multilateralism and the ruled-based world order is in the country's national interest, while 'the "dilution" of multilateralism and the 'enhanced drift in international order with the multilateralism dismantling tendency' is a trend that can influence security environment, and a potential risk to Romania's national security.⁶³ The Government's Programme for 2020-2024 mentions that support for effective multilateralism will continue to be one of the country's main directions in foreign policy, together with promoting and respecting the international law⁶⁴. The document mentions that especially the pandemic situation has underlined the increased role of the international organizations, and the need for more cooperation and a multi-layered diplomacy.⁶⁵

The support for multilateralism is also a significant direction for the foreign policy of other European countries. France and Germany have launched in 2019 an initiative called the Alliance for Multilateralism⁶⁶, which aims to facilitate the interaction between different kinds

⁶⁰ Ministry of National Defence, International missions (Misiuni internaționale), <https://www.defense.ro/misiuni-internationale-1> (accessed 20.10.2021).

⁶¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Romania's participation in peacekeeping operations under the auspices of the UN [Participarea României la operații de menținere a păcii sub egida ONU], <http://www.mae.ro/node/2114> (accessed 14.09.2021).

⁶² UN Missions, Protection and Guard Service, <http://www.spp.ro/#/misiuni-externe> (accessed 20.10.2021).

⁶³ National Defence Strategy for 2020-2024, pp. 19-26 https://www.presidency.ro/files/userfiles/National_Defence_Strategy_2020_2024.pdf (accessed 14.09.2021).

⁶⁴ See: Government's Programme for 2020-2024, p. 145, <https://gov.ro/ro/obiective/programul-de-guvernare-2021-2024> (accessed 08.02.2022).

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 145.

⁶⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Press release 'Minister of Foreign Affairs Bogdan Aurescu attended the Ministerial Meeting of the Alliance for Multilateralism', (26.06.2021) <https://www.mae.ro/en/node/53021> (accessed 15.09.2021).

of actors on various topics, and Romania is an active member of this alliance. The initiative can be seen as flexible and therefore, potentially a more efficient mechanism for discussing and debating different topics, with the informal element as a strong asset for the actors involved in the process.

Having in mind the close collaboration between the UN and the EU in the fields of peace operation and crisis management, as well as Romania's support for an efficient multilateralism, we can say that it is in accordance with the country's interest to have a deeper cooperation between the UN and the EU. Romania can support this partnership by providing expertise in specific and relevant areas, including the cybersecurity, where it can engage the community of Romanian experts in this area.

Conclusions

There are several official documents that guide the interaction between the UN and the EU. The basic documents are the UN Charter and the EU treaties, followed by the 2003 EU-UN Joint Declaration, the 2007 EU-UN Joint Statement on Cooperation in Crisis Management, and the Action Plan to enhance EU CSDP Support to UN Peacekeeping, developed in 2011 by the EU's Political and Security Committee⁶⁷. All these documents offer a clear legal and institutional framework for the cooperation between the two organizations in a number of fields.

In this working paper, we focused on the cooperation in the fields of peace operation and crisis management, and we have shown that the legal foundations of both organisations are following the same principles: a world order based on norms and practices derived from the international law. The civilians and the affected regions or countries are the main beneficiaries of the joint commitment of the UN and the EU, with the citizens of the EU and its Member States as secondary beneficiaries.

Nevertheless, we should keep in mind that the world is not static, many things are changing, and the global pandemic is just one factor that has shown the fragility and vulnerability of our societies. The effects of the sanitary crisis will emphasise the differences between and within states, especially in war-prone or disaster-prone countries. To mitigate the risks of such events, we need more cooperation, communication, and multilateral involvement

⁶⁷ Council of the European Union, Brussels, 27 March 2015, 'Strengthening the UN-EU Strategic Partnership on Peacekeeping and Crisis Management: Priorities 2015-2018', p. 3, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7632-2015-INIT/en/pdf> (accessed 10.09.2021).

form various actors. Strengthening cooperation between the most representative actors from target regions can help improve the lives of the citizens from vulnerable areas.

The EU is following the international guidelines for its action in the areas of crisis management and peacekeeping, just as is the case with the actions taken in the sector of green reforms⁶⁸. In this endeavour, the EU shows its global mission, since it is also interested in world affairs and not only in the European space, highlighting its role as a responsible and committed actor.

Other UN agencies, the World Health Organization and World Food Organization, can also develop more in-depth cooperation within multilateral frameworks. However, a balance should be sought between the specific problems identified on the ground and the general picture. Moreover, the role of the individual policymaker is crucial in assessing the security environment.

In conclusion, we can say that the cooperation between the EU and UN also strengthens the EU's position as a normative power, which acts based on international norms and regulations, aiming to provide for other people further access to more stable societies and crisis management mechanisms. The UN as an actor with a longer and more consistent activity in this area, can help EU become more articulated in its activities, while receiving European support in terms of capabilities.

Recommendations

- Considering that, in today's world, there are risks and threats which can have a speedy evolution and a significant impact on many infrastructures, a more flexible and rapid response to crises should be developed at local, regional, national, regional and international levels.
- A multidisciplinary approach can help enrich the perspectives of researchers and policy-makers. It is the case, for instance, of health specialists, who can analyse better cooperation in this specific domain, of economists, who can discuss the security of supply chains etc.

⁶⁸ In *The European Green Deal*, the European Commission mentions that the document is a tool to implement the United Nation's 2030 Agenda and the sustainable development goals: European Commission, Communication From the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and The Committee of the Regions. The European Green Deal, Brussels, 11.12.2019 COM(2019) 640 final, p. 3 https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:b828d165-1c22-11ea-8c1f-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC_1&format=PDF (accessed 09.09.2021).

- Following this perspective, the newly developed Strategic Compass – with its four dimensions: crisis management, resilience, capability development and partnerships – is an important step towards a more efficient cooperation between the EU Member States.
- The impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the civilian and military missions should be assessed and correctly understood in order to avoid delays in the implementation of the previously planned activities
- The role of women in peacekeeping and security, and the situation of vulnerable civilians should remain a high point of reference for future initiatives, because they are the main affected segment of the population in times of uncertainty. Although the health crisis caused by Covid-19 is still ongoing, we saw that women, young women and children were affected disproportionately by it and its effects may impact their future on the long run. That is why more specific measures are needed to try to ease the burden this pandemic (and possibly other future disturbing events) has had on this part of the population already vulnerable in many conflict zones around the world.

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