

Contributor Profile¹: Paraguay

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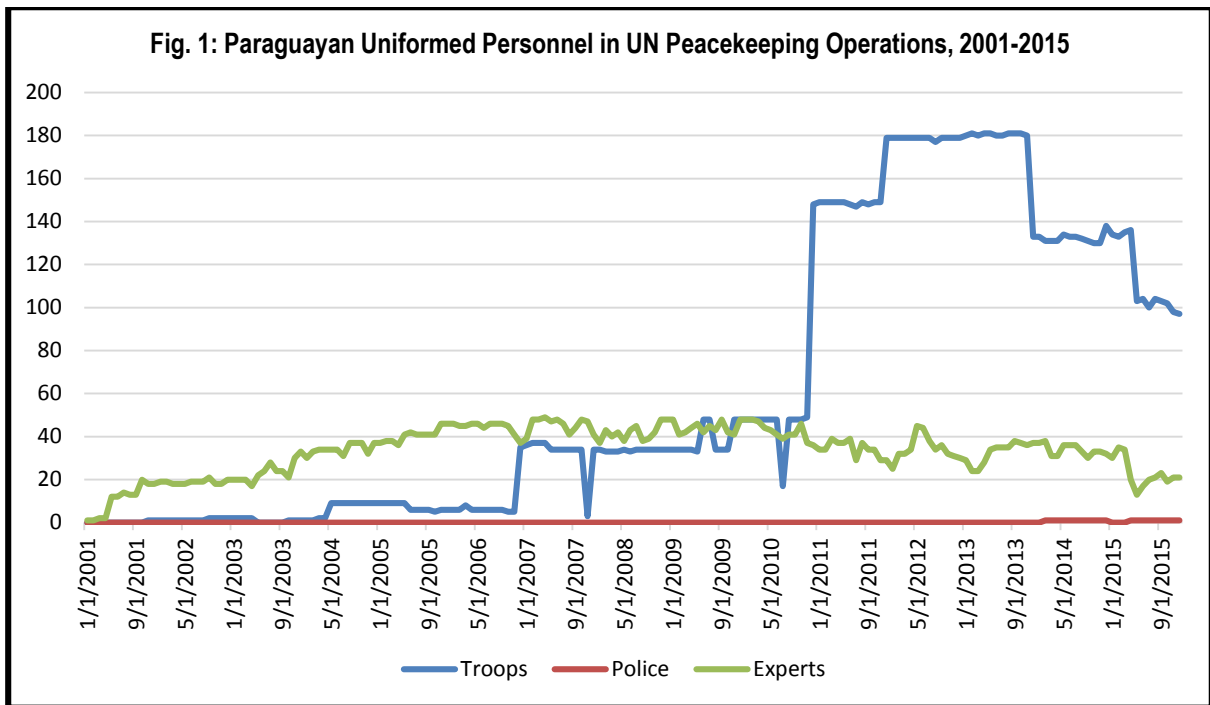
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Active armed forces ²	Helicopters & fixed-wing transport	Defense Budget	UN Peacekeepers	UN Contribution Breakdown	Other significant deployments
Total: 10,650 World Ranking (size): 102 Army: 7,600 Navy: 1,950 Air: 1,100 Paramilitary: 14,800	Transport: 10 (light)	2015: ³ US\$0.32bn 2014:\$0.31bn (1.00% of GDP) 2013:\$0.35bn (1.20% of GDP) 2012: \$0.34bn (1.35% of GDP)	119 (4 female) (31 Dec. 2015) Ranking: 65th 8 th largest contributor from the Americas	MINUSCA 2 (1 expert, 1 troop) MINUSTAH 81 (1 police, 80 troops) MONUSCO 17 experts UNFICYP 14 troops UNMISS 2 experts UNOCI 3 (1 expert, 2 troops)	None
Defense Spending / Troop⁴: US\$28,455 (compared to global average of approximately US\$65,905 and regional average of approximately US\$2,618).					

Part 1: Recent Trends

Paraguay has contributed to United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions since 2001. More recently, Paraguay's contribution of UN peacekeepers has increased from 1.14% of all Latin American peacekeepers in 2007 to 2.78% in 2014.⁵ At the end of 2015, 119 Paraguayan uniformed personnel were deployed in six UN missions (in Central African Republic, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Ivory Coast, and South Sudan). With the exception of Haiti, all Paraguayan involvements are token contributions (i.e. deployments of fewer than forty uniformed persons).⁶ Although Paraguay did not pledge any new contributions at the 2015 World Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping, organized by the United States during the opening week of the 70th UN General Assembly, the country has been developing specialized capabilities in engineering by funding the "Operation Multi-Role Engineer Company," which is intended for use in peacekeeping operations.

Paraguayan officers join UN mission in three categories: Senior officers (with 13 years or more of career experience) can become military observers; junior officers and non-commissioned officers (with less than 13 years in service), who may be contingent forces; non-military personnel are hired as UN civil employees.⁷ No Paraguayan soldiers are assigned to the line of battle; they are all ascribed to logistical and observation roles.



Since Paraguay lacks tactical equipment, it has favored dry-leasing arrangements instead of wet-leasing deals (assistance only involves human contributions rather than military equipment).⁸ Thus, it has signed agreements of cooperation with neighboring countries such as Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay, allowing Paraguayan troops to take part in UN peacekeeping as part of those country's contingents. In February 2015, during Ban Ki-Moon's visit to Asunción, the first visit to Paraguay by a UN Secretary-General since Dag Hammarskjöld in 1959, the Paraguayan President announced that the country would continue supporting UN missions as a strategy of assertive and active insertion of Paraguay into international politics.

Part 2: Decision-Making Process

Paraguayan peacekeepers are deployed under Article 35 of the Law of National Defense and Domestic Security.⁹ The decision to contribute to multinational peacekeeping is typically made in four steps. First, once the UN publishes its current and future needs (usually before a peacekeeping deployment), Paraguay's UN representation studies the request. Second, if there is a window of opportunity for any involvement, delegates in New York City communicate with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who generate a feasibility report to be submitted to the Executive Power. Third, the President of Paraguay, as the Commander in Chief and head of the Executive, makes a decision. Finally, and even if there is no specific legislation related to peace operations, the Constitution's¹⁰ section 5, article 224 specifies that the Senate must approve any international military deployment.

In a 266-page [White Paper](#) published in 2013, Paraguay defends the right of legitimate defense and aspires to uphold international human rights. It rejects international actions against national independence, self-determination of peoples, and the legal equality of States. It claims that defense policies should reinforce collective measures to prevent risks, direct aggressions, and other threats to international peace. It acknowledges that in recent years the increasing necessity for peace operations has imposed an unprecedented burden on the UN.¹¹ In order to help this deployment of around 100,000 uniformed personnel from 100 countries, international cooperation must improve.¹² Thus, one of the goals of Paraguayan defense policy is to encourage the country's association to peacekeeping missions. Paraguay can also take part in

humanitarian support initiatives (often executed by civilian parties, with the Army playing an advisory role. These are designed to alleviate human suffering caused by natural or human-made disasters), and confidence-building measures (professional exchanges for training and specialization of military personnel; the organization of joint maneuvers and combined exercises with other Armies to standardize procedures), to help preventing crisis and conflicts.¹³

Part 3: Rationales for Contributing

Political rationales: Paraguay believes that in the globalized world, where problems, crises, and threats may have spillover- and contagion effects, peacekeeping can serve different goals. It may help keep small countries secure by providing external support to national agendas. It can also enhance national prestige and regional influence because it is easier to be heard in a discussion as a contributor country, thereby allowing small states to speak knowledgeably about important topics of international affairs. Paraguay neither competes against rising regional powers (such as Brazil) nor balances the influence of states such as Argentina or Chile. It does not seek more influence in other countries—there is no link between Paraguay and the countries where its troops are deployed. It depends more on available resources and judgments from political leaders. Paraguay justifies its role in principled terms. Indeed, the “niche” image, according to which peacekeeping brings greater international respect and authority applies here.¹⁴ Its mission is to help build a world based on international law and principles such as independence and self-determination,¹⁵ and an international collective security system able to prevent and manage crises and conflicts.¹⁶

Economics rationales: From an economic angle, two factors explain Paraguay’s interest in UN peacekeeping missions. First, the country is interested in reforming its military but does not have enough resources to do so alone.¹⁷ UN payments are essential to reimburse part of the cost of the new equipment that is required to reach UN peacekeeping missions standards (but which will remain as assets of the Armed Forces once a mission ends). In short, UN transfers serve both to support national budgets and to augment security expenses. Second, they help their troops’ training and education in the long term. While the average Paraguayan soldier earns about US\$4,200 per year, deployed as a UN peacekeeper they earn US\$13,644. These UN allowances help them pay tuitions fees in colleges and technical institutes or provide remittances to their families, which have reached an average of US\$12,000 a year per person.¹⁸

Security rationales: Paraguay believes that better trained and equipped troops are necessary to respond to current global threats and defend national sovereignty. Paraguay adheres to the multidimensional view of security prompted by the Organization of American States (OAS).¹⁹ Organized crime, drug trafficking, terrorism, environmental degradation, and energy security, among others, are also considered threats to international peace and stability.²⁰ It is precisely because new threats are so diverse, with so many different drivers and structures involved, that habitual institutions and routines might no longer be enough to guarantee peace.²¹

Institutional rationales: Institutional growth is also important and can be approached from two levels. From an operational perspective, it refers to improved capabilities, flexibility, and preparedness in order to be ready for rapid deployment.²² From a political perspective, Latin American armies, especially those of Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, bargained new democratic roles and functions with the emerging elites after the end of authoritarianism, including roles as peacekeepers.²³ Paraguay has also overcome a transition from authoritarian rule after the breakdown of the Stroessner dictatorship in 1989. Optimists argue that despite some occasional windows for institutional breakdown and the rise of political leaders such as

Lino Oviedo (who was condemned for a coup d'état attempt in 1996, and who presumably was behind another coup attempt in 2000), the Army has grown into an organization committed to the defense of democracy.²⁴ Pessimists maintain that corruption has undermined the country's transition from authoritarian rule.²⁵ Paraguayan leaders insist that the Army is not among the more corrupt entities but has adapted well to democracy²⁶. Yet, corruption in the military remains a concern. Critics point to the Army's slow-moving structure, low budgets, and the absence of political will to reform old ways of functioning, as reflected in two reform laws approved in 1992 and 1993 but left unimplemented. Most experts consider Paraguay as a case of military autonomy, where the Army has not be submitted to real political control by civilian authorities.²⁷

It is premature to state that Paraguay has developed a "peacekeeping habit," because UN peacekeeping is not yet viewed as a routine part of the country's of foreign and defense policies. Also, most of Paraguay's deployments occurred under the flags of neighboring states. In addition, since the current global peacekeeping agenda may include controversial elements, such as the use of force or the protection of civilians, the Joint Chiefs of Staff prefer to analyze deployment opportunities on an ad-hoc basis. Nevertheless, Paraguay has taken steps to create this habit by participating in several Inter-American and international confidence-building initiatives²⁸ and consolidating its democratic government.²⁹

Part 4: Barriers to Contributing

Legal and Political Barriers: The main supporter of providing UN peacekeepers is the Government of Paraguay. The authorities argue that bureaucracy is not a barrier because administrative procedures are flexible and the country knows what the UN needs. In short, there are no legal obstacles. Therefore, Paraguayan authorities keep their own right to decide whether or not they authorize deployments; subsequently, discomfort with any expanding UN peacekeeping agenda would result in a Paraguay's refusal to deploy troops. Conversely, Paraguayan deployments should be interpreted as support for the UN peacekeeping agenda.

Financial Costs: Some argue that barriers are not linked to political will but rather to resources, which are often too scarce to reach the required UN standards in a timely manner. Indeed, the UN's minimum standards of training and equipment have increased procurement costs for some peacekeeping contributors.³⁰ For others, however, although the Armed Forces' modernization depends on legal reforms, there are no recent deliberations on legislation proposing institutional changes.³¹ Lacks of reform may imply likely resistances, in this case from the military. Still, there are no known public signs suggesting this. Officially, since Paraguay faces low budgets and institutional constraints, including difficulty finding new recruits for the armed forces, reinforcing the Army is essential. In this context, peacekeeping experiences may help this goal. In 2012, the congress approved the Armed Forces Professional Soldier Law, which aimed to hire temporarily 1,400 soldiers per year to repopulate deserted detachments, mainly in the border regions and in the Paraguayan Chaco.³² There is no accurate data measuring the effects of this law, but they seem to be modest. In 2014, local media announced that (only) around 780 young men would be recruited thanks to this law.³³ That same year, security international specialized networks highlighted that only 620 recruits (of 14,284), 4.34%, were Professional Voluntary Soldiers.³⁴

Alternative political or strategic priorities: Another eventual barrier to contributing peacekeepers could be domestic security issues. The rise of a Marxist-Leninist insurgent group called *Ejército del Pueblo Paraguayo* (EPP) in the northern Department of *Concepción* since 2008, may force the government to refocus on internal security. Furthermore, the peace

movement could emphasize certain aspects of the UN peacekeeping agenda that are not very popular. The move towards more robust peacekeeping is by some NGOs misconstrued as building peace by making war; while others would defend an idealistic idea of world peace, where the emphasis should be on contributing to non-military means.³⁵ Nevertheless, the EPP is too small to represent a major security threat to the government and a broad consensus seems to have formed that it is important for Paraguay to provide UN peacekeepers.

Part 5: Current Challenges and Issues

Perhaps the most challenging task for Paraguayan peacekeepers is to gain experience. The country's authorities are aware of this and have taken two major measures to address this situation. First, Paraguay has signed several memorandums of understanding with neighboring countries—*Embedded Operational Partnerships*—allowing Paraguayan troops to integrate with partner countries in peacekeeping missions.³⁶ Examples include [an unlimited treaty with Uruguay](#) signed in July 2015 and agreements with [Argentina](#) and [Brazil](#) in 2010. They cover matters such as chain of command issues, sources of revenues, communication protocols, and others.³⁷ Paraguayan peacekeepers were deployed within the Argentinean contingent in the UNFICYP. Paraguay also engages in inter-institutional cooperation with the Uruguayan Army.³⁸

Second, in October 2001, Paraguayan authorities approved and supported the establishment of the [Paraguayan Joint Peace Operations Training Centre \(CECOPAZ\)](#). Along with other centers created in Argentina, Chile, and Peru, it seeks to promote “education for peace, with a cross-disciplinary approach for the joint training of military, civilian, and police forces”.³⁹ This center trains troops, police, observers, and journalists, to be integrated into UN peacekeeping. The courses cover UN Contingent Basics, UN Military Observers, multinational logistics, decision-making in MINURSO, and an advanced pre-deployment training for MINUSTAH and UNFICYP.⁴⁰ Every year, approximately 40 military observers, 10 staff members, 82 senior officials, and 90 non-commissioned officers, are deployed. By 2015, CECOPAZ had graduated 150 officials and non-commissioned officers, 30 police, and 50 civilians, mainly journalists and volunteer firefighters.⁴¹

Part 6: Key Champions and Opponents

Within the State, the Army can be counted among the first supporters of UN peacekeeping. While the Paraguayan authorities know that the UN's compensation payments do not fully cover the costs of deploying their military, they judge that the institutional benefits of integrating peacekeeping teams also bring political returns, including institutional/cultural renovation and learning of new languages. Opponents to peacekeeping missions include non-governmental organizations working in the world peace movement. As indicated above, some NGOs may express an opposition to the idea of peace enforcement and an ideal concept on how world peace should be constructed. Other rationales include fear of collateral damages and Human Rights violations, unexpected environmental consequences of the use of force, nationalism, rejection of “colonial troops” in former colonies (and, consequently, a fierce defense of the principles of self-determination of peoples and national sovereignty), and others. When pacifist NGOs merge with international anti-imperial movements, UN missions may be perceived as an expression of U.S./Western imperialist policies.

Part 7: Capabilities and Caveats

Paraguay has limited operational capabilities in terms of heavy equipment such as strategic air/sealift, utility and tactical helicopters, infantry with high mobility vehicles, and cutting-edge technology for information gathering (e.g. reconnaissance/surveillance high-resolution

equipment for nighttime operations), among others. In spite of this, Paraguay has developed special capabilities in engineering. In fact, since 2006, Paraguay has been receiving support from the US to create and train multi-role teams, by strengthening CECOPAZ's facilities. In Haiti, the first "Paraguayan United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Multi-Role Engineer" Company was deployed in December 2010 as an expert unit specialized in reconstruction tasks, mainly of schools and hospitals. The team, composed by 100 members from the Army, Navy, and the Paraguayan Air Force comprising blacksmiths, carpenters, electricians, heavy equipment operators, mechanics, plumbers, and security staffs, worked on post-conflict reconstruction, principally building and maintaining facilities (such as schools and hospitals) and roads, and reinforced international humanitarian assistance efforts.⁴² A second multi-role company relieved the first one on December 24, 2011. The company has been deployed five times in MINUSTAH so far.⁴³

The admission of women into Paraguay's security forces started in 2004, when the second lieutenant *JM Carmen Leticia Ramírez Paredes* joined, from March to September, as part of an Embedded Operational Partnership, the Paraguayan team participating in the Argentinian force deployed in Cyprus.⁴⁴ Women's access to the Army was first granted in 1990 but their participation in security bodies remains inconsistent. In the Police Academy, for example, women's involvement was interrupted from 1996 to 2006. Though the Military Statute declares that both men and women have the same rights and duties (and equal opportunities of professional advancement), social prejudices still lead some to view women as the weaker sex. Until 2008 few formal changes were registered despite the inclusion of women. At that time, military codes still did not consider cases of sexual harassment.⁴⁵ In fact, in June 2015, as the result of harassment scandals, the Ministry of Defense has presented reforms—cases, for example, would be known directly by the Joint Chiefs of Staff—to make the process more transparent.⁴⁶ Argentina, through its memorandum with Paraguay (which established specific provisions for female participation), makes it possible for Paraguayan female personnel to take part in national contingents.⁴⁷ Paraguayan women have been directly deployed to UN peace operations since 2012.

Part 8: Further Reading

[Primer Libro Blanco de la Defensa Nacional de la República del Paraguay](#)

[La Mujer en las Fuerzas Armadas y la Policía: una aproximación de género a las Operaciones de Paz](#)

Notes

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² Unless otherwise stated, data is drawn from IISS, *The Military Balance 2015* (London: IISS/Routledge, 2015).

³ Data is drawn from the Budget Law 2015. The amount in Paraguayan Guarani (PYG) was converted into United States Dollars (US) using the market's representative rate average of PYG \$5.008.73, between 1 January and 14 September, according to Paraguay's Central Bank.

⁴ Armed Forces Spending is a country's annual total defense Budget (in US\$) divided by the total number of active armed forces. Figures from IISS, *The Military Balance 2015*.

⁵ Marcela Donadio, *Atlas comparativo de la defensa en América Latina y Caribe* (Buenos Aires, 2014), 239; Marcela Donadio, *Atlas comparativo de la defensa en América Latina* (Buenos Aires, 2008), 250.

⁶ Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams, [Broadening the Base of United Nations Troop- and Police-Contributing Countries](#) (IPI, 2012), 9.

⁷ Edgar López-Jiménez, *La mujer en las Fuerzas Armadas y Policía. Una aproximación de género a las Operaciones de Paz* (Buenos Aires, 2008), 21–22.

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- ⁸ López-Jiménez, *Op. Cit.*, 21.
- ⁹ For more information see the [Law of National Defense and Domestic Security](#)
- ¹⁰ Constitution available [online](#)
- ¹¹ Ministro de la Defensa Nacional - Consejo Permanente de Defensa Nacional, *Primer Libro Blanco de La Defensa Nacional de La República Del Paraguay* (Asunción, 2013), 81, 120.
- ¹² Adam C. Smith and Arthur Boutellis, [Rethinking Force Generation: Filling the Capability Gaps in UN Peacekeeping](#) (IPI, 2013), 3.
- ¹³ Ministro de la Defensa Nacional - Consejo Permanente de Defensa Nacional, *Op. Cit.*, 9, 39, 50, 67, 162, 182, 187.
- ¹⁴ Bellamy and Williams, *Op. Cit.*, 4.
- ¹⁵ Ministro de la Defensa Nacional - Consejo Permanente de Defensa Nacional, *Op. Cit.*, 122.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 123.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 135.
- ¹⁸ Interview with a Paraguayan representative (New York City, August 24, 2015).
- ¹⁹ Raúl Benítez-Manaut, “América Latina y la seguridad internacional: el caso de Haití y las Misiones de Paz,” *Revista Enfoques* VI, no. 8 (2008): 11.
- ²⁰ Ministro de la Defensa Nacional - Consejo Permanente de Defensa Nacional, *Op. Cit.*, 60, 68, 82–89, 92–93.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 55, 111.
- ²² *Ibid.*, 120–121, 163. Alex J. Bellamy, “Conflict Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect,” *Global Governance*, 14:2 (2008): 135–56.
- ²³ Benítez-Manaut, *Op. Cit.*, 8.
- ²⁴ Marcela Donadio, *Atlas comparativo de la Defensa en América Latina y Caribe* (Buenos Aires, 2010), 262.
- ²⁵ Transparency International’s 2014 Corruption Perceptions Index ranked Paraguay at 150 of 175 countries. Only Haiti and Venezuela have poorer perceptions than Paraguay in the Americas. Transparency International, [“Corruption Perceptions Index 2014: Results.”](#)
- ²⁶ See, for example, Infodefensa, [El Gobierno de Paraguay minimiza la supuesta corrupción en sus Fuerzas Armadas](#) (2010).
- ²⁷ Donadio, *Atlas Comparativo de la defensa en América Latina y Caribe*, 2010, 49, 262–263. For example, an impeachment process led by the Congress—not a military coup d’état—removed President Fernando Lugo’s from office. Still, one of the Paraguay’s defense policies is professionalization through an ethical and doctrinal enhancement Interview with a Paraguayan representative, New York City, 24 August 2015.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 126, 239.
- ²⁹ Ministro de la Defensa Nacional - Consejo Permanente de Defensa Nacional, *Op. Cit.*, 81.
- ³⁰ Bellamy and Williams, *Op. Cit.*, 7.
- ³¹ Donadio, *Atlas comparativo de la defensa en América Latina y Caribe*, 2010, 263.
- ³² Donadio, *Atlas comparativo de la defensa en América Latina y Caribe*, 2012, 239.
- ³³ Radio Uno, [Instan a jóvenes a cumplir con el servicio militar](#) (2015).
- ³⁴ Donadio, *Atlas comparativo de la defensa en América Latina y Caribe*, 2014, 235.
- ³⁵ Interview with a Paraguayan representative, *Op. Cit.*
- ³⁶ See Donald C.F. Daniel, Paul D. Williams and Adam C. Smith, [Deploying Combined Teams: Lessons learned from operational partnerships in UN peacekeeping](#) (IPI, 2015), 3.
- ³⁷ Gobierno de la República del Paraguay and Gobierno de la República Oriental del Uruguay, *Memorandum de Entendimiento Entre La República Del Paraguay Y La República Oriental Del Uruguay* (Asunción, 2015).
- ³⁸ Donadio, *Atlas comparativo de la defensa en América Latina y Caribe*, 2014, 258.
- ³⁹ Giuseppe Caforio (ed.), *Advances in Military Sociology: Essays in Honor of Charles C. Moskos* (Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2007).
- ⁴⁰ Donadio, *Atlas comparativo de la defensa en América Latina y Caribe*, 2014, 239.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 72, 239.
- ⁴² Embassy of the United States in Asunción, *Embajador Thessin brinda una recepción en honor a la compañía de Ingeniería Multi-Rol para operaciones de paz*, http://spanish.paraguay.usembassy.gov/pr_010612.html (2012, Online).
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁴ López-Jiménez, *Op. Cit.*, 23.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 14, 17–19.
- ⁴⁶ Miguel González, [Las denuncias de acoso sexual irán directamente a la cúpula del Ejército](#), (2015,).
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.