Contributor Profile: Brazil

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active Armed Forces¹</th>
<th>Helicopters</th>
<th>Defense Budget</th>
<th>Uniformed UN Peacekeepers</th>
<th>UN Contribution Breakdown</th>
<th>Other Significant Deployments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>334,500 World Ranking (size): 17</td>
<td>Total: 254</td>
<td>2018: BRL92.6bn (US$29bn)</td>
<td>MINURSO 11 experts</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>Army: 198,000</td>
<td>Transport: 169 Heavy: 29 (9 Army, 7 Navy, 13 AF)</td>
<td>2017: BRL93.3bn (US$29.4bn) (1.41% of GDP)</td>
<td>MONUSCO 7 staff officers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Navy: 69,000 (Marine Corps 16,000)</td>
<td>Medium: 35 (12 Army, 7 Navy, 16 AF)</td>
<td>2016: BRL82.1bn (US$23.6bn) (1.31% of GDP)</td>
<td>UNAMID 1 staff officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Air Force: 67,500</td>
<td>Light: 105 (15 Army, 38 Navy, 52 AF)</td>
<td>2015: BRL78.8bn (US$24.3bn) (1.35% of GDP)</td>
<td>UNFICYP 2 (1 troop, 1 staff officer)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Multirole/ISR: 53 (51 Army, 2 AF)</td>
<td></td>
<td>UNIFIL 222 (219 troops, 3 staff officers)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ASW: 18 (Navy)</td>
<td></td>
<td>UNIOGBIS 4 (1 expert, 3 police)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>CSAR: 2 (Navy)</td>
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<td>UNISFA 2 experts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attack: 12 (AF)</td>
<td></td>
<td>UNMISS 17 (5 police, 7 staff officers)</td>
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<td>UNOCI 4 (2 experts, 2 troops)</td>
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Part 1: Recent Trends

Brazil has contributed to UN peace operations since 1947. Its participation can be clearly divided into three eras: before, during, and after the MINUSTAH operation in Haiti from 2004 to 2017. Prior to MINUSTAH, Brazil strictly participated only in Chapter VI missions (often not participating in more robust follow-on missions) in the Western Hemisphere and in Lusophone states. This resulted in a steady trickle of individual or small teams of soldiers—in essence token contributions—to UN missions, with four notable exceptions. A battalion-size (600-800 strong) force was integrated into UNEF I (1956-67); 200 troops deployed with ONUMOZ (1992-94); 800 infantry troops, 200 engineers and two field hospitals were sent to Angola with the UNAVEM missions; and over 50 police participated in Timor-Leste beginning with INTERFET in 1999. Overall, Brazil participated in 23 peacekeeping operations from 1957 to 1999, as well as several Organization of American States (OAS) missions and operations under the auspices of the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA).

From 2004 to 2017, Brazil took on its most important and sizeable peacekeeping commitment to date: providing MINUSTAH’s largest contingent (up to c.2,200 troops following the 2011 earthquake) as well as—unusually for UN practice—an unbroken succession of generals serving as its Force Commander. Brazilian troops participated in the full range of activities under MINUSTAH’s Chapter VII mandate. Despite this, in order to maintain discursive continuity with Brazil’s tradition of non-intervention—expressed through participation only
in Chapter VI missions—Brazil’s diplomats long insisted MINUSTAH did not have a peace enforcement mandate and was not fully a Chapter VII mission.

Brazilians original MINUSTAH contribution consisted of an Army infantry battalion, a Marine Corps operations group, and a military engineering company (1,300 troops). Following the devastating January 2010 earthquake, this was supplemented with a second Army battalion, resulting in a total contingent of ca. 2,200. This commitment was reduced proportionally to MINUSTAH’s troop drawdown, coming to a close with the end of the mission on 15 October 2017. Throughout the mission Brazilian leaders voiced their preference to reduce the mission’s military aspects and enhance those related to development, strengthening state institutions, and a constabulary role. Despite this there is no current involvement in MINUJUSTH, MINUSTAH’s successor operation.

The MINUSTAH experience continues to shape Brazil’s doctrine and training for peacekeeping today. However, the country’s post-Haiti commitment to UN peacekeeping operations has been significantly reduced. The main contribution has consisted of a frigate and a contingent of 220-280 (currently 219) Marines to the maritime component of UNIFIL since late 2010. The Maritime Task Force has been under the command of Brazilian admirals since February 2011. The UNIFIL contingent marks the first time Brazil has participated in the maritime component of a UN PKO.

Beyond this, as of 31 December 2018, Brazil currently has committed 52 individuals and other token contributions to UN peacekeeping operations; about a third of these work within UNMISS. One notable individual is former MINUSTAH Force Commander Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, who exercised the same role in MONUSCO from April 2013 to December 2015, including command of the offensively oriented Force Intervention Brigade. Santos Cruz later went on to author the December 2017 UN Report Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers.3
Brazil made a relatively modest contribution at the World Leaders’ Summit on Peacekeeping in September 2015, pledging 800 Army troops and 200 Marines, a Level II hospital, 20 MILOBs and 20 staff officers, as well as a series of training activities to be carried out at its Peacekeeping Training Centre CCOPAB in Rio de Janeiro.

The growth of Brazil’s participation in the 2000s was in part driven by the specific interests of the Workers’ Party government and by a favourable economic climate. With the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff in 2016 and the subsequent election of right-wing extremist Jair Bolsonaro to the Presidency from 1 January 2019, as well as significant economic difficulties and budget cuts, retrenchment is to be expected. The country may remain in current missions, but should not be expected to take on extensive new commitments for the sake of showing global presence or responsibility.

**Part 2: Decision-Making Process**

Brazil’s presidential system leaves ministries significant autonomy; sustained coordination is difficult to achieve, particularly on crosscutting issues such as peacekeeping. Two actors have the greatest influence on peacekeeping policy: the Foreign (MRE) and Defence (MD) Ministries. The Foreign Ministry has long held a monopoly on issues with foreign impact; its relative isolation from the rest of government has allowed it to develop entrenched values (see below) that have guided policy for over a century and a half. Similarly, civilian control of the armed forces is still weak, having only existed institutionally since the Ministry of Defence was created in 1999. Thus, the armed forces have also been allowed to build a significant body of doctrine and traditions in isolation from civilian or democratic input. Both ministries have developed policy independently, and coordination is very limited. As a result, security (and peacekeeping) policy documents are few and vague, and do not provide clear objectives or operational guidance. Policy initiatives therefore tend to depend upon (often short-term) Presidential or ministerial protagonism, with negative effects on their cohesion, rationality and sustainability. When interests diverge between the Foreign and Defence Ministries, Presidential influence is key.

The decision-making process itself is an ad-hoc mechanism made permanent, dating from Brazil’s first major deployment in 1956. It is grounded in imprecise legislation and remains “byzantine and under-institutionalized.” Initially, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) submits a request to the Brazilian Permanent Mission to the UN, which is forwarded together with an initial evaluation to the MRE. The MRE consults the President as to the political landscape, the MD on the availability of troops, and the Ministries of Planning and Finance regarding funding. If the response is positive DPKO is requested to formalize its request, on the basis of which the MD and the MRE draw up a Joint Exposition of Motives for the National Congress, which is accompanied by a Presidential message. If the Congress approves—by decree—the President, also by decree, authorizes deployment under the auspices of the MD. Although there is significant discontent with this process, which is beholden to personalities and unrelated external forces, several reform proposals have failed to come to a vote in the legislature. Though parliamentary participation in the decision-making process is required, its nature reflects legislators’ low levels of interest in, and competence on, defense and security issues, leading to an increased risk of personal preferences or exogenous political factors such lobbyism and corruption influencing decisions.

**Part 3: Rationales for Contributing**

Brazil’s surge to prominence as a peacekeeping provider was largely the result of a specific foreign policy project, led by the Workers’ Party and Lula da Silva, following a strategy of
adopting diplomatic niches favored by emerging powers, i.e. areas where comparative advantages in experience and capacity allow countries to “punch above their weight.” This policy lost impetus under his successor Dilma Rousseff for both economic and political reasons and was put to rest following her impeachment by caretaker President Michel Temer. Right-wing populist Jair Bolsonaro has been President since 1 January 2019; he has promised a significant reduction in engagement with multilateralism and the UN; a return to alignment with the West (and with issues set by the Trump Administration in the United States); and a massive rise in military influence within government decisionmaking across all areas.

Inconsistencies, internal divisions and frequent retractions make the Bolsonaro government’s policy positions challenging to predict. In terms of potential effects on participation in peace operations, policymaking is likely to see a divide between at least two camps. Foreign Minister Eduardo Araújo is a firm opponent of multilateralism and of the UN; he is, however, a minority within a Foreign Ministry whose longstanding traditions are globalist in nature. The Brazilian Armed Forces, whose nationalist and conservative wings will have considerable sway under Bolsonaro, are torn between aversion to the association of peace operations with a now-defunct left-wing emerging-power project, and the obvious prestige and influence which participation has generated for those in uniform. In this sense, as the new government settles in, previous rationales will remain essentially the same, taking into account the end of MINUSTAH; future potential for participation will depend on the outcome of struggles for influence between the armed forces and those responsible for the government’s ideological orientation.

Political rationales clearly explain Brazil’s rise as a contributor to peacekeeping, though they were tinged by normative concerns as well. As in many other states where the establishment of civilian control over the military is recent, institutional rationales play a key role. Economic and particularly security rationales play a negligible role. Some political rationales are internal: for example, the country’s participation in UNIFIL should be placed in the light of the influential presence of the over seven million Brazilians of Lebanese origin. Government alignment with the West, as well as austerity and a focus of resources on domestic issues are likely to increase the relative weight of institutional factors—within the Armed Forces—among remaining rationales in favor of participation.

Political Rationales: Peacekeeping has long provided a role in emerging powers’ strategies to gain international influence. However, Brazil has now effectively abandoned its goal of permanent membership of the UN Security Council and greater influence in international decision-making bodies. In this sense there is now considerably less political incentive to demonstrate capacity and commitment through strong involvement in peacekeeping operations such as MINUSTAH. In normative terms, the prestige to be garnered from these missions remains high for the military, but has evaporated for elected officials who now seek image gains outside the multilateral sphere.

MINUSTAH’s role as a testing ground for a distinct Brazilian approach to peacebuilding and development aid, mirroring its successful domestic development initiatives, will not continue past its closure. The current government has scuppered almost all of the domestic programs for the economic and social development of the disenfranchised that had served as the basis for a “Brazilian way of peacebuilding”. As the country’s foreign policy turns to the West, opportunities for regional leadership through PKOs are less likely to see the investment of diplomatic and military capital. Equally, the brief window of norm entrepreneurship around Brazil’s “responsibility while protecting” initiative, floated in November 2011, came to an abrupt end with the shift in government and is unlikely to see a repeat in the near future.
Economic Rationales: Economic reasoning is likely to have a negative effect on Brazil’s propensity to engage in UN PKOs. Peacekeeping is costly for the Brazilian state and budget motives have repeatedly been cited over the past three years as reasons not to increase engagement. One prominent example is the case of prospective Brazilian participation in MINUSCA in the Central African Republic. Long in the works, and crystallized into a formal request from DPKO in November of 2017, the country’s offer of a contingent in Bangui—much favoured by the military—was eventually rescinded due to budget constraints incurred due to intervention by the armed forces in public security in Rio de Janeiro in 2018. Injuries sustained by Brazilian MILOBs in MINUSCA in May 2018, illustrative of the complexity and risk of the new mission, as well as the impossible of independent logistical access also played a role in this decision.

Peacekeeping does not come cheap in terms of the Brazilian states’ resources. Overall, Brazilian diplomats estimate that no more than 40% of operational costs within missions are reimbursed, excluding Brazil’s assessed contributions to the UN operating and peacekeeping operations budgets. Typically, costs come out of the defense budget, while reimbursements are made to the general Treasury. Remuneration for personnel deployed on UN peacekeeping operations is generous, using a scale ranging from US$972 (for privates) to US$4,400 (general officers) added to monthly base pay. Total investment in Haiti from 2004 to 2014 both within and outside of MINUSTAH was estimated by the Brazilian Defence in May 2015 at approximately BRL2.3 billion (US$1.1 billion), with reimbursements totaling approximately BRL 1 billion (US$478 million). There appears to be little trade incentive to participate in peacekeeping operations: trade with states to whom Brazil deploys or has deployed peacekeepers is minimal.

Security Rationales: For political reasons, Brazil favors operations within its zones of influence—the Western Hemisphere and Lusophone countries. This is where it receives the greatest return on its investment in terms of image and prestige, due to cultural affinities and similar levels of economic development. However, this effective focus on its immediate surroundings should not be taken as motivated by security concerns. Brazil’s historical preference has been to address regional instability multilaterally through regional organizations and the UN; the Bolsonaro government has indicated an early preference for alignment with US interests in the region, especially as regards the deepening crisis in Venezuela and its migratory component; some politicians close to the President have even advocated invading Venezuela unilaterally or under US command. Brazil remains likely to seek a leadership role among regional powers in any US-led efforts to address crises in neighboring countries.

Institutional Rationales: The two major governmental actors in Brazilian peacekeeping policy both have, to varying degrees, institutional reasons to support involvement in peacekeeping. First, these missions benefit the armed forces in a number of ways. They provide operational experience, socialization into international professional norms, and exposure to a multinational environment. In addition, over US$100 million of the excess expenditure in Haiti has gone towards equipment and other purchases for the armed forces; such a pattern is likely to continue.

Involvement in peace operations, which is voluntary, has also somewhat assuaged interservice rivalries and the Army and Marine Corps peace operations training centers were merged in June 2010. The Sergio Vieira de Mello Peace Operations Training Centre (CCOPAB) has been a major source of professionalization and socialization for Brazilian
peacekeepers; there is a strong commitment to quality and training running through the country’s preparation of personnel for PKOs. Cooperation between training centers, both at the regional (ALCOPAZ) and global (IAPTC) levels has been a significant driver of military-military cooperation for the Brazilian armed forces.

Whereas the military possess strong incentives to continue to prepare for deployment under blue helmets, the Foreign Ministry under Bolsonaro has shown signs of division. A strong current within the Ministry remains committed to traditions of multilateralism and a global presence. The new ministerial leadership, however, has clearly set priorities antagonistic to these goals. How this power struggle plays out will determine the prospects for Brazil’s participation in the future.

**Normative Rationales:** Peacekeeping aligns normatively with Brazil’s historical diplomatic traditions, from which the current government has announced a departure. Chapter VI peacekeeping shows a great deal of overlap with both longstanding Brazilian foreign policy principles such as multilateralism, pacific resolution of disputes and collective security, and more recent emerging-power priorities. Under President Lula da Silva and his Foreign Minister Celso Amorim, Brazil’s bid for global influence was couched in a claim to speak for the global South. As such, the involvement in MINUSTAH was justified using a rhetoric of a “diplomacy of solidarity,” “non-indifference,” and South-South cooperation. These justifications gained currency as the use of force by the Brazilian MINUSTAH contingent increased, creating tensions with Brasília’s official rejection of Chapter VII. Brazilian participation in peace operations has dwindled considerably since the Lula presidency, particularly with the lack of substitution for MINUSTAH commitments, and will likely remain at token levels under the current government, whose priority is realignment with the West, under conditions of austerity and privatization.

**Part 4: Barriers to Contributing**

*Alternative political or strategic priorities:* Overall, Brazil is still inwardly focused, dealing with priorities such as poverty reduction, pension reform, industrial development, and combatting crime. Foreign policy priorities have ceased to center on the concerns of the global South and on global player status. As peace operations have predominantly served to increase the country’s global decision-making influence and cementing its standing as a voice for the global South, they will decrease in terms of priority unless the institutional interests of the armed forces prevail.

*Alternative institutional preferences for crisis management:* Under the new leadership Brazil has aligned itself with other right-wing governments and has chosen to seek diplomatic solutions outside traditional multilateral channels. In terms of multilateral action, Brazil has a preference for dealing with important issues in those multilateral forums where it has the most influence; this would seem to favor regional institutions for regional crises. In general, Brazilian foreign policy favors the peaceful resolution of problems and emphasizes its preference for pacifist solutions and aversion to the use of force. However, oppositional to leftist governments in the region has become at least a discursive priority under Bolsonaro.

*Financial costs:* The Brazilian government has instituted successive rounds of budget cuts since 2011, and these have affected the defense sector as well, though nowhere near as strongly as other areas. Spending on internal security and police equipment has increased. Major purchasing programs and a focus on maritime protection of oilfields have drawn resources away from peacekeeping in relative terms. These restrictions have had an increasingly negative effect on operational capacity and especially logistics since 2014. (see
below). Despite this, the considerable cost of participation in peace operations is generally seen as acceptable as long as it brings tangible results for the country’s image, albeit within the general framework of a significantly decreased diplomatic profile since 2014 and subaltern alignment with the West under Bolsonaro.

Discomfort with the expanding UN peacekeeping agenda: A strong proponent of state sovereignty defined as inviolability, Brazil has been critical of the new normative underpinnings of UN peace operations. Though the R2P and PKO debates are separate, the RwP paper did underline several points of relevance to the country’s stance on peacekeeping. Brazil warmed to the “responsibility to protect” only when the inevitability of the concept’s endorsement by the UN and the benefits for its foreign policy aims became clear. The “responsibility while protecting” paper claimed that “one person killed in an intervention is too many.” The country has in the past shown it will not vote in favor of, or contribute to, robust Chapter VII operations even in the face of grave human rights violations, preferring a negotiated solution (on Haiti, see below). Deep suspicion as to the motives behind recent Western interventions has been replaced by adherence to Western aims and more support for unilateral or US-led coalition interventions.

Exceptionalism: The distinct sense of exceptionalism to that pervaded Brazil’s approach to peace operations has faded. As foreign policy realigns with the West and the foundations of the global liberal order, the drive to be different from the “liberal peace” has disappeared, though the perception of high effectiveness will remain. This perception of difference ranges from essentialist claims about the Brazilian “national character” (gregarious, peaceful, caring, tolerant, mediator) to the idea that cultural affinities and economic similarities—which ease contact with the local population—heighten the effectiveness of the Brazilian soldier vis-à-vis other contingents. Brazil’s colonial past and Southern provenance are considered, by many in the Global South, to confer heightened normative legitimacy on its participation in interventions. One specific Brazilian advantage—programs for agricultural development, infrastructure creation, and poverty reduction tested at home—has faded as these programmes were ended by the Temer and Bolsonaro governments. However, all of these advantages only come to bear in specific contexts where similarities are significant, excluding a number of current UN peace operations.

Absence of pressure to contribute: Brazil is not a member of any alliance where its allies’ interests might drive participation. It faces no interstate instability, and its regional security culture does not motivate intervention in the name of individual rights.

Difficult domestic politics: While the armed forces have amassed considerable experience and know-how on peace operations, the lack of thematic competence that pervades the legislative and executive branches extends to issues of defence such as peacekeeping as well. Academic production and civil society output on the matter is substantial and of high quality.

Damage to national reputation: There is, within the armed forces, diplomats and civil society a degree of attention to the positive image and prestige generated by participation in peace operations. As such, any event detrimental to Brazil’s image is likely to lead to a sharp rise in criticism, a drop in broad support and a hasty withdrawal. Economic factors now heighten the lookout for a good reason to withdraw.

Resistance in the military: Negligible. Peace operations are seen as conducive to the military’s image and financial situation.
Lack of fit with legislative, procurement and operational timelines: These are not sufficiently consistent, stable, or institutionalized to conflict with peacekeeping necessities.

Legal obstacles: Article 4 of the Brazilian Constitution establishes guiding principles for foreign policy that have the potential to conflict in the case of modern peace operations (e.g. non-intervention and peaceful conflict resolution versus human rights, self-determination, and the defense of peace). Traditionally, state sovereignty has trumped individual rights, though this is a political choice rather than a binding legal interpretation.

Part 5: Current Challenges and Issues
Budget reductions have significantly reduced Brazil’s overall operational readiness and the scope of its strategic goals. First signs of this in the country’s peacekeeping effort had come with regard to logistical chains in late 2015, when according to private sector reports, in the absence of available ships to maintain the logistics link with Haiti, the Navy has been forced to contract commercial air services to Haiti.

Despite these challenges, the Brazilian Army has reaffirmed its investment in participating in peace operations. In late 2015, the Brazilian Army announced the creation of an Expeditionary Force, based within the Second Infantry Division in the interior of São Paulo State, destined to support participation in peace operations. Initial expectations were for it to deploy by 2022 and to evolve to brigade strength by 2030. However, amidst the deep austerity measures under the new government, the Armed Forces saw their budget for maintenance and procurement reduced by 24%. This, coupled with a realignment in foreign policy objectives away from the emerging power project that stimulated participation in peace operations, is expected to delay the force’s deployment and reduced overall investment in peacekeeping participation.

Following the withdrawal from MINUSTAH, efforts were made to identify a new locus for a larger Brazilian intervention. As the CAR example shows (see above), this became impossible after Armed Forces resources were diverted to a public security function in Rio de Janeiro and assistance with refugee flows at the country’s border with Venezuela. While the armed forces continue to view peacekeeping participation as desirable, the main challenge currently is maintaining readiness for internal support missions in the face of budget cuts. Conversely, heightened military influence in the current government may lead to a favorable position regarding future deployments.

Part 6: Key Champions and Opponents
There is little public debate on security issues in Brazil, isolating decision-making from public pressure to a certain extent. Coverage of the country’s efforts in Haiti tended to portray peace operations as a worthwhile investment of resources, portraying a positive and responsible image of Brazil in the world. Key proponents include the armed forces, which possess strong institutional motivations for participation, and the bulk of the Foreign Ministry’s diplomats, who view the country as standing to gain from the increased influence putatively accruing to major troop contributors. The Bolsonaro government has placed more active-duty armed forces personnel in leading policymaking positions than the military governments of the past; this includes six former MINUSTAH Force Commanders and a retired four-star general as Vice President. This high level of familiarity should act as a counterbalance to other elements’ aversion to multilateralism and the UN.

While foreign policy-focused actors tend to support peacekeeping, those focused on internal problems such as poverty reduction (rural areas) and combating crime (urban favelas)
question the need to invest extensive resources abroad. This category includes some parliamentary representatives of these areas. In addition, some academics and other leftist civil society movements are critical of the use of force by Brazilian forces abroad in what they see as a neocolonial, neoliberal and Western-dominated practice.

**Part 7: Capabilities and Caveats**

Though it was able to maintain solid logistical links with the relatively proximate contingent in Haiti, the Brazilian military does not possess the same maritime or airlift capacity to maintain a battalion-size contingent further from home for an extended period. This became clearly evident in planning for MINUSCA and is rumored to be one veiled reason for Brazil’s withdrawal of its offer of a contingent there. Indeed, as seen above, the country’s operational capacity had become increasingly fragile over time in Haiti. In addition, several political factors limit the country’s ability and/or propensity to contribute large contingents to the major UN peacekeeping operations: the aversion to Chapter VII; the restriction to areas of policy priority and cultural affinity; and an image-conscious approach that is highly sensitive to potential scandals and political ambiguity and has yet to face any combat deaths of peacekeepers. Nevertheless, Brazilian troops are trained to high professional standards and have shown themselves to be very effective in contexts such as Haiti, Timor-Leste and Lebanon.

**Part 8: Further Reading**


**Notes**


2 Armed Forces Spending is a country’s annual total defense budget (in US dollars) divided by the total number of active armed forces. Figures from IISS, *The Military Balance 2017*.


4 See Kenkel, “Brazil” in Bellamy & Williams (eds.), *Providing Peacekeepers*.

5 Ibid, p.338.

6 See Kenkel, “Out of South America” in Kenkel (ed.), *South America and Peace Operations*.


Folha de São Paulo, “,” 11 June 2012.


See the news items collected at https://www.defesa.gov.br/busca?searchword=Pacaraima.