

**Forum:** General Assembly Third Committee

**Issue:** The question of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic

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## Introduction

The Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic (ZPCAS or ZOPACAS) was formed on 27th October 1986 with the initiative of Brazil. The main aim was to improve the cooperation of the states in question. There are twenty four member states in the ZOPACAS: Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Angola, Benin, Cape Verde, Cameroon, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Namibia, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Togo.

The headquarters of the ZOPACAS is situated in Brazil, but the presidency changes in every ministerial meeting. Uruguay has the current presidency, and the next one is to go to Cape Verde<sup>1</sup>. There has been a total of seven<sup>2</sup> ministerial meetings since the declaration of the Zone. The ZOPACAS has four official languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese and French<sup>3</sup>.

The main goals of the ZOPACAS are the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons and preventing countries outside of the Zone from performing a military intervention. Other aims of the ZOPACAS are to enhance economical and commercial cooperation, to settle conflicts and bring peace to the Zone, to protect natural resources and the diversity of nature, to regulate the maritime and to expand cooperation in scientific and technological research. The Zone's emphasis is also on democracy and human rights and all of its acts are made towards reaching the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals.

## Definition of Key Terms

### **ZOPACAS**

Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic. The abbreviation comes from the Spanish name: Zona de Paz y Cooperación del Atlántico Sur. In this research report also referred to as "the Zone". Formed in 1986 in the 50th plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly.

### **Nuclear-weapon free zone**

A zone created to enhance the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament<sup>4</sup>.

### **Denuclearisation**

To remove nuclear arms from or to prohibit the use of nuclear in a specific region.

### **NPT**

Treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Covers the aspects of disarmament, non-proliferation

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<sup>1</sup> <https://papersmart.unmeetings.org/media2/7651225/34-brazil.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://papersmart.unmeetings.org/media2/7651225/34-brazil.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://lip.ranepa.ru/english/ZPCAS.htm>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.un.org/disarmament/WMD/Nuclear/NWFZ.shtml>

and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Also encourages international cooperation in the matter.<sup>5</sup> Adopted in 1968<sup>6</sup>.

## **NATO**

Abbreviation for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. "NATO's essential purpose is to safeguard the freedom and security of its members through political and military means."<sup>7</sup>

## **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**

Eight international development goals, varying from minimising poverty to protecting the environment. Declared in 2000, need to be achieved by 2015.<sup>8</sup>

## **To militarise**

To supply a place with soldiers and other military resources<sup>9</sup>.

## **Background**

In 1986, when the ZOPACAS was declared, one of the main reasons behind it was the impacts of the Cold War. The Zone was created in contrast to NATO and its acts. A large majority of 124 member states voted for the declaration of the Zone. There were eight abstentions, all from developed countries and one vote against, from the United States<sup>10</sup>. The abstentions from the industrial countries were no surprise, since all had, and still have, interests on the region's natural resources. Even though the abstaining nations in the declaration have all since voted in favor of the resolutions concerning the ZOPACAS, they still have reservations about the obligations the Zone brings.

In the third ministerial meeting in 1994, when the Cold War had ended, and the tension between the US and Russia had eased up, the member states of the ZOPACAS needed to find other justifications for the Zone's existence. In that meeting, the emphasis was on economical cooperation and maritime environment and regulation. At the same meeting, the declaration of the denuclearisation of the South Atlantic region<sup>11</sup> was adopted and South Africa joined the Zone.

There has been contemplation on whether or not the Zone is working sufficiently enough with solving conflicts and reaching its aims. The ZOPACAS is sometimes seen as unnecessary, since there are treaties and cooperation organisations in the area, solving the same issues but often more efficiently. But, what needs to be kept in mind is that even though many of the organisations and treaties do some of the work that seems to belong to the ZOPACAS, it is still a unique organisation bringing the nations of South Atlantic together.

The ZOPACAS has faced many difficulties during its nearly thirty years of existence. There have been numerous attempts to militarise the South Atlantic. The United Kingdom has had full power over the Falkland Islands (in spanish: *las islas Malvinas*) since winning the Falklands War in 1982. That has lead to Argentina accusing the UK of militarising the South Atlantic, through the Falkland and Sandwich Islands.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.state.gov/t/isn/npt/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.iaea.org/publications/documents/treaties/npt>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/militarize>

<sup>10</sup> <http://unbisnet.un.org:8080/ipac20/ipac.jsp?profile=voting&index=VM&term=ares4111>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/49/a49r026.htm>

Also the United States has gotten accusations concerning militarism in the South Atlantic. With the reactivation of the US Fourth Fleet the nation received harsh feedback. The Fourth Fleet is responsible for US Navy ships, aircraft and submarines<sup>12</sup> in the South Atlantic region. Inter alia the president of Venezuela and the governments of Argentina and Brazil were suspicious when the Fourth Fleet got reactivated, even blaming the US of wanting to frighten the nations of South Atlantic. AFRICOM (the US Africa Command) is another US military mission, that has been criticised. Both the Fourth Fleet and AFRICOM were according to the US formed to secure peace in the region, but haven't been received that way.

Besides the questions of militarisation, one of the other problems the ZOPACAS is facing has to do with illegal narcotics. Among the many targets of the Zone, is the elimination of illegal drugs and criminal syndicates. Brazil is well-known for its illegal drug trafficking. Even though the country has several laws against it, the narcotics business is still very common. This often leads to organised crime and violence. Brazil is therefore one of the most violent countries in the world, with its homicide rate of 27.1 per 100,000 inhabitants<sup>13</sup>. But Brazil is not the only country with problems in this area. Also the increasing cocaine trade in both Argentina<sup>14</sup> and Guinea-Bissau<sup>15</sup> and transporting methamphetamine via South Africa and Western African countries<sup>16</sup> endangers the South Atlantic to crime.

## Key Member States Involved

### Brazil

Brazil is one of the founding members of the ZOPACAS. It is a key actor in the South Atlantic, due to its close relations with the African Countries. Brazil has signed defense cooperation pacts, joint navy exercises and additional exercises with numerous African countries in the ZOPACAS<sup>17</sup>. The headquarters of the Zone is in Brazil. Brazil has hold the ministerial meeting of the ZOPACAS two times. Its trade with Africa increased massively from \$4.3 billion in 2000 to \$28.5 billion in 2013<sup>18</sup>, being an example of the economical achievements of the ZOPACAS.

### Argentina

Argentina fought the Falkland War in 1982 against the United Kingdom. Argentina has since accused the UK for militarising the South Atlantic region<sup>19</sup>

### South Africa

South Africa was the last country to join the ZOPACAS, in 1994. South Africa dismantled its nuclear weapons before joining the ZOPACAS and the NPT

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story\\_id=36606](http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=36606)

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Research/Files/Papers/2015/04/global-drug-policy/Miraglia--Brazil-final.pdf?la=en>

<sup>14</sup> [https://www.unodc.org/documents/wdr2015/World\\_Drug\\_Report\\_2015.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/wdr2015/World_Drug_Report_2015.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/report/2013/08/22/72557/guinea-bissau-and-the-south-atlantic-cocaine-trade/> (page 61)

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.unodc.org/documents/wdr2015/World\\_Drug\\_Report\\_2015.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/wdr2015/World_Drug_Report_2015.pdf) (page 90)

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/africa/2015-06-11/blue-amazon>

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-muggah/what-is-brazil-really-doi\\_b\\_6413568.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-muggah/what-is-brazil-really-doi_b_6413568.html)

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/southamerica/falklandislands/9169477/Argentina-accuses-Britain-of-militarising-South-Atlantic.html>

(Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons) and was the first nation to do so voluntarily. One of the first aims of the Zone was to eliminate apartheid, which had happened by the year 1994.



*Map of the Member States of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic*<sup>20</sup>

### Other African Member States

With only three countries from the South America, a majority of the members of the ZOPACAS are African. Angola, Benin, Cape Verde, Cameroon, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Namibia, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo are the African member states. Over half of these countries were listed as LDCs (Least Developed Countries) in the UN listing of 2014<sup>21</sup>. Therefore it is especially important for the countries to work together with the other member nations of the Zone to reach the MDGs.

### The United States of America

The US was the only UN member state to vote against the declaration of the ZOPACAS. It is still to this day refraining from voting for any resolutions concerning the ZOPACAS. This is partly because the US is one of the founding members of NATO and because the US feels that peace zones should not be created through the UN. But perhaps the most problematic part of the ZOPACAS for the US is, that if given a legally binding non-use assurance to the Zone, the US ships and aircraft passing the South Atlantic region would be forced to declare whether or not they're carrying nuclear weapons<sup>22</sup>.

The US has been accused of militarising the South Atlantic with AFRICOM (The US Africa Command) and the reactivation of the Fourth Fleet.

### The United Kingdom

The UK fought the Falkland War against Argentina in 1982 and was the victorious side of the war. Falkland Islands are part of UK's overseas territory. Since the war, Argentina has accused the UK of militarising the South Atlantic, but the accusations have been denied. The UK has stated that there is nothing unclear about the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands and it will not be debated unless the islanders wish to do so.

## Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
June 14, 1982	The UK won the Falklands War
October 27, 1986	Declaration of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic
February 20, 1994	Third ministerial meeting in Brazil; Declaration of the Denuclearisation of the South Atlantic
April 24, 2008	
October 1, 2008	

<sup>20</sup><http://www.saiia.org.za/opinion-analysis/south-africas-foreign-policy-priorities-for-the-21st-century-a-closer-look-at-t-he-potential-for-co-operation-in-the-south-atlantic-zone>

<sup>21</sup>[http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/cdp/ldc/ldc\\_list.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/cdp/ldc/ldc_list.pdf)

<sup>22</sup><http://www.un.org/press/en/2007/ga10612.doc.htm>

The US reactivated the Fourth Fleet  
 The US Africa Command (AFRICOM) became an independent command in Africa  
 January 15-16, 2013 Seventh and by far last ministerial meeting in Montevideo Uruguay; The Montevideo Declaration

## UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

The International Maritime Organisation (IMO)<sup>23</sup>, which is a UN specialised agency, is working closely with the ZOPACAS when it comes to maritime regulation, eliminating piracy and such. Also the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)<sup>24</sup> is co-operating with the Zone in denuclearisation issues.

- Declaration of a zone of peace and cooperation in the South Atlantic, 27 October 1986 **(A/RES/41/11)**  
<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/41/a41r011.htm>
- Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, 2 October 2007 **(A/RES/61/294)**  
<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/512/01/PDF/N0651201.pdf?OpenElement>
  - redefines the purposes and aims of the ZOPACAS
- United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea, 10 December 1982  
[http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention\\_agreements/convention\\_overview\\_convention.htm](http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/convention_overview_convention.htm)
  - The ZOPACAS acts upon and emphasises the Law of Sea. It is also a base for the aims of the Zone concerning maritime.
- Treaty of Tlatelolco, 14 February 1967  
<http://disarmament.un.org/treaties/t/tlatelolco>
  - establishes the South American Nuclear-Weapon Free Zone
  - Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay all have signed and ratified
- Treaty of Pelindaba, 11 April 1996  
<http://disarmament.un.org/treaties/t/pelindaba>
  - establishes the African Nuclear-Weapon Free Zone
  - all of the African member states of ZOPACAS have signed this, but Cape Verde, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sao Tome and Principe and Sierra Leone have not ratified<sup>25</sup>
- Montevideo Declaration, 15-16 January 2013  
<http://osf.org.za/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Montevideo-Declaration-Seventh-Ministerial-meeting-of-the-Zone-of-Peace-and-Cooperation-of-the-South-Atlantic.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.imo.org/en/About/Pages/Default.aspx>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.iaea.org/>

<sup>25</sup> <http://disarmament.un.org/treaties/t/pelindaba>

## Possible Solutions

### Concentrating on one thing at a time

The ZOPACAS has numerous aims to achieve, which at times can mean that there is too much to handle. An option for the ZOPACAS would be to concentrate on only few similar goals at the same time. The different targets of the Zone can be divided under four bigger categories: peace and security, economical and financial issues, sustainable development and governance. While all of these are important to achieve, it could be more sufficient to act upon one goal at a time. But, of course a problem of deciding between the four aims would occur. It is a difficult task to try and rank the goals according to importance.

### Redefining the ZOPACAS' role and targets

Since there are treaties and organisations working in the same areas as the ZOPACAS, the Zone could try and redefine its purpose in the South Atlantic region. This is closely linked with the possible solution above, since this "reinventing" would be a great opportunity to focus on one target at a time.

### Working together with NATO

Working with NATO would certainly not be acting upon some the ZOPACAS' principles, but it could help it to function better. Even with Brazil's military significantly growing, the ZOPACAS are still nowhere near in reaching the level of military force of NATO. It might create more progress, if the Atlantic wasn't divided between the two but shared. NATO's forces could definitely help the Zone in solving difficult and violent conflicts and bringing peace.

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