

# **Good practices in increasing women's representation and gender equality in armed forces**

**Case studies**

**February 2024**

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## Preface

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These eighteen case studies have been prepared by DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance as a contribution to the preparation of the United Nations (UN) Report on Gender Equality and the Status of Women in the Defence Sector.

### Context

In his 15 March 2022 report dedicated to ‘Strengthening security sector reform’ (S/2022/280), the Secretary-General announced that the UN will publish a **report on gender equality and the status of women in the defence sector** to help countries enhance women’s representation in the armed forces, including in their troop contributions to peace operations.

The goal of the report and associated consultation processes is to **identify, exchange and disseminate good practices** taken by the UN, governments, international and regional organizations, civil society and other stakeholders to advance gender equality in national defence sectors and increase women’s full, equal and meaningful participation therein. The report also aims to address data gaps and collect and analyse information on the situation of women in the defence sector globally.

The report is being developed through analysis of publicly available data and research, case studies, questionnaire research and consultation.

### Case studies

To identify good practices in increasing women’s representation and gender equality in the armed forces, the UN commissioned DCAF to develop this set of case studies.

Informed by desk research by DCAF and publicly available data, the UN selected the Member States to be approached to share their good practices. These Member States were drawn from all Regional Groups (as set by the General Assembly) based on meeting one of the following criteria (in order of priority):

- ❖ Highest representation of women in armed forces and defence leadership, including: (i) overall percentage of women in the Member State’s armed Forces (above 13%), (ii) whether the Ministry of Defence (or equivalent institution) is led by a woman or the head of the Member State’s armed forces is a woman;
- ❖ Good practices in promoting the meaningful participation of women in the armed forces, including as regards: (i) political commitment; (ii) recruitment, (iii) retention, (iv) promotion (v) deployment to combat roles or (vi) career development;
- ❖ Contribution of armed forces to UN peace operations, based on: (i) the highest total number of women deployed by the Member States to UN troops in peace operations (above 60 women deployed) or (ii) the percentage of women currently deployed by the Member State to UN troops in Peace Operations (above 16%).

The UN approached the selected Member States to request their participation in the study and nomination of a contact person to be interviewed. Where Member States responded positively, DCAF undertook further desk research on the country’s practices and then conducted a semi-structured video interview or series of interviews with the designated Ministry of Defence or Armed Forces contact person or persons. Interviewees were usually the senior persons in the Ministry of Defence or Armed Forces responsible for the design and implementation of measures to increase women’s representation. The interviews were conducted during April, May, September and

November 2023. Many interviewees also provided DCAF with relevant documents and reports to inform the case study. DCAF drafted the case studies. Interviewees reviewed drafts, responded to follow-up questions and in most cases, formally confirmed their nation's acceptance of the final version of the case study.

The DCAF team (staff and consultants) that conducted the interviews and wrote the case studies were Dr Mia Schöb, Ms Sarah Rowse, Ms Graziella Pavone and Ms Diana Morais, under the supervision of Dr Megan Bastick, DCAF project lead and overall case study editor. DCAF intern Ms Asmaa El Alaoui Talibi supported project coordination.

Our warm thanks are extended to the many individuals in the participating Armed Forces and Ministries of Defence who gave generously of their time to support this study.

## Case Studies

### Argentina

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#### Argentina: GBV leave in the Argentinian Armed Forces.

Since 2007, the Armed Forces of the Argentine Republic (AAF) have institutionalized mechanisms for gender equality and enhanced women's equal access to career opportunities.<sup>1</sup> The proportion of women has increased from 17.3% in 2020 to 19.5%, in 2023.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, women's representation across the AAF remains uneven: in 2022, women's officers proportions in auxiliary professional corps (*cuero profesional*) are comparatively high, with 47.7% in the Army, 26% in the Navy, and 49.7% in the Air Force, but relatively low in higher ranks and, in particular, in the command corps (*cuero commando*), where women make up only 6.6% in the Army, 9% in the Navy, and 5.4% in the Air Force.<sup>3</sup>

Through research with military staff, the AAF create a quantitative and qualitative evidence base to identify barriers to women's recruitment, retention, and career opportunities, and to develop solutions. This research identified that female AAF personnel faced challenges accessing support when they were victims of gender-based violence (GBV), which negatively impacted them professionally. GBV as a phenomenon was almost invisible in the AAF. Personnel rarely reported it because leave for victims of GBV was categorized as "psychiatric sick leave". This stigmatized them as mentally ill and could put their careers at risk: after 60 days of psychiatric sick leave, a medical council examines the case, which can result in dismissal. Interviews with women in the command corps revealed a further reason why they abstained from reporting. Women perceived that reporting GBV would put their professional identity as equals to their male peers at risk.<sup>4</sup>

Acknowledging that GBV posed an invisible barrier to women's wellbeing and career equality, in 2020 the Ministry of Defence passed a resolution introducing the possibility for AAF staff to take specific leave from work when experiencing GBV.<sup>5</sup> This "GBV leave" avoids any suggestion of psychiatric illness of the victim, does not lead to a medical council examination nor create a threat of dismissal. As such, it avoids fears of and *de facto* repercussions in career development for those who report GBV.

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Argentina, Nacional Defence University, *Militares argentinas: evaluación de políticas de género en el ámbito de la defensa*, ed. Laura Masson (Buenos Aires: UNDEF Libros, 2020), 15; See also, for example, the Gender Office and international and national legal framework at: 'Estado Mayor Conjunto de Las FFAA', accessed 8 May 2023, <https://www.fuerzas-armadas.mil.ar/Dependencias-oficina-de-genero-documentacion.aspx>; Air Force Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Argentina, 'Normativa de Género y Violencia', Argentina.gov.ar, 22 January 2021, <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/fuerzaaerea/datos-de-interes/normativa-de-genero-y-violencia>.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with the Director of Gender Policies at the Argentinian Ministry of Defense. 11 April 2023. Also: Chantal de Jonge Oudraat et al., 'Enhancing Security: Women's Participation in the Security Forces in Latin America and the Caribbean' (Washington D.C.: Women in International Security, 2020), 13, <https://wiisglobal.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/REV.2-Enhancing-Security-Report-Jan-22-21.pdf>; Laura Masson, 'Políticas de Género Para El Cambio Institucional: Desafíos Pendientes Para Las Américas', *Revista Mujeres 4* (2022): 20–21, <https://online.fliphtml5.com/ripbf/ejff/>.

<sup>3</sup> Interview, 11 April 2023. Data for 2022 provided by the interviewee.

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Argentina, Nacional Defence University, *Militares argentinas*.

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Argentina, 'Licencia Especial Por Violencia En Razón de Género', Pub. L. No. RES-2020-77-APN-MD (2020), <https://www.fuerzas-armadas.mil.ar/documentacion-oficina-de-genero/0-Licencia-Especial-por-Violencia-en-razon-de-Genero.pdf>.

Positive effects of this measure were visible after the first year of implementation: 49 women requested the GBV leave in 2022 in the Army alone. This formal reporting of GBV, in turn, enabled the AAF to further address GBV on institutional-cultural and legal levels, including by granting victims access to support.<sup>6</sup>

Introducing GBV leave as a separate category with specific protection and rights challenges the widespread stigma against victims and has created a safe space for AAF staff to report GBV without fearing for their career or being questioned about their professionalism.

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<sup>6</sup> Interview, 11 April 2023.

## Australia

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### **Australia: Defence's strategic centre to advance the WPS Agenda.**

The Australian Department of Defence (hereinafter, Defence) is a key contributing department to the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda through Australia's second *Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan* (WPS NAP), spanning 2021-2031.<sup>1</sup> Defence has built on a strong foundation established through Australia's first whole-of-Government WPS NAP (2012 – 2018).<sup>2</sup>

In 2020, the increased crisis management responsibilities taken over by the Australian Defence Forces (ADF) during the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>3</sup> and the development of the second WPS NAP provided an opportunity to accelerate WPS efforts across Defence. In particular, the NAP preparatory work enabled a reflection on establishing and resourcing a strategic headquarters function to drive WPS and gender mainstreaming.<sup>4</sup> A governance framework was established to ensure momentum, progress and accountability, and to drive senior leadership commitment. A key element of this framework was the establishment in 2021 of a Gender, Peace and Security Directorate within the Joint Capabilities Group.<sup>5</sup> Embedded in the ADF Headquarters and reporting to a 2-star General, the new role of Director, Gender Peace and Security is responsible for the implementation of the WPS Agenda across ADF's breadth of planning, operations and international engagement.

In addition to coordinating Defence's implementation plans, the Gender, Peace and Security Directorate is engaged in specialist training for military Gender Focal Points and Gender Advisors and retains technical control over the analysis, design, development and evaluation phases.<sup>6</sup> As such it has the potential to translate lessons learned into doctrine and policy while providing a *de facto* repository of practice. The Gender, Peace and Security Directorate works closely with policy officers to integrate a gender perspective into international engagement activity and policy officer training.

To operationalise the priorities of the second WPS NAP, Defence has developed a *Gender, Peace and Security Mandate* (2020 – 2030). The Mandate is divided into six lines of effort spanning core areas of Defence: policy and doctrine, personnel, education and training, mission readiness and effects, international engagement, and governance and reporting.<sup>7</sup> Having a departmental mandate in place ensures alignment of effort and

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Government, 'Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2021-2031' (Australian Government, 2021), <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/australias-national-action-plan-on-women-peace-and-security-2021-2031.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Australian Government, 'Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018' (Australian Government, 2012), <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/women/publications-articles/government-international/australian-national-action-plan-on-women-peace-and-security-2012-2018>.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Department of Defence, 'Operation COVID-19 Assist', Website, n.d., <https://www.defence.gov.au/operations/covid19-assist>.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with the Director for Gender Peace and Security of the Australian Armed Forces, 20 April 2023.

<sup>5</sup> The Joint Capabilities Group (JCG) supports the Military Services by providing a wide range of enabling capabilities, including logistics support and services, health services, professional military education and training and military legal services. See: Department of Defence, 'Joint Capabilities Group', Website, Australian Government, accessed 31 May 2023, <https://www.defence.gov.au/about/who-we-are/organisation-structure/joint-capabilities-group>.

<sup>6</sup> Interview, 20 April 2023.

<sup>7</sup> Department of Defence, 'Gender, Peace and Security at Defence', Website, Australian Government, accessed 31 May 2023, <https://www.defence.gov.au/programs-initiatives/gender-peace-security-defence>.

accountability, with progress tracked through a measurement, evaluation and learning framework. The Mandate implementation is also subject to independent Government reviews.

The establishment of the Gender, Peace and Security Directorate as a strategic centre is proving instrumental in consistently driving the WPS Agenda forward, as it entrenches its implementation into ADF's institutional architecture. Just as importantly, dedicated human and financial resources increase the Agenda's prospects for sustainability, with the strategic centre demonstrating Defence's recognition of women's contribution to peace and security, raising the profile of WPS and thus contributing to the promotion of gender equality.

## Bangladesh

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### **Bangladesh: Policy initiatives help overcome gendered barriers to women's participation**

The Bangladesh Army has a history of women officers in the Army Medical Corps dating back to the War of Liberation in 1971. It started recruiting female officers into non-medical roles from 2000 and female soldiers from 2015. Despite growing awareness and acceptance of women serving in the armed forces, gender roles and household constraints make it challenging for women to balance service life and family life. This is a barrier to increasing the recruitment, retention and career progression of women in the Armed Forces.<sup>1</sup> In 2022, women made up only two per cent of the total personnel of the Armed Forces of Bangladesh (AFB).<sup>2</sup>

The AFB have introduced a range of initiatives in recent years to overcome gender barriers and contribute to a more enabling environment for servicewomen. In 2020, a Gender Adviser was appointed to the Armed Forces Division and Gender Focal Points were appointed to the Army, Navy and Air Force.<sup>3</sup> Gender Focal Points have created an important support platform for servicewomen to network, raise concerns and amplify their voices in an otherwise male-dominated environment. The AFB have also initiated internal policy changes concerning maternity, ahead of national policy, which include enhanced maternity leave of six months for women in the armed forces and provision for breastfeeding (as compared to the usual 120 days maternity leave for a female worker,<sup>4</sup> and no equivalent provision on breastfeeding for Government employees outside of the Armed Forces<sup>5</sup>). Additionally, across the three branches of the AFB, there is thirty-minute flexibility over the start of work time for women with families (Navy policy), a one-hour break during office hours for lactating mothers (Air Force practice), and access to daycare for lactating mothers (Army practice).<sup>6</sup>

Although it is too early to quantify the impact of such policy and practice changes on the recruitment, retention and career progression of women in the AFB, the number of women in senior leadership positions is gradually increasing. Major General Susane Giti became in 2018 the first female General of the Bangladesh Army. This is an indication that gender-responsive policies and their enforcement do contribute to a more enabling environment for women to fully participate and progress in armed forces.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Lieutenant Colonel of the Bangladesh Army and instructor at the Bangladesh Armed Forces Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT), 15 November 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Niloy Ranjan Biswas et al., 'Bangladesh Armed Forces of Bangladesh: MOWIP Report 2022', MOWIP Reports (Geneva: DCAF, Cornell University, Development research Initiative, 2022), 9, [https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Bangladesh\\_ArmedForcesMOWIP\\_EN-June2023.pdf](https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Bangladesh_ArmedForcesMOWIP_EN-June2023.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Ranjan Biswas et al., 'Bangladesh Armed Forces of Bangladesh: MOWIP Report 2022'. 9

<sup>4</sup> As stipulated under the Bangladesh Labour (Amendment) Bill, 2023, passed by Parliament on 2nd November 2023. <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/parliament/329868/%E2%80%98bangladesh-labour-amendment-bill-2023%E2%80%99-passed>

<sup>5</sup> Interview, 15 November 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Ranjan Biswas et al., 'Bangladesh Armed Forces of Bangladesh: MOWIP Report 2022', 9.

## Bosnia and Herzegovina

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### **Bosnia and Herzegovina: Leadership commitment and affirmative action for gender mainstreaming in the Armed Forces.**

The proportion of women in the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina (AFBiH) increased from 4.7% in 2007 to 7.2% in 2020 and 9.2% in 2023.<sup>1</sup> The predominantly male leadership of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Armed Forces (AFBiH) has played a key role in driving this change, by recognizing and supporting the need and opportunities for recruiting more women, and by leading structural, institutional and cultural processes to ensure women's retention *and* promotion.

In the 2000s, young women showed an increased interest in becoming part of the traditionally male-dominated AFBiH, but the institution had no specific gender policies or structures. The AFBiH's leadership recognized the important opportunity to become more generationally *and* gender balanced.

Since then, decision-makers in the MoD and AFBiH have been at the forefront of BiH's efforts to promote gender equality, including through gender-specific policies and action plans, such as the Gender National Action Plan, developed in coordination with the BiH Agency for Gender Equality. In 2018, the AFBiH joined the "Women, Peace and Security Chief of Defence (WPS CHOD) Network", agreeing to four conclusions<sup>2</sup> (met by the end of 2022) that required implementing significant defense system improvements.<sup>3</sup> AFBiH general officers actively engage with the WPS CHOD Network, in close coordination with the British Embassy Sarajevo, NATO Headquarters in Sarajevo, UNDP SEESAC, and other international and regional partners.<sup>4</sup>

The Office of the Inspector General (IG) plays a pivotal role in AFBiH gender mainstreaming, successfully driving affirmative action measures. The IG's 15 staff members are dedicated to fighting discrimination and advancing gender equality in the AFBiH and strive to constantly reinforce their gender expertise. They lead affirmative actions to enhance women's participation and promote gender equality, e.g. through recruitment campaigns in high schools and universities. They act as gender trainers, training more than 1700 staff on gender and the code of ethics in 2022, including coordination with the MoD, the AFBiH Gender Advisor, and the network of 138 Gender Focal Points.

Affirmative actions have proven effective in increasing retention and promotion of female staff. The AFBiH's *Book on Professional Development and Career Management*,<sup>5</sup> requires at least one candidate of each gender for a

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with the Assistant Minister of Defense for Personnel Management, Inspector General of the Ministry of Defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and a Gender Adviser to the Chief of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 6 April 2023. Data provided by interviewees.

<sup>2</sup> The four conclusions were: 1. AFBiH Gender Audit, 2. Appointment of GENAD in strategic and operational HQs, 3. Inclusion of UNSCR 1325 Principles and other resolutions into military doctrine and guidelines, 4. Inclusion of Gender perspective into scenarios of exercises and training events. Interview, 6 April 2023. Data provided by interviewees.

<sup>3</sup> Gender audit was conducted in 2019 to fulfill requirements in technical field visits.

<sup>4</sup> Interview, 6 April 2023. Data provided by interviewees.

<sup>5</sup> Affirmative measures refers to the Rulebook on professional development and career management AFBiH, Article 26, paragraph (11), which states that if there is not one representative of each gender among the first 5 or 7 most successful candidates, a sixth or eighth candidate is added to the list. That is, the most successful candidate from the list of success of the missing gender, and must have all the necessary conditions. For admissions (advertisements, competitions, academies, etc.), if two candidates have the same number of points, preference is given to the person of the less represented gender. The Rulebook is aligned with Article 8 of BiH's Gender Equality Law: Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 'Law on Gender Equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Consolidated Version' (2010), [https://arsbih.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/GEL\\_32\\_10\\_E.pdf](https://arsbih.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/GEL_32_10_E.pdf).

vacancy, and that the underrepresented gender must be prioritized in the selection, if all criteria are fulfilled. This helped to raise the number of female IGs, from one in 2018 to three of 15 in 2020.<sup>6</sup> In addition to the aforementioned increase in the number of women in the BiHAF, the established mechanisms have ensured continued growth in the number of women in peace support operations between 2018 and 2023, so that the total number reached a percentage of almost 9% (33 women and 372 men).

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<sup>6</sup> Interview, 6 April 2023. Data provided by interviewees.

## Brazil

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### **Brazil: Initiatives to train women for combat roles in the Brazilian Army.**

In 2012, the Federal Government of Brazil established that, from 2017, all existing restrictions for women to serve in combat roles had to be lifted.<sup>1</sup> Since then, the Armed Forces of Brazil have been working on the institutionalization of a gender perspective in their recruitment and retention policies, which has contributed to an increase in the number of women in their armed forces. The proportion of women increased from 7% in 2016 to 7.6% in 2020, and then to 10.5% in 2023.<sup>2</sup> In the Army, which in 2016 was the service with the lowest representation of women, the proportion of women increased from 3.7% in 2016 to 6% in 2023.

This significant increase of women in the Army was achieved through the development and implementation of the “Project for the Integration of Female Personnel in Education and Training for Combat Roles” (*Projeto de Inserção do Sexo Feminino na Linha Ensino Militar Bélico* or PISFLEMB). The PISFLEMB aimed to mainstream a gender perspective in eight main areas – planning, documentation, infrastructure, health, human resources, uniforms/weapons/equipment, physical training and evaluation – to allow women to equally join men in all education and training programmes for combat roles.<sup>3</sup>

Developing a multidisciplinary project was key to its success. While the Army General Staff was responsible for guiding, monitoring and supervising all the actions of the project and the Department of Education and Culture of the Army was responsible for identifying and proposing the necessary changes, many other bodies of the Army were involved in the PISFLEMB’s development and execution. This induced a sense of ownership in all the entities involved in the PISFLEMB, contributing to more efficient execution.

It is also relevant to underline as a best practice that senior female officers who joined the Armed Forces in the early 1990s were consulted throughout the whole process, from PISFLEMB’s inception and across the implementation phase. Moreover, some female officers were also trained to join the staff and become tutors in the education and training facilities that would begin to train women for combat roles. This had a twofold purpose: to have a mixed team of instructors, mirroring the student population, but also to allow female instructors to become role models and mentees of the young female cadets.

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<sup>1</sup> Federal Government of Brazil, “Lei Nº 12.705, de 8 de Agosto de 2012 - Dispõe sobre os Requisitos para Ingresso nos Cursos de Formação de Militares de Carreira do Exército”, Pub. L. No. L12705 (2012), [https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/\\_ato2011-2014/2012/lei/l12705.htm](https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2011-2014/2012/lei/l12705.htm).

<sup>2</sup> Ministério das Relações Exteriores, ‘Plano Nacional de Ação Sobre Mulheres, Paz e Segurança (National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security)’ (Brasília, 2017), <https://funag.gov.br/loja/download/1209-Plano-Nacional-de-Acao-sobre-Mulheres-Paz-e-Seguranca.pdf>. Also: Chantal de Jonge Oudraat et al., ‘Enhancing Security: Women’s Participation in the Security Forces in Latin America and the Caribbean’ (Washington D.C.: Women in International Security (WIIS), 2020), <https://wiisglobal.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/REV.2-Enhancing-Security-Report-Jan-22-21.pdf>; Interview with an Analyst of the Policy and Strategy Section of the Army Personnel Division of the Brazilian Army General Staff and the Head of the Reserve Personnel Department of the Navy Directorate of Personnel, 30 May and 31 May 2023. Data provided by interviewees.

<sup>3</sup> Natália Diniz Schwether “Inovação em defesa e participação feminina nas forças armadas : uma relação de ganhos mútuos?.” *XI Encontro Nacional da ABED*. Rio de Janeiro, 2021, [https://www.enabed2021.abedef.org/resources/anais/15/enabed2020/1626182199\\_ARQUIVO\\_5b0089a4ad0883d76779be9994c47693.pdf](https://www.enabed2021.abedef.org/resources/anais/15/enabed2020/1626182199_ARQUIVO_5b0089a4ad0883d76779be9994c47693.pdf); Cláudia Conceição Pinto. “A formação acadêmica profissional e tecnológica da mulher no ensino militar bélico na academia militar das agulhas negras (AMAN): Estudo de caso.” *Instituto Federal de Santa Catarina – IFSC*, Santa Catarina, 2021, <https://repositorio.ifsc.edu.br/bitstream/handle/123456789/1786/Artigo%20Cientifico-%20AMAN%20-%20EPT%20-%20IBLIOTECA%20FINAL.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>; Silva & Xavier. “Inserção do segmento feminino na linha de ensino militar bélica.” *UNI/ASSELVI*, Santa Catarina, 2021, [https://bdex.eb.mil.br/jspui/bitstream/123456789/9514/1/CGAEM\\_2021\\_2\\_tcfernando.pdf](https://bdex.eb.mil.br/jspui/bitstream/123456789/9514/1/CGAEM_2021_2_tcfernando.pdf).

In terms of physical standards for combat roles, the PISFLEMB undertook frequent monitoring and review of standards according to the needs of the posts in question. Where needed, female recruits were offered additional training to build their capacity to meet the standard.

The initial findings of the implementation of PISFLEMB show that in 2017 and 2018, in the Army's Preparatory School of Cadets ("Escola Preparatória de Cadetes do Exército" or EsPCEX), female cadets achieved higher academic and technical performance than male cadets and showed lower performance regarding physical training. From 2016 to 2023, the percentage of women that applied to combat roles in EsPCEX was on average 25%, reaching 27% in 2018.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with an Analyst of the Policy and Strategy Section of the Army Personnel Division of the Brazilian Army General Staff, 30 May 2023; Natália Diniz Schwether. "Innovation in Defense and Female Participation in The Armed Forces: a win-win relationship." *XI Encontro Nacional da ABED*. Rio de Janeiro, 2021.

## Bulgaria

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### **Bulgaria: A military women's association for gender equality in the armed forces.**

In 2023, women make up 17.2 per cent of the Bulgarian Armed Forces (BAF),<sup>1</sup> a significant increase from 4.2 percent in 2003.<sup>2</sup> Until 2008, women were not allowed to join the armed forces for some roles, including combat and commander positions, limiting their possibilities for advancement. Consequently, women's occupational options were to be found in the legal, medical and public communication fields, while only 1.2 percent were military officers.<sup>3</sup> Determined to overcome these systemic barriers and seize the opportunities provided by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and an anti-discrimination law adopted in 2004, in 2006 a group of women from all armed forces services and military ranks founded the Bulgarian Armed Forces Women Association.<sup>4</sup>

A non-governmental organization with a female leadership, the Association is a voluntary network cooperating with and advising the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces on concrete gender equality measures.<sup>5</sup> In its first years of activity, it managed to successfully advocate for legislative amendments to the Defence Act that opened military academies, military universities and defence colleges to women, paving the way to women's access to all active-duty roles and, ultimately, all ranks in 2010.<sup>6</sup>

The Association then turned to advocate for good retention practices, helping create a gender-sensitive environment. Milestones of this work include a women's career mentoring programme<sup>7</sup> and the promotion of child and family-friendly arrangements, such as parental leave for men and women<sup>8</sup> and the placement of seven military kindergartens in different garrisons in the country from 2008 onwards.<sup>9</sup> The Association also provides men and women with an alternative path for filing complaints, ensuring confidentiality and survivor-centred approaches, so to address under-reporting of sexual harassment, abuse and assault. Direct contact with victims and immediate

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<sup>1</sup> Permanent Mission of the Republic of Bulgaria to the United Nations, the OSCE and Other International Organisations in Vienna, 'Response of the Republic of Bulgaria to the Questionnaire on the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security', Information Exchange on the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security (Vienna: OSCE Secretariat, 12 April 2023), <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/8/e/542373.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Defence of Bulgaria, 'Bulgaria National Report', National Reports to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives (Brussels: NATO, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> Interview with the Gender Adviser of the Ministry of Defence of Bulgaria, 4 May 2023.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. The law referred to is the *Law on Protection from Discrimination*, Закон за защита от дискриминация, S.G. No. 86/2003, in force since 1 January 2004, last amended by S.G. 7/2018.

<sup>5</sup> Nevena Atanasova-Krasteva, 'Role of Women in Security and Defense: Bulgarian National Policies and Experience', *International Conference Knowledge-based organization* N 23, no. 1 (20 June 2017): 9–14, <https://doi.org/10.1515/kbo-2017-0001>.

<sup>6</sup> Interview, 4 May 2023.

<sup>7</sup> 'Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives 2020' (Brussels: NATO, 2023), [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_132342.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_132342.htm).

<sup>8</sup> European Commission. Directorate General for Justice and Consumers. et al., *Country Report, Gender Equality: How Are EU Rules Transposed into National Law? : Bulgaria 2022*. (LU: Publications Office, 2022), <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2838/771788>.

<sup>9</sup> Interview, 4 May 2023.

psychological support and procedural legal advice are part of this package.<sup>10</sup> As the Association actively promotes systemic accountability, it also informally monitors the progress of official complaints.<sup>11</sup>

Thanks to the close cooperation between the Association and the Ministry of Defence to address vital concerns of military personnel and women in particular, through the years recruitment and retention rates have significantly improved.<sup>12</sup> In this regard, the Association's gender equality campaigns leveraging on the country's international commitments, such as the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and its NATO membership, have been instrumental in advocating for progress while forging partnerships. The Gender Adviser to the Ministry of Defence and a key figure in the Association's development has also contributed to "connecting the dots" and, thus, sustaining change.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. Megan Bastick, 'Gender and Complaints Mechanisms: A Handbook for Armed Forces and Ombuds Institutions' (Geneva: DCAF, 2015).

<sup>11</sup> Interview, 4 May 2023.

<sup>12</sup> Republic of Bulgaria, *Information Exchange on the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security*, April 2023.

## Cambodia

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### Cambodia: Messaging by women to women about deployment opportunities

The first deployment of four women from the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) took place in 2010, to the UN peacekeeping mission in Lebanon, UNFIL. Since the number of servicewomen involved in UN peacekeeping operations (UNPKOs) has steadily risen. A particularly strong increase was achieved between April 2020 and April 2023: from 9.5% to 16.7% women deployed.<sup>1</sup> Although women remain heavily deployed in logistics roles, the number of women peacekeepers advancing as team leaders and deputy team leaders is also steadily rising.

Cambodia's Ministry of National Defense, in concert with the National Centre for Peacekeeping Forces, Mine and Explosive Remnants of War Clearance (NPMEC),<sup>2</sup> has made sustained efforts to increase women's participation in peacekeeping. NPMEC has a target of 30 training places to be filled by women. An early lesson learnt was that requests alone by the Ministry of National Defense for servicewomen to attend training at the NPMEC did not translate into increased numbers of women applying. In large part, this was because many servicewomen did not consider themselves 'eligible' or sufficiently skilled. Limited language proficiency in English and/or French was an impediment facing women given gendered educational disparities in Cambodia. An upper age limit on those eligible to deploy and entrenched societal expectations on women to fulfil traditional family and child-care responsibilities are also persistent barriers.<sup>3</sup>

One of the approaches that has helped to address this challenge and drive progress has been to organise forums for Cambodian women peacekeepers who have successfully deployed to share their achievements and experiences with female counterparts from RCAF units. This is proving to be a simple yet highly effective means of raising awareness and understanding of deployment opportunities and the realities of deployment for servicewomen on UNPKOs. When women can "see themselves" across different levels and roles in peacekeeping, they will be more likely to consider deployment a realistic prospect. Women peacekeepers, from military observers through to deminers, liaison officers, logistics or catering support, are also invited to give seminars to women from civilian audiences at events organised by the Ministry for Women's Affairs.

Through these outreach activities, women can see that not all roles require highly specialised skills and, equally, that there are training and opportunities for servicewomen to advance their skills and deploy equivalent to their male counterparts.<sup>4</sup> A platform for women peacekeepers to speak is now a regular part of an annual event organised by the Ministry of National Defense, which all units of the RCAF attend.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Troop and Police Contributors', United Nations Peacekeeping, 30 April 2020, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors>; United Nations Peacekeeping, 'Troop and Police Contributors', 30 April 2023, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors>.

<sup>2</sup> The National Centre for Peacekeeping Forces, Mines and ERW Clearance of Cambodia (NPMEC) was created in March 2005 and is responsible for building the peacekeeping capacity of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces, as well as training personnel in peacekeeping operations and the clearance of landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW).

<sup>3</sup> Interview with the Deputy Director General of the RCAF National Centre for Peacekeeping Forces, Mine and Explosive Remnants of War Clearance (NPMEC), 14 September 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Interview, 14 September 2022.

## Canada

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### **Canada: Establishment of a three-star command organisation to nurture an inclusive culture across the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces.**

As of May 2023, women make up 16.5 percent of Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) personnel, up 1.5 percentage points since 2015.<sup>1</sup> Its objective is that by 2026, one in four, or 25 percent, of CAF members will be women.

Despite setting ambitious targets to increase the proportion of women across all trades and ranks, Canada's Defence Team<sup>2</sup> remains aware of the challenges women face in the military. These include a Defence Team culture that has lagged broader Canadian society and its values, thereby inhibiting operational effectiveness and mission readiness.<sup>3</sup>

In response, Canada's political and military leadership took the unprecedented decision among NATO members to establish the Chief of Professional Conduct and Culture in April 2021. Reporting directly to the Deputy Minister and the Chief of Defence Staff, the Chief of Professional Conduct and Culture's remit is to create an inclusive and psychologically safe culture underpinned by respect for the dignity of all people, where Canadians from all walks of life can contribute to defending and protecting Canada.<sup>4</sup>

Cultural transformation towards these goals demands targeted interventions and a whole of defence strategy, and it is the Minister of Defence's top priority as expressed in the Chief of Professional Conduct and Culture's mandate. In October 2021, the new command launched a six-month consultation process that involved a series of town hall events, small-group discussions and structured leadership interviews with over 9,000 Defence Team members. The consultations created safe and supported spaces for Defence Team members – civilian and military – to share their perspectives, ideas, and feedback on culture and ways forward to build a more diverse and inclusive institution.<sup>5</sup> Distilling this collective input revealed themes and essential aspects of culture that demand attention. According to Defence Team participants, investing time and resources at the outset to learn from members' lived experiences has proven pivotal in guiding informed action to address systemic barriers to creating a culture that respects the dignity of all members of the Defence Team.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Data provided post interview by the Director General – Culture (DGC), Chief Professional Conduct and Culture, Canadian Armed Forces. 29<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Canada's Defense Team includes both the Department of National Defense (DND) and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF).

<sup>3</sup> Government of Canada, 'CDS/DM Initiating Directive for Professional Conduct and Culture', National Defence, Policies and standards, DM/CDS Directives, April 2021, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/policies-standards/dm-cds-directives/cds-dm-initiating-directive-professional-conduct-culture.html#toc7>.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with the Director General – Culture (DGC), Chief Professional Conduct and Culture Canadian Armed Forces, the Gender Adviser, Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC GENAD), Canadian Armed Forces, the Gender Advisor, Chief Ministry Personnel Command (GENAD, CMP), Department of National Defence and the ADM(Pol) Women Peace and Security Adviser (WPS) Policy Adviser, Department of National Defense. 15 May 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Government of Canada, 'Defence Team Conduct and Culture Consultation Summary Report', National Defence, Conduct and Culture, Conduct and Culture Engagements, accessed 24 May 2023, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/conduct-and-culture/join-the-discussion-defence-team-conduct-and-culture-consultation/defence-team-conduct-and-culture-consultation-summary-report.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Interview, 15 May 2023.

In less than two years, the Chief of Professional Conduct and Culture is providing greater support for victims and survivors of misconduct as well as support to leadership in navigating conflicts and proactively offering a reintegration into the workplace framework, a coaching program and Leadership Support Teams.<sup>7</sup> In 2023, it will launch its Culture Evolution Strategy and a publicly accessible Conduct and Culture Resource and Data Hub to offer greater transparency and accountability.

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<sup>7</sup> Government of Canada, 'Conduct and Culture Change Progress Tracker', National Defence, 26 May 2023, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/conduct-and-culture/conduct-and-culture-tracker.html>.

## Dominican Republic

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### **Dominican Republic: Enhancing recruitment and retention through gender-responsive social benefits.**

In 2023, the Dominican Republic has 53.4% women working in the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and 22% in the total Armed Forces (FFAA), including two female Generals.<sup>1</sup> Of the seven UN peacekeepers in February 2023, five are women.<sup>2</sup> One of the first examples of women's roles in the FFAA is the legendary *La Coronela* ("The (female) Colonel"), often depicted in paintings of the battle of Independence in 1844 with a machete or a rifle alongside the founding fathers of the Nation.<sup>3</sup> Since 1980, women have formally entered the FFAA.<sup>4</sup> The military academies of the Army and Air Force opened their doors to women in 2002; the Navy followed in 2015. This removed an important barrier to women's rise in the military hierarchy to leadership positions.<sup>5</sup>

One identified barrier to the recruitment, retention, and professional development of FFAA personnel, in particular women, was difficult access to housing and childcare facilities, especially in border territories. The President of the Dominican Republic acknowledged this by declaring the social well-being and improvement of the life quality of soldiers and their families a Government priority. In 2021, the MoD introduced new housing benefits and childcare options, aiming to positively impact recruitment, retention, and promotion opportunities for FFAA personnel and enhance the FFAA's image as an attractive employer and inclusive institution that provides equal opportunities. FFAA staff and their families are awarded housing allocations or purchase benefits for their first home. In border areas, housing plans were developed to ensure adequate conditions. Childcare facilities for children over the age of two were expanded to grant equal access to the children of FFAA staff. Childcare centers for children under two years of age were established, in particular, to facilitate the return of women to work after maternity leave. In addition, in 2023, the President of the Dominican Association of Officers' Wives Inc. (*Asociación Dominicana de Esposas de Oficiales de las Fuerzas Armadas*, ADEOFA) inaugurated the Center for the Comprehensive Care of the Armed Forces (*Centro de Atención Integral de las Fuerzas Armadas*, CAIFFAA), for the children of military personnel and immediate family members with special conditions, in a safe, inclusive space with multiple facilities.<sup>6</sup>

It is too early to fully assess the impact of these measures on the professional development of women. According to informants from the MoD, these measures have contributed significantly to strengthening recruitment and

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with the Director of Gender Equality of the Defense Ministry of the Dominican Republic, a Gender Advisor of the Defense Ministry of the Dominican Republic, and gender trainer of the academy of the Air Force of the Dominican Republic, 27 April 2023. Statistics provided by interviewees.

<sup>2</sup> As of February 2023, the Dominican Republic had four female experts plus one female and two male police deployed in UN Peacekeeping Operations. United Nations Peacekeeping, 'Contribution of Uniformed Personnel to UN by Country and Personnel Type. Experts on Mission, Formed Police Units, Individual Police, Staff Officer, and Troops', 28 February 2023, 5, [https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/05\\_country\\_and\\_post\\_59\\_february\\_2023.pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/05_country_and_post_59_february_2023.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Interview, 27 April 2023. See also: El Nacional, 'Develan Murales Para Rendir Honor a Las "Mujeres de La Patria"', 1 May 2022, <https://elnacional.com.do/develan-murales-para-rendir-honor-a-las-mujeres-de-la-patria/>.

<sup>4</sup> Interview, 27 April 2023. See also: Angelica W Mayor Piloto (ERD) Rosa Durán, 'Perspectiva Equidad de Género En Las FF.AA. Avances, Retos, Proyección' (Revista de las Fuerzas Armadas No 377, República Dominicana, 3 January 2022), 70, Document provided by interviewees (pp. 70-73).

<sup>5</sup> Interview, 27 April 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Interview, 27 April 2023.

retention, including the increase of women in the FFAA from 20.8 percent in 2020<sup>7</sup> to 22 percent in 2023.<sup>8</sup> In addition, they were highly publicized and positively received within the FFAA and among the general population.

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<sup>7</sup> de Jonge Oudraat et al., 'Enhancing Security: Women's Participation in the Security Forces in Latin America and the Caribbean', 13.

<sup>8</sup> Interview, 27 April 2023.

## Germany

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### **Germany: Assessing women's participation in UN peace operations as part of the promotion of gender equality across the armed forces.**

In 2001, women were granted equal access to all positions in the German Armed Forces, the *Bundeswehr*. The percentage of women has since increased from 1.9% in 2001, to 9% in 2010, to 13% in 2023.<sup>1</sup> Germany aspires to meet the UN Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy targets. As of February 2023, Germany contributes 7.7% women in troop contingents and 5.9% of women among military observers and staff officers in UN peace operations.<sup>2</sup>

To better understand and remove structural barriers to women's meaningful participation in UN peace operations, the Federal Ministry of Defence (FMoD) conducted a barrier assessment in 2019,<sup>3</sup> using the draft methodology for Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations (MOWIP) developed by DCAF and Cornell University for the Elsie Initiative.<sup>4</sup> The Assessment identified twelve barriers holding women in the *Bundeswehr* back from UN peacekeeping operations: first, the eligible pool of trained female service personnel is too small. Second, insufficient information on UN peace operations is provided to Bundeswehr staff, and there is a lack of opportunities for exchanging experiences. Third, selection decisions for deployment are partly perceived as non-transparent or biased. Fourth, long absence from the private environment. Fifth, negative experiences during deployment, such as discrimination, unfair treatment, and sexual harassment, and sixth, negative stories heard about peacekeeping operations. Seventh, little career benefit from participation in UN operations, and eighth, UN peace operations being given low priority by superiors. Ninth, national initiatives being not widely enough known and effective enough to increase the number of women in UN operations. Tenth, a perception that female military personnel must first convince their superiors and other service personnel of their capability to perform, and eleventh, partially stereotypical special tasks for female military personnel on operations. Finally, the assessment found that discriminatory images of women among members of armed forces of other nations in peace operations or of the host country's armed forces can affect the perception of the capabilities of female military personnel.<sup>5</sup> The summary findings were published and disseminated in German, French and English. Through virtual meetings, they were presented to interested UN member states, UN Women, and the UN Secretariat.

The FMoD is working to implement the Barrier Assessment recommendations. After a thorough review of the recommendations, a set of next steps has been adopted. Priority is initially being given to addressing the following barriers: first, an information deficit in the *Bundeswehr* on the possibilities of deployment to UN peace operations and a lack of opportunities to exchange experiences, especially among women and, second, increasing the

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with an Officer of the United Nations branch, and a WPS Desk Officer at the Federal Ministry of Defence, 20 April 2023; also see Bundeswehr, 'Women in the Bundeswehr', 30 April 2023, <https://www.bundeswehr.de/en/about-bundeswehr/identity-of-the-bundeswehr/equal-opportunities/women-bundeswehr>.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping, 'Contribution of Uniformed Personnel to UN by Country and Personnel Type. Experts on Mission, Formed Police Units, Individual Police, Staff Officer, and Troops', 6.

<sup>3</sup> German Federal Foreign Office, 'Third Action Plan of the Federal Government on the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council's Agenda on Women, Peace and Security (2021-2024)', 2021, 45.

<sup>4</sup> Sabrina Karim et al., 'MOWIP Methodology: Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations' (DCAF, Cornell University, The Elsie Initiative, October 2020), <https://www.dcaf.ch/mowip-methodology>.

<sup>5</sup> Bundeswehr, 'Results of the Barrier Study. Summary of the Assessment of Barriers Standing in the Way of Greater Participation of Female Military Bundeswehr Personnel in United Nations Peace Operations', MOWIP Reports (Federal Ministry of Defence, October 2021), 4, <https://www.bmvg.de/resource/blob/5248870/4f53bc6f3b6a99293b9f5045a0e914cd/barrier-study-data.pdf>.

number of trained female service personnel.<sup>6</sup> For example, the FMoD is planning events to create spaces for female personnel to learn from female peers about their deployment experiences.

Although focused on UN peace operations, the Barrier Assessment has brought to light gendered issues across the FMoD and *Bundeswehr* and built credible evidence-based recommendations to promote gender equality. For instance, the socio-cultural findings about gender matters can be used to create awareness within the *Bundeswehr* about its comparatively low percentage of women, and of women in military leadership positions in particular as well as to raise gender issues in training and other sensitization efforts. The Barrier Assessment findings are and will be further integrated into trainings, leadership and promotion courses, to raise awareness about gender concepts, barriers and underlying cultural-institutional dynamics.<sup>7</sup>

Germany's good practice of conducting a Barrier Assessment is reinforced through leadership commitment. In 2019, Germany's Chief of Defence pronounced an "order of the day," the highest order in the military hierarchy, to meet the UN targets on the deployment of uniformed female peacekeepers. Keeping up the momentum after the Barrier Assessment, the order was renewed and updated in 2022.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Interview, 20 April 2023; also Bundeswehr, 4.

<sup>7</sup> Interview, 20 April 2023. See also Bundeswehr, 'Personalzahlen', 17 April 2023, <https://www.bundeswehr.de/de/ueber-die-bundeswehr/zahlen-daten-fakten/personalzahlen-bundeswehr>.

<sup>8</sup> Interview, 20 April 2023. See Bundeswehr, 'Tagesbefehl Des Generalinspektors Der Bw (Order of the Day by the Chief of Defence)', (Bundeswehr, 16 August 2019).

## Ghana

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### **Ghana: Deploy women as UN peacekeepers to expand their skillset and increase career opportunities.**

In 2023, the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) have 18% women among their staff; a steep rise from 3% in 2010. Since 2016, women are admitted to all roles in the GAF, including combat roles, and the institution already has four female Generals.<sup>1</sup> Ghana deploys 15% of their female Armed Forces staff as part of contingents to UN peacekeeping missions.<sup>2</sup> As of February 2023, 16% of deployed GAF peacekeepers are women (including military and police), with women's percentages varying across functions: they make up 14% of troops, 23% of staff officers, and 36% of experts on mission.<sup>3</sup> With Elsie Initiative funding, Ghana conducted an assessment of women's participation in peacekeeping, applying the Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations (MOWIP) methodology in 2019.<sup>4</sup> Since 2022, the Ghana Armed Forces are implementing the recommendations for reducing the barriers identified in the MOWIP report,<sup>5</sup> notably related to the small eligible pool of women for UN peacekeeping deployment, and gender roles and social exclusion dynamics in the GAF and society at large.<sup>6</sup>

What makes the GAF so successful in mobilizing women as peacekeepers? Deployment experience is not a promotion criterion in the GAF and does not *per se* bring benefits for career advancement. However, going on a UN peacekeeping mission allows peacekeepers to expand their portfolio of skills and thereby provides access to career opportunities upon return that would not be available otherwise. For instance, the MOWIP assessment revealed that, while deployed, female and male peacekeepers are trained to fulfill a diverse set of roles, with specific focus on cross-training, i.e. building men's capacities in roles traditionally reserved for women (such as cooks or waiters) and vice versa (women were trained as drivers, guards, operations assistants, patrol commanders, and cooks).<sup>7</sup> This creates a more inclusive institutional culture and qualifies both female and male peacekeepers for a wider spectrum of career options after deployment.

Deployment to UN peacekeeping missions also enhances both male and female soldiers' eligibility for highly qualified positions upon their return: some women have benefited from leadership experience in new issue areas during deployment for attaining high-level advisor roles upon their return. For example, a current Gender Policy Advisor (GENAD) started her leadership trajectory in gender as a Gender Focal Point in Liberia, before becoming a Staff Officer in charge of Human Rights Due Diligence Process in the DRC, and

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with the Gender Policy Advisor to the Chief of Defence Staff of the Ghana Armed Forces and a Gender Advisor to the Ghana Air Force Commander, 13 April 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Interview, 13 April 2023. Data from the Ghana Armed Forces Department of International Peacekeeping, provided by the interviewees.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping, 'Gender: Troop-Contributing Countries Achieving Gender Parity Targets', United Nations Peacekeeping - Gender, 7, accessed 9 May 2023, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/gender>; Ghana News, 'Ghana Armed Forces Exceeds UN Quota of Female Inclusion', Business Ghana, 10 March 2023, <https://www.businessghana.com/>.

<sup>4</sup> Cornell University, DCAF, and KAIPTC, 'Ghana Armed Forces MOWIP Report 2020. Results of the Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations (MOWIP) Assessment', MOWIP Barrier Assessment (Geneva: DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, 2020), [https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Ghana\\_Armed\\_Forces\\_2020\\_MOWIP\\_Report.pdf](https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Ghana_Armed_Forces_2020_MOWIP_Report.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> The Elsie Initiative Fund, 'The Elsie Initiative Fund', 1 September 2022, <https://elsiefund.org/2022/09/01/ghana/>.

<sup>6</sup> Cornell University, DCAF, and KAIPTC, 'Ghana Armed Forces MOWIP Report 2020. Results of the Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations (MOWIP) Assessment', 8.

<sup>7</sup> Cornell University, DCAF, and KAIPTC, 50.

finally being appointed GENAD once back in Ghana.<sup>8</sup> Her deployment as a peacekeeper *per se* was not taken into account for evaluating her promotion and career opportunities, but the skills she had acquired thanks to the deployment were. Similarly, the GENADs for the GAF's Airforce Headquarters and the Air Force Base in Accra both received gender training while deployed with UNHQ in New York. Deployment thus provides indirect career benefits while enriching the GAF as an institution with the skillsets and experiences necessary for advancing gender mainstreaming at the national level: GENADs have been established at all levels of the GAF.

The leadership of the GAF believe in the empowerment of all personnel to create a fair and equitable working environment. This is the main driver of gender mainstreaming in the GAF — which began in advance of any external support. Nonetheless the MOWIP assessment and collaboration with international partners have helped the GAF to enhance women's participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations and to strengthen the pool of qualified women and men within the GAF at the national level.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Interview, 13 April 2023.

<sup>9</sup> Interview, 13 April 2023.

## Greece

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### **Greece: a people-based approach to women's empowerment in the Hellenic Armed Forces.**

The participation of women in the Hellenic Armed Forces (HAF) has evolved considerably over recent decades. Although women have long been a part of HAF, the percentage of women serving was historically very low and confined to supporting roles.<sup>1</sup> This situation changed from 1991 and 2002 respectively, when women were admitted to Military Academies<sup>2</sup> and, correspondingly, entered the three Branches of HAF, without restrictions and quotas.<sup>3</sup> In 2020, 16.4 percent of HAF recruits were women, up from 3.75 percent in 2001.<sup>4</sup> The reasons for this achievement are not only Greece's strong legislative framework on the advancement of gender equality<sup>5</sup> but the determination of the political and military leadership to rapidly identify and adopt practical measures to realise legal requirements and to build broad acceptance of the notion of a powerful national defence that is inclusive of men and women.

An approach that is proving effective in helping to facilitate an empowering environment for women has been HAF's people-based commanding system. This approach is one of the main pillars of HAF's commanding traditions, due to the importance of its personnel for a country that needs to maintain a strong military power with a limited population. One element of the people-based commanding system that is proving especially important to increasing the percentage of women in the HAF is the emphasis it gives to balancing military and family life. This emphasis is backed by a range of family-friendly policies and initiatives that continue to evolve and strengthen, in part thanks to formal and informal feedback and response mechanisms, which HAF's people-based approach engenders.<sup>6</sup>

HAF's family-friendly policies take into account that motherhood can affect a woman's professional requirements. They enable maternal and parental leave, exemption from 24 hour-service and exercises until one's infant reaches 24 months of age, service in place of interest for five years immediately after the birth of a child, and exemption of service in case of a single-parent family. In addition, family welfare measures aimed at facilitating the work-family balance include the service of spouses in the same location, flexible

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<sup>1</sup> Written information provided by Full-time Staff Officer, Department for Gender Equality, Human Resources Directorate, Hellenic National Defense General Staff (HNDGS), 30 May 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Based on Law 1911/1990 (Gov. Gaz. A'166/11-12-1990) 'Admission of women to military academies, regulation of conscription matters and other provisions', as provided in written information by Full-time Staff Officer, Department for Gender Equality, Human Resources Directorate, Hellenic National Defense General Staff (HNDGS), 30 May 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Based on Law 2913/2001 (Gov. Gaz. A'102/23-05-2001) 'Regulation of Ministry of National Defense Equity Fund Issues and other provisions', as provided in written information by Full-time Staff Officer, Department for Gender Equality, Human Resources Directorate, Hellenic National Defense General Staff (HNDGS), 30 May 2023.

<sup>4</sup> Committee on Women in the NATO Forces, 'Greece', Year-in Review Special Edition, NATO International Military Staff, 2001, <https://www.nato.int/ims/2001/win/greece.htm>; 'Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives 2020', 28–29.

<sup>5</sup> Fotini Bellou and Kalliopi Chainoglou, 'The WPS Agenda in the Eastern Mediterranean: The Cases of Greece, the Republic of Cyprus and Turkey' (University of Salento, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1285/I20398573V8N1P57>.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with the Section Chief, Department for Gender Equality, Human Resources Directorate, Hellenic National Defense General Staff (HNDGS) and Full-time Staff Officer, Department for Gender Equality, Human Resources Directorate, Hellenic National Defense General Staff (HNDGS), 30 May 2023.

working hours (depending on the requirements of the units), operation of day nurseries, as well as special measures for large families or families with members with special needs.<sup>7</sup>

The above initiatives and policies reflect a human-approach mentality that characterizes military leadership in Greece which, in turn, is helping to make the professional career of women in HAF more accessible.

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<sup>7</sup> See Ministry of Defense decisions: 400/34/292616/s.4753/31 Ayr 2016 (Gov. Gaz.2808 B') and 400/33/328233/S.7547/13 Noe 2018 (Gov.Gaz.5455 B') "Regulation of Leave of Military Personnel"; 400/15/214623/S.3587/18 June 2019 (Gov.Gaz. B' 2335) "Administrative and other beneficial measures for categories of military personnel of the armed forces facing special and acute social problems"; 454/11/229946/S. 3662/17 May 2023 (Gov. Gaz. 3267 B') "Beneficial measures and administrative facilities for armed forces personnel," as provided in written information by Full-time Staff Officer, Department for Gender Equality, Human Resources Directorate, Hellenic National Defense General Staff (HNDGS), 30 May 2023.

## Hungary

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### **Hungary: The Defence Forces as a reliable and family-friendly employer.**

In 2023 women make up 21% of the Hungarian Defence Forces (HDF). The percentage has remained stable at around 20% since at least 2014.<sup>1</sup>

The first women were able to apply to and enter military academies in 1994. The HDF have generally been regarded as a reliable employer in Hungarian society.<sup>2</sup> In addition to the prospect of full access to all military roles and positions due to the absence of gender-related restrictions, flexible working arrangements and childcare provisions have incentivized women's participation and promoted women's retention.

Against the backdrop of the closure of workplaces and high dismissal rates in the civilian labour market, the HDF were the first state institution to get involved in the Hungarian Government's *Economy Protection Action Plan* by offering jobs to unemployed citizens.<sup>3</sup> In addition, with a view to retaining their service personnel, the HDF opted to raise salaries and keep up with pre-pandemic standards, especially concerning childcare, and to have a stable workplace ultimately appealing to military women with families.<sup>4</sup>

These standards and measures distinguish the HDF from the civilian labour market in the country and positively affect personnel retention in the military. For example, thanks to provisions on childcare leave, service personnel are entitled to up to eighty-four sick-leave days per year per child for sick children under three years old, up to forty-two days for children between three and six years, and up to fourteen days for children between six and twelve. The number of days doubles up in the case of single parents. Being transferable, childcare leave is frequently used by the father if the mother's civilian employment does not entail the possibility to take maternity leave, or if taking it would put her at risk of dismissal.<sup>5</sup>

The importance attached to family-friendly employment is also reflected in the HDF's flexible working arrangements. For example, single parents with children younger than six years old can request not to be assigned to 24-hour duty. Similarly, if their child is younger than three years old, they are not required to work overtime nor to be moved to another garrison.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, the military provides different forms of housing support, such as subletting contributions, financial support for the monthly rate, or an interest-free Military Employer Loan for service personnel to buy their own apartment. The military contributes to everyday travel expenses as well.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Senior Desk Officer, International Operations Branch, Joint Operations Centre, Hungarian Defence Forces, 27 April 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Interview, 27 April 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Márta Pákozdi and György Bárdos, 'Voluntary Military Service for Hungarian People Who Have Lost Their Job Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic – A Qualitative Study', *Heliyon* 8, no. 10 (October 2022): e10903, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e10903>.

<sup>4</sup> Interview, 27 April 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Interview, 27 April 2023.

<sup>6</sup> 'Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives 2020'.

<sup>7</sup> Interview, 27 April 2023. Data provided by the interviewee.

Taken together, these provisions have positively affected many women's recruitment and retention. They have also been instrumental to achieving women's promotion within mid-level and senior ranks across the whole of the HDF. In 2023, 25% of majors, 14% of lieutenant colonels and 6% of colonels are women.

## India

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### **India: Normalizing a new mindset regarding women's inclusion in the Army**

Women have been part of the Indian Armed Forces since its independence; however, their role and employment were limited to a few selected domains. Aligned with trends across the world, the Indian Armed Forces have shown commitment to enhancing opportunities for women, aligned with the nation's vision to empower women in all facets of life.

Women's participation in the Indian Armed Forces increased significantly between 2015, when all positions in the Air Force and Navy were opened to women, and 2021.<sup>1</sup> In 2022, women officers comprised 13.69% of the Air Force, 6% of the Navy and 3.97% of the Army.<sup>2</sup>

The Indian Army has faced comparatively greater challenges in achieving gender equality than in the Navy and Air Force. These stem from myriad concerns concerning the suitability, employability and effectiveness of women, primarily due to societal beliefs and mindsets. These manifested in restricted entry and shorter employment of women in the Army compared to men.

In an effort to ensure equal terms and conditions of service for male and female personnel, the Indian Army has enacted multiple initiatives in recent years. From 2020, it commenced the grant of permanent commissions to women officers, who were previously inducted only for an 11-month training programme with no scope of extension or promotion to higher ranks. This path-breaking decision brought women officers at par with their male counterparts. In addition, from 2022 the Armed Forces opened entry for women candidates to the National Defense Academy, a premier institute for pre-commissioning training previously open to male cadets only. Except for combat arms, where direct confrontation with the enemy in line of action is envisaged, all streams in the Armed Forces traditionally occupied only by male personnel have been gradually opened to women, including fighter pilots in the Airforce, gunners in the Army and executive branches of the Navy. A further major milestone towards gender equality was achieved with the decision to commence the induction of women into other ranks (non-officer ranks). The services are continuously upgrading the environment and infrastructure for female personnel, and special family leave has been provisioned for women.

To normalise the culture of women serving alongside men in the Armed Forces, the Government of India is also adopting strategies that extend into schools and communities. One such strategy has been to allow girls from the age of ten to attend India's military Sainik schools, previously all-boy educational institutes. Military schools are primary feeder institutes for the Armed Forces, inculcating military ethos and culture amongst students who traditionally have risen to higher ranks. Additionally, career opportunities for women in the Armed Forces are widely publicised through advertising media.

The Indian Armed Forces recognise proactive military leadership as pivotal to building a conducive environment for the integration of women in all facets of the military system. The Forces are pursuing the necessary administrative, training and policy changes to ensure "gender neutrality," seeing gender-neutral policies and their unbiased implementation as the "order of the day".

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with the Policy Director, Human Resources, Indian Army, 22 September 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Press Information Bureau, Government of India and Ministry of Defence, 'Participation of Women in Defence Sector', December 2022, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1882084>.

## Jordan

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### **Jordan: enhancing women's participation in military positions through all-female training and platoons.**

Women's participation in the Armed Forces of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (JAF) increased from 0.7% in 2006 to 17.4% in 2023.<sup>1</sup> This has been due to efforts at the highest political and military levels to gradually remove barriers to women's meaningful participation in all roles and at all levels of the JAF.<sup>2</sup>

Implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 has accelerated opportunities for servicewomen in the JAF. Jordan developed National Action Plans on Women, Peace, and Security in 2017 and 2023. To implement the most recent National Action Plan, the JAF developed a Gender Mainstreaming Plan for 2021-2024, informed by a Gender Impact Assessment conducted in 2020 with UN Women's support.<sup>3</sup> One target of the JAF's Gender Mainstreaming Plan is to diversify women's roles and to increase the number of women in active military roles, especially in the border regions of the country.

Creating all-female entities and infrastructure that offer women-only basic training has proved a successful strategy to ensure women's equal qualification and gradual integration across the JAF. Of particular importance for women's access to military education and training were the establishment of the Directorate of Women's Military Affairs in 1995 and the Women's Military Training Center in 2006.<sup>4</sup> The Women's Military Training Center works exclusively with female staff, but teaches the same curricula as other JAF military training centers, ensuring that women and men receive the same education and training.<sup>5</sup> NATO funding enabled the Women's Military Training Center to expand its capacities by 25% in 2020, graduating 800 women in 2023.<sup>6</sup> After training, women and men carry out their work together —with same requirements and efficiency — although are separately accommodated.

In 2023 the JAF introduced all-female infantry platoons. The first female non-commissioned officers will be deployed in June 2023, with other all-female platoons to follow in border regions of the country. These build on the successful example of all-female special forces platoons, which were created for specific security tasks in counterterrorism and intelligence after the 2005 Amman terrorist attacks. The all-female platoons of the JAF are specifically trained to deal with border drug trafficking issues; for example, body searches of women (women being identified as important traffickers in the region, wherein cultural codes do not allow male soldiers to search them). The establishment of this all-female platoon comes with separate infrastructure for the female soldiers. Therewith,

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with the Director of the Women's Military Affairs Department, Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF), 10 May 2023. See also Callum Watson, "Defence and Gender," Tool 3, Gender and Security Toolkit (Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN Women, 2020), 12, [https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/GSToolkit\\_Tool-3%20EN%20FINAL\\_0.pdf](https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/GSToolkit_Tool-3%20EN%20FINAL_0.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Interview, 10 May 2023. See also Jumana Kawar, 'Jordanian Women's Evolving Role in the Armed Forces', *Women in International Security, Women, Peace and Security Blog* (blog), 28 November 2017, <https://wiisglobal.org/jordanian-womens-evolving-role-in-the-armed-forces/>.

<sup>3</sup> Interview, 10 May 2023; information provided by UN Women Jordan staff and consultant, July 2021.

<sup>4</sup> DCAF, 'Defence and Gender', 23; 'Women in Arab Armies', 12, accessed 27 March 2023, <https://aiw.lau.edu.lb/images/Women%20in%20Arab%20Armies-final%20report.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> DCAF, 'Defence and Gender', 23; NATO Support and Procurement Agency, 'Jordan III', March 2021, [https://www.nspa.nato.int/resources/site1/General/operations/Trust-Fund/FACTSHEET\\_EN\\_Jordan-III\\_March21.pdf](https://www.nspa.nato.int/resources/site1/General/operations/Trust-Fund/FACTSHEET_EN_Jordan-III_March21.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Interview, 10 May 2023. See also DCAF, 'Defence and Gender', 23; NATO Support and Procurement Agency, 'Jordan III'.

the JAF respects the cultural norm of spatially separating women's and men's facilities (e.g. sleeping areas, toilets), while gradually opening up space for women.<sup>7</sup>

Through all-women educational institutions, military entities, and the corresponding infrastructure, the JAF seeks to create equitable conditions for women to be equally well-trained, prove their professional capacities on the job, and gain access to all positions within the military hierarchy, while the institutional culture gradually becomes more gender-responsive and open to women. It also seeks to strengthen the JAF's capacities to respond to gendered security problems whose effective and efficient solution requires women's active engagement. The JAF is prioritizing piloting the all-female platoons as a precursor to increasing the number of female staff in UN peacekeeping operations.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Interview, 10 May 2023.

<sup>8</sup> Interview, 10 May 2023. As of February 2023, all of the military women deployed to UN peacekeeping operations are in military expert or staff officer positions; none deployed as troops. "Gender: Troop-Contributing Countries Achieving Gender Parity Targets," United Nations Peacekeeping, February 2023, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/gender> (accessed May 9, 2023).

## Moldova

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### **Moldova: The WPS Agenda as a tool to reform the defence sector.**

The proportion of women serving in the armed forces of Moldova increased from 18.2% in 2016 to 21.6% in 2023. The percentage of female students in military academies rose from 8% in 2016 to 29% in 2022.<sup>1</sup> This increase in women's participation in defence reflects Governmental efforts to reform the defence sector, following an institutional gender self-assessment undertaken by the Ministry of Defense (MoD) in 2016.<sup>2</sup> This gender self-assessment used the questionnaire tool from the DCAF *Gender Self-Assessment Guide for the Police, Armed Forces, and Justice Sector*.<sup>3</sup>

The MoD's gender self-assessment underscored structural barriers to women's representation and influence of women in the defence sector, including systemic gender stereotyping, inadequate work/life balance, ineffective procedures to prevent and address sexual harassment, discrimination and gender-based violence, gaps in human resources management, and overall, limited opportunities for women's in-service advancement. Once acknowledged, these challenges were addressed by the MoD using the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda as a normative framework to guide institutional change.<sup>4</sup> In this spirit, and to align with international commitments, in 2017 a first set of legal and policy amendments were introduced to provide women full access to roles and positions in the armed forces: in line with the participation pillar of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325.

The following year, in 2018, Moldova adopted its first WPS National Action Plan.<sup>5</sup> Aiming to increase women's representation in the security and defence sector and foster inclusivity, the plan was structured around addressing the eight barriers identified in the gender self-assessment. For example, to tackle sexual harassment, discrimination and gender-based violence, a *Regulation on the Procedure for Prevention, Identification, Registration, Reporting and Examination of Cases of Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Violence* was enacted in 2020.<sup>6</sup> To allow better reconciliation of professional and family life, relevant provisions were introduced in 2016 and 2022, including a social package with improved benefits for service personnel and improved childcare provisions.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with two Senior Officers of the Human Resources Policy Directorate and with the Head of Public Policy Coordination and European Integration Section, President of the National Army Women Association. Information provided by the interviewees, 13 April 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Inclusive Security, 'Evaluation Report: Moldova's Security Sector Institutional Self-Assessment from the Gender Perspective' (Washington D.C.: Inclusive Security, October 2016).

<sup>3</sup> Megan Bastick, *Gender Self-Assessment Guide for the Police, Armed Forces and Justice Sector* (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), 2011).

<sup>4</sup> Interview, 13 April 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Government of the Republic of Moldova, 'Decision on the National Implementation Program of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security for 2018-2021 and the Action Plan Regarding the Resolution 1325 Implementation', Pub. L. No. 259 (2018), <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Moldova-NAP-2018.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> 'Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives 2020'.

<sup>7</sup> Reference is made to Law No. 71 of 14 April 2016 "On Amendments and Supplements to Certain Acts", to the Regulation on the Way of Performing Military Service in the Armed Forces (Decision No. 941 8 July 2006) amended on 21 December 2022, and to the Law No. 162 (published on Official Gazette on 30 September 2005) amended on 29 December 2022.

A key ally in the MoD's efforts to undertake systemic change through the WPS Agenda has been the National Army Women's Association, a non-governmental organization established in 2019 to promote equal opportunities and gender equality within the armed forces. The Association, led by a board of five female directors, has supported the MoD's path to the WPS Agenda and institutional change, contributing to legal and policy drafting and sharing the new gender-sensitive provisions among service personnel. The Association has also been instrumental in improving the image of the armed forces with the broader public. Joint information campaigns led by the Association with the MoD have focused on, among others, portraying the armed forces as an inclusive service focused on community needs, tackling gender stereotyping and promoting women's diverse roles in the military.<sup>8</sup>

To sustain achievements, in May 2023 the Government adopted its second WPS National Action Plan, covering the period 2023-2027. In 2022 a public opinion barometer featured the armed forces as the third most trusted public institution in the country.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Interview, 13 April 2023.

<sup>9</sup> Interview, 13 April 2023. The information referred to is the Public Opinion Barometer of the Republic of Moldova (see P.I. Institute for Public Policy, 'Republic of Moldova Public Opinion Barometer', 2023, <http://bop.ipp.md/en>).

## South Africa

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### **South Africa: An Intentional Approach to increasing the representation of women in the armed forces.**

Women's participation in the South African National Defense Force (SANDF) increased significantly post-apartheid from 1994. In 1989, 10 percent of uniformed members were women.<sup>1</sup> By 2002, this figure had risen to 20 percent<sup>2</sup> and as of May 2023, it stands at 30 percent.<sup>3</sup> South Africa is the sixth largest contributor among UN Member States of women peacekeepers, with women making up 18 percent of the current external deployments.<sup>4</sup>

Progressive legislative changes from 1994, which included the removal of all restrictions on the ranks and positions women could serve in SANDF, have been the driving force behind increasing women's participation in the armed forces. However, given the legacy of apartheid and entrenched patriarchal norms, addressing the participation and leadership gap of women in SANDF has been an enduring challenge.

To help confront this challenge, the SANDF has taken an intentional approach to increasing the representation of women in the armed forces, best demonstrated through its recruitment and professional development practices. Beyond setting ambitious female recruitment targets for the Military Skills Development System at entry level - which in 2023, now sit at 40 percent women in order to retain at least 30 percent through contract translations into the Medium-Term System<sup>5</sup>, recruitment drives include positive, purposeful representation of women in military disciplines traditionally regarded as the domain of men. To avoid tokenism and actively support women's career progression in the military, a 30 percent women's quota has been introduced for all senior staff and management courses at the SANDF training institutions (as allowed by the organisational requirements as far as possible), and is accompanied by mentoring, coaching and leadership training together with male counterparts.<sup>6</sup>

The cumulative effect of this approach is realising results on the number of senior ranked female officers in key decision-making roles. In 2021, SANDF appointed its first female Lieutenant General, bringing the total number of senior ranked female Generals to nine.<sup>7</sup> As at May 2023, it had forty-two women occupying Senior

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<sup>1</sup> Lindy Heinecken, 'Affirming Gender Equality: The Challenges Facing the South African Armed Forces', *Current Sociology* 50, no. 5 (1 September 2002): 715–28, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392102050005006>.

<sup>2</sup> Heinecken.

<sup>3</sup> Data provided by the Chief Director Transformation Management at the South African National Defense Force and the Chief Director Career Management at the South African National Defense Force, 31 May 2023.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping, 'United Nations Thanks South Africa for Its Contribution to Peacekeeping', United Nations Peacekeeping, 7 December 2022, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/united-nations-thanks-south-africa-its-contribution-to-peacekeeping>. Published December 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Data provided by the Chief Director Transformation Management at the South African National Defense Force and the Chief Director Career Management at the South African National Defense Force, 31 May 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with the Chief Director Transformation Management at the South African National Defense Force and the Chief Director Career Management at the South African National Defense Force, 11 May 2023.

<sup>7</sup> Data provided by the Chief Director Transformation Management at the South African National Defense Force and the Chief Director Career Management at the South African National Defense Force, 31 May 2023.

Management Service positions in the rank of Brigadier General and higher.<sup>8</sup> High level recognition that women are an integral part of the SANDF fundamentally underpins SANDF's intentional approach to recruiting and retaining more women in the armed forces.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Data provided by the Chief Director Transformation Management at the South African National Defense Force and the Chief Director Career Management at the South African National Defense Force, 31 May 2023.

<sup>9</sup> Interview, 11 May 2023.

## Uruguay

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### **Uruguay: providing caretaking support to facilitate women's participation in the armed forces, including for deployment in peacekeeping missions.**

With 25% in 2023, the Armed Forces of Uruguay (UAF) believe they have the highest percentage of women in the armed forces worldwide.<sup>1</sup> Since women first joined the UAF as nurses in 1921, their access has progressively expanded to all positions.<sup>2</sup> The opening of military academies to women between 1996 and 2000 granted women the possibility of gradual access to all positions in the military hierarchy, in accordance with the timelines for promotion.<sup>3</sup> In 2023, the first women were promoted to Colonel.<sup>4</sup> As of February 2023, 6.7% of Lieutenant Colonels in the Army are women, 2.2% in the Navy, and 18.2 % in the Air Force. Furthermore, 7.2% of all women in the UAF formed part of the superior cadres of the Army, Navy, and Air Force combined; 92.8% are part of the lower-ranking cadres.<sup>5</sup> Notwithstanding women's high participation in the UAF, they only make up approximately 6% of Uruguay's UN peacekeeping staff in 2023, including military and police.<sup>6</sup>

Acknowledging the problem of a low percentage of female peacekeepers, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) conducted an assessment in 2019, using the Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations (MOWIP) methodology developed by DCAF and Cornell University.<sup>7</sup> Among the top barriers to women's participation in UN peacekeeping operations are household constraints and gender roles, which leave the duty of care (for children, elderly or sick relatives) with women primarily and make it more difficult for them to go abroad for longer periods of time.<sup>8</sup> With support from the Elsie Initiative Fund, the MoD is working to reduce these barriers: a pilot project provides 50 scholarships annually to women and men in single-parent households to pay for external caretaking support to their families during deployment to UN peacekeeping operations.<sup>9</sup>

Uruguay showcases a range of other good practices in providing caretaking support to military personnel, which enable the reconciliation of a career in the armed forces with caretaking responsibilities in private life for all staff, but in particular benefiting women. In line with public policy, there are maternity, paternity, and dependent care leave schemes in place, and afterwards, women have a right to 12-36 months of part-time reintegration with breastfeeding hours allocated as paid working hours.<sup>10</sup> The UAF have breastfeeding rooms in all facilities, in line

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with the Vice-Minister of National Defense, Republic of Uruguay, 19 April 2023. Statistical Data on "Personal masculine y personal femenino en las Fuerzas Armadas" provided by the interviewee.

<sup>2</sup> DCAF and Cornell University, 'Armed Forces of Uruguay MOWIP Report 2020', MOWIP Reports (Geneva: DCAF, 2021), 17.

<sup>3</sup> DCAF and Cornell University, 17.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with the Vice-Minister of National Defense, Republic of Uruguay, 19 April 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Interview, 19 April 2023. Statistical Data on "Personal masculine y personal femenino en las Fuerzas Armadas" provided by the interviewee.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping, 'Gender: Troop-Contributing Countries Achieving Gender Parity Targets', 17.

<sup>7</sup> DCAF and Cornell University, 'Armed Forces of Uruguay MOWIP Report 2020'.

<sup>8</sup> DCAF and Cornell University, 49–51.

<sup>9</sup> Interview, 19 April 2023. See also DCAF and Cornell University, 'Armed Forces of Uruguay MOWIP Report 2020'; The Elsie Initiative Fund, 'The Elsie Initiative Fund', The Elsie Initiative Fund, 8 September 2022, <https://elsiefund.org/2022/09/08/uruguay/>.

<sup>10</sup> According to article 81 of Law 19775, the organic law of the UAF, these provisions are also granted in case of adopting a child (Interview, 19 April 2023). See also DCAF and Cornell University, 'Armed Forces of Uruguay MOWIP Report 2020', 50.

with Uruguayan labor law.<sup>11</sup> Finally, the MoD and the UAF have their own childcare systems respectively, called, Child and Family Care Centres (*Centros de Atención a la Infancia y la Familia*), which are complementary to public daycare centers.<sup>12</sup> Since there are not yet enough spaces for all children of UAF staff, children of UAF staff who cannot afford private nurseries are prioritized.<sup>13</sup> Importantly, the UAF and MoD seek to instill a culture wherein staff feel safe to talk about family issues with their superiors and take the care leave they are entitled to without fearing to miss out on career opportunities.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> DCAF and Cornell University, 50, referring to Decreto N° 84/016. REGULACION DE LAS LICENCIAS POR MATERNIDAD, ADOPCION, LEGITIMACION ADOPTIVA, PATERNIDAD Y LACTANCIA OTORGADAS AL PERSONAL MILITAR Y DEROGACION DEL DECRETO 28/992 of March 2016; and ORDENANZA 77/009 of 27 February 2009.

<sup>12</sup> DCAF and Cornell University, 50.

<sup>13</sup> Interview, 19 April 2023. See also: Karim et al., Armed Forces of Uruguay. MOWIP Report 2020.; Kim Piaget and Camille Risler, "The Duty of Caring," Policy Brief 1A, Opportunities For Women In Peacekeeping: Policy Series (Geneva, Switzerland: DCAF, MFA Canada, Norwegian MFA, The Elsie Initiative, October 2021).

<sup>14</sup> Among respondents of the MOWIP assessment survey, 43% had taken maternity leave, 39% paternity leave, 9% leave for taking care of elderly family members, and 27% a more generic kind of sick leave. See DCAF and Cornell University, 'Armed Forces of Uruguay MOWIP Report 2020', 51.

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