

CHAPTER 11 – CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN

We have decided to reproduce this section from the Implementation Guidance for the Vancouver Principles¹ as it is a central focus of all of the articles and thus an important reference while reading them.

1 Government of Canada, *Implementation Guidance for the Vancouver Principles* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2019), <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/dnd-mdn/documents/reports/2019/igvp-20190614.pdf>.

THE PRINCIPLE

To recognize the essential contribution of women to peacekeeping operational effectiveness, and the distinct and critical roles of both men and women in the protection of children and the prevention of the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

UNSCR 2382 (2017) specifically recognizes the **indispensable role of women** in UN peacekeeping operations.²

UNSCR 2242 (2015), the UN's Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy, and the UN Secretary-General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity all call for the **doubling of women in military and police peacekeeping** roles by 2020.³

UNSCR 1820 (2000) encourages Troop and Police Contributing Countries (T/PCCs) to consider steps they could take to improve the responsiveness of peacekeepers "to protect civilians, including women and children, and prevent sexual violence against women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations, including wherever possible **the deployment of a higher percentage of women peacekeepers or police.**"⁴

WHY IS THIS PRINCIPLE IMPORTANT?

UN Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security acknowledges the valuable role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflict, and calls on the UN and Member States to undertake tangible efforts to increase the participation of women in all aspects of peace and security.⁵ For example, women offer important perspectives on communities and cultures, they can often access populations and venues that are closed to men, and they can serve as role models to empower women and girls in the local community to take an active part in peace and security efforts.⁶ The involvement of women can improve

2 UN Security Council, [Resolution 2382, United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Police Commissioners](#), S/RES/2382 (6 November 2017), 3.

3 UN Security Council, [Resolution 2242, Women and peace and security](#), S/RES/2242 (13 October 2015), 5.

4 UN Security Council, [Resolution 1820, Women and peace and security](#), S/RES/1820 (19 June 2008), 3.

5 UN Security Council, [Resolution 1325, Women and peace and security](#), S/RES/1325 (31 October 2000).

6 Marta Ghittoni, Léa Lehouck, and Callum Watson, *Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations: Baseline Study* (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2018); and Canada, Global Affairs Canada, "[Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations](#)," last modified 13 November 2018.

peace processes and the negotiation of peace agreements by reducing tensions, building trust, and advancing stability and the rule of law.⁷

Women peacekeepers can also communicate and engage with children differently, and they can offer valuable perspectives on the gender dynamics associated with the recruitment and use of child soldiers. The Annual Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG/CAAC), for example, estimates that girls constitute as many as 40% of the children recruited by armed forces and armed groups.⁸ Moreover, girls are used in a wide variety of roles, including as fighters, suicide bombers, and sex slaves. Effective protection and prevention strategies must take into account – and address – the gender dynamics of child recruitment and use.

In her 2017 report, the Special Representative of the SRSG/CAAC referenced over 900 cases of rape and other forms of **sexual violence** against *boys and girls* in situations of armed conflict.⁹

This principle is meant to bring attention to the essential contributions of women to peacekeeping operations, and specifically the distinct roles of *men and women* in the protection of children to prevent the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

While evidence indicates that the inclusion of women can improve peacekeeping efficiency and effectiveness, women continue to be significantly and routinely underrepresented in operations.¹⁰ This Principle is therefore intimately tied to the broader objective of increasing the number of women in peacekeeping operations. Ultimately, all peacekeepers have a fundamental responsibility to protect children.

HOW CAN THIS PRINCIPLE BE IMPLEMENTED?

Collect gender-disaggregated data on relevant national military, police, and civilian organizations: The persistent underrepresentation of women in peacekeeping operations is likely due to a variety of structural, cultural, and institutional barriers, many of which reside *within* Member States. While work is underway to fully identify and better understand the

7 Council on Foreign Relations, "[Increasing Female Participation in Peacekeeping Operations](#)," last modified 26 September 2018.

8 UN General Assembly, [Report of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict 34/44, Annual Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict](#), A/HRC/34/44, (22 December 2016) 5.

9 UN General Assembly, Report 72/865, [Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General](#), A/72/865-S/2018/465 (16 May 2018), 3.

10 UN General Assembly, [Report of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict 34/44, Annual Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict](#), A/HRC/34/44 (22 December 2016) 5.

barriers at play, Member States should, as a starting point, collect gender-disaggregated data on their military, police, and civilian organizations.

Develop strategies to increase the representation of women throughout relevant national military, police, and civilian organizations, including through the development of a National Action Plan: With the baseline data recommended above, informed strategies can then be developed to increase the number of women in relevant national military, police, and civilian organizations, and to ensure that women gain the training, education, and experience required to qualify for peacekeeping deployments. This should be a priority in recruitment and retention strategies, and should permeate policies, doctrine, and decision-making throughout the organization. Among other things, organizations should implement institution-wide education and training for personnel on the benefits of greater women’s participation, and identify institutional champions that can foster top-down support for women’s increased integration. Efforts can be captured in a National Action Plan, which should articulate the practical national measures that will be taken to implement UNSCR 1325.¹¹

Increase the meaningful participation of women in peacekeeping operations, including in senior positions: Ensuring the meaningful participation of women in peacekeeping operations means working to integrate women throughout the architecture of peacekeeping operations, including in senior positions.

It requires fostering a mission environment that is conducive to women’s safe and successful deployment (including by tackling sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) within peacekeeping). It also requires supporting women early and consistently throughout their careers, so that they are well-positioned, prepared, and supported to take advantage of deployment opportunities.

Promote gender diversity across the cadre of trained Child Protection Focal Points (CPFPs) in UN peacekeeping operations: Member States must avoid gender bias when it comes to identifying personnel for child protection roles. Both women and men bring unique and distinct contributions to child protection, and therefore both women and men peacekeepers should be nominated to serve as uniformed CPFPs in UN peacekeeping operations.

Deploy mixed engagement teams, gender-integrated formed police units (FPUs), or “Gender Strong Units”¹² to UN peacekeeping operations: The co-deployment of women and men personnel in areas of operations has been found to be preferable to all-women or

11 See UN Security Council, [Resolution 1325, Women and peace and security](#), S/RES/1325.

12 A “gender-strong unit” is a military unit or a formed police unit (FPU) that includes the substantial representation of women overall and in positions of authority, has provided gender-equity training to all unit members, and has adequate equipment and other materiel to ensure parity of deployment conditions for women and men peacekeepers.

all-men engagement teams and FPU.¹³ With the co-deployment of women and men, military and police units have the potential to be more flexible and adaptable in the face of diverse local populations, including in the context of child protection.

Provide specific training and education for peacekeepers on the gender dimension of the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict: Member States must ensure that their training modules on child protection include specific teaching on the gender dimensions of children in armed conflict, and specifically of child soldiering. Training and education should specifically include information on the realities of sexual- and gender-based violence on children in armed conflict, and consider a gender-sensitive approach to prevention and protection.

Support research on the nexus between the role of women in peacekeeping, and the prevention of the recruitment and use of child soldiers: While there is a growing body of literature on the valuable role of women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and separately, on children in armed conflict (and on child soldiers specifically), there is very limited research focused on the value and impact of women peacekeepers on preventing and addressing the recruitment and use of child soldiers. Member States could consider funding and/or supporting further research and analysis in this area, including by sharing operational lessons learned in this regard.

EXAMPLES AND RESOURCES

“United Nations Police Gender Toolkit”: This UN police resource is “a training package of best practices for mainstreaming gender into police activities in peacekeeping operations.”¹⁴ The three modules in this toolkit focus on building the capacity of UN police officers on gender mainstreaming and of host state police on promoting gender equality, as well as on preventing and investigating sexual- and gender-based violence. This toolkit is available as a handbook with an accompanying Compendium of Project Tools, as an instructor’s manual for in-person Training of Trainers courses, and as an online e-learning course.

Handbook on Teaching Gender in the Military: This handbook, produced by the Security Sector Reform Working Group under the leadership of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), aims to improve the capacity of gender experts, military instructors, and educators to deliver education content under the framework of UNSCR 1325

13 UN Women, “[Ready for Peacekeeping Deployment, with a Gender Lens](#),” last modified 29 May 2018; and UN Peacekeeping, “[Women in Peacekeeping](#),” accessed 21 March 2019.

14 UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Department of Field Support, and Division for Policy, Evaluation and Training (DPKO-DFS-DPET), “[United Nations Police Gender Toolkit](#)” (11 November 2015), accessed 20 April 2019.

by providing tools and strategies to integrate gender into Professional Military Education (PME).¹⁵ The handbook may be used to develop the leadership competencies of military leaders and those deployed on peacekeeping operations, as well as to highlight the support required from men to increase women's participation.

Female Military Officers Course: This two-week course aims to bridge the gender gap in UN peacekeeping. It is organized by UN Women and partners, and provides specialised training for female military officers around the world to create a global network of trained women peacekeepers.

Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations: The Elsie Initiative is a multilateral pilot project that is developing, applying, and testing a combination of approaches to help overcome barriers to increasing women's meaningful participation in peacekeeping operations.

Elsie Initiative Fund for Uniformed Women in Peace Operations: This Fund seeks to accelerate the pace of change towards the increased meaningful participation of uniformed women in UN peacekeeping operations through financial assistance and incentives, in order to support the deployment of more trained and qualified uniformed women. With two financing streams (flexible project funding and paying premiums for the deployment of gender-strong units), the Fund is intended to be accessed primarily by Troop and Police Contributing Countries (T/PCCs). However, UN organizations wishing to implement and test innovative approaches will also have access as secondary recipients.

The State of the World's Girls Annual Report: Each year, Plan International produces a report on the development of girls around the world, with a unique thematic focus each year. In 2008, the focus was on the impact of armed conflict on girls, including reference to their recruitment and use as child soldiers.¹⁶

IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

To implement this principle, Member States should undertake the following:

- Collect gender-disaggregated data on relevant national military, police, and civilian organizations.

15 Partnership for Peace Consortium of Defence Academies and Security Studies Institutes et. al., *Handbook on Teaching Gender in the Military* (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces and Partnership for Peace Consortium of Defence Academies, 2016).

16 See Plan International, "[Reports and Publications](#)," accessed 20 April 2019, and Nikki van der Gaag, *In the Shadows of War: Girls in Conflict* (Italy: Plan International, 2008).

- Develop strategies to increase the representation of women throughout relevant national military, police, and civilian organizations, including through the development of a National Action Plan.
- Increase the meaningful participation of women in peacekeeping operations, including in senior positions.
- Promote gender diversity across the cadre of trained Child Protection Focal Points (CPFPs) in UN peacekeeping operations.
- Deploy mixed engagement teams, gender-integrated formed police units (FPUs), or “Gender Strong Units” to UN peacekeeping operations.
- Provide specific training and education for peacekeepers on the gender dimension of the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict.
- Support research on the nexus between the role of women in peacekeeping, and the prevention of the recruitment and use of child soldiers.