

**Forum:** General Assembly 5

**Issue:** Inclusion of Women in Peacekeeping Operations

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## Introduction

The integration of women in the military has, historically and currently, always been an issue. This is no different even in the United Nations. The military is traditionally considered a male occupation in many cultures and countries and the discrimination in those countries leads to a shortage of women in peacekeeping operations. For the United Nations peacekeeping operations, the focus lies increasingly more on humanitarian aspects rather than military ones, as conflicts have become more targeted towards cutting off food and water supplies. Wars have to largest impact on those who are not directly involved with it, and these people need the aid and supply provided by peacekeepers. The United Nations peacekeeping organizations does not generally use violence, nor is it legally permitted to unless it is in self-defense. Therefore, the United Nations peacekeeping operations have always focused more on gathering intelligence which could help those involved in fighting, but more importantly aiding the civilians affected by the conflict. Having women in peacekeeping operations is very valuable in areas such as aiding survivors of sexual violence and rape as well as in reintegrating demobilized female soldiers into civilian life. There is a severe inadequacy in experts on gender in peacekeeping operations, and issues specific to women are often considered secondary to problems such as street crime, corruption, and demobilization. Despite being so vital in these areas, women are underrepresented in UN peacekeeping missions. One of the sustainable development goals agreed upon in 2015 is gender equality. As a part of working towards this goal by 2030, the United Nations is working hard towards including women both in UN staff and in peacekeeping operations.

One of the key factors in achieving gender equality in peacekeeping operations is the elimination of gender discrimination in the countries which are the main contributors of UN troops and military staff to peacekeeping missions. The male to female ratio in the troops contributed is highly unbalanced. For instance, Ethiopia, the largest contributor of UN troops, sent at total of 8,215 troops in 2017. Of these 8,215, only 657 were female. This severe imbalance in the number of female to male troops sent by contributing Member States is the main cause for the shortage in female peacekeepers within the UN. The resolutions that have been passed by the Security Council regarding the issue have all addressed this fundamental part

in solving the issue, and have encouraged Member States to take measures in order to ensure the fair selection of peacekeeper in both leadership roles and military personnel.

## **Definition of Key Terms**

### **UN Peacekeeping Operations**

The United Nations peacekeeping operations work in countries during and after conflict to build and maintain peace through security and humanitarian efforts. The use of violence is prohibited except for self-defense, and the missions are expected to remain neutral in conflict.

### **Gender advisors**

Gender advisors are part of the UN Development Programme and were put in place in order to oversee and enforce gender equality and women's empowerment in all branches of the United Nations in order to achieve the fifth sustainable development goal.

### **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals**

In 2015, the United Nations created seventeen sustainable development goals which are to be completed by 2030. These goals include gender equality, quality education, zero hunger and no poverty. The aim of the SDGs is to motivate the international community to work together on eradicating the most prominent issues in today's world and make it a better and safer place for everybody.

### **Gender equality**

Gender equality is the notion of equal opportunities and treatment regardless of gender, and it is one of the UN's seventeen sustainable development goals.

### **Women's economic empowerment**

The United Nations bill of human rights states that all people have the right to employment as well as a safe and fair working environment. Organizations such as UN Women have been working especially towards improving women's economic empowerment both within and outside the United Nations.

## **Background Information**

The United Nations started actively working on this issue in 2000 when the Windhoek declaration was made and the first Security Council resolution regarding the issue was passed. Since then, various things have been done to promote the importance of women in peacekeeping and integrate women into missions. According to the UN statistics, women currently make up only around 4% of peacekeeping operations, in comparison to 1% in the early 1990's. Including more women in peacekeeping has been beneficial, as an increase in the intelligence collected has made missions safer and more effective, and humanitarian aid has become more specialized and therefore better at helping those in need.

### **The Importance of Women in Peacekeeping Operations**

The importance of the role women play in peacekeeping operations is often highly underestimated. The idea that UN peacekeeping operations are largely military and require more physical labor has resulted in women being underrepresented, despite their contributions in knowledge of humanitarian aid as well as their role in addressing the specific needs of women in conflicted areas. In areas of conflict, there is often not enough attention paid to women and girls. These women and girls are often victims of sexual assault, and having women who are able to address their specific needs is essential.

However, these are only the humanitarian aspects of peacekeeping. Statistics show that there is a noticeable lack of people specialized in the gathering of information and intelligence. This information is needed to be able to identify potentially dangerous armed groups and plan missions. Most of the information and intelligence comes from human sources, and this is where women play such an important role. A study was done in Afghanistan in 2010 where male peacekeepers were prohibited from speaking to women which cost valuable information. Having female peacekeepers proved to be essential in gathering the information required for a successful mission. This is only one of the examples which shows that male peacekeepers have a disadvantage. They tend to only be able to gather information from male sources whereas female peacekeepers have proven to be able to gather intelligence from both female and male sources because of their ability to foster trust with a wider range of people due to cultural norms. Even in conservative societies, women have shown to have access to more people than men. Thus, improved intelligence is an important non-humanitarian factor in peacekeeping operations.

### **Windhoek Declaration**

The Windhoek declaration was agreed upon on May 31st, 2000. It was among the first documents to draw attention to the shortage of women and their vital role in peacekeeping operations. It emphasizes the importance of women in peacekeeping operations, as well as outlining ways to implement strategies regarding the inclusion of women. These include- but are not limited to- the leadership, recruitment, and

training of women as well as the planning of peacekeeping operations to include women in fieldwork. For instance, the Windhoek Declaration suggests that a database should be created with all female candidates applying for civilian and peacekeeping positions as well as an advisory board to ensure that all these candidates are given fair consideration. Furthermore, the Windhoek Declaration called on the Security Council to create and improve resolutions regarding the inclusion of women in peacekeeping.

## **Resolution 1325**

Resolution 1325 was passed by the Security Council on October 31st, 2000, exactly five months after the Windhoek Declaration was created. It is the first of eight Security Council resolutions regarding the inclusion of women in peacekeeping. The resolution calls on countries to integrate many of the policies mentioned in the declaration. It emphasizes the need for Member States to provide the United Nations with female candidates for executive positions and financially support and incorporate gender-specific training, particularly in areas regarding issues such as HIV/AIDS. It also calls for the expansion of women's role in field work, whether humanitarian or military. The resolution has been built upon and improved, and the most recent resolution was passed in 2015 which continues to make efforts to improve strategies for the inclusion of women in peacekeeping.

## **Women in Leadership Positions**

Although the United Nations had been working on this issue for over a decade, it was only in 2014 that a woman was placed in a leadership position within UN peacekeeping operations. On May 12, Major General Kristin Lund from Norway was appointed as the first female commanding officer in the UN mission in Cyprus. At the time of documents such as the Windhoek Declaration and resolution 1325, the Secretary-General's aim was to have 50 percent of women in leadership positions. The Windhoek Declaration suggested a separate database for all female applicants for leadership positions, an idea which was expanded on and put into place following the Security Council resolutions.

## **Major Countries and Organizations Involved**

### **UN Women**

UN Women focuses on issues pertaining to women, including women's economic empowerment. The organization has worked with UN peacekeeping in order to integrate women into missions through the creation of guidelines as well as advertising. The organization has created many projects and sub-organizations such as the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, which has played an active role in the issue of the

inclusion of women in peacekeeping operations. The organization funds many specialized training programs in different sectors, including peacekeeping. For instance, partnership with India, UN Women and the IANWGE set up specialized training programme which focuses on the training of female military officers.

### **UN Department of Peacekeeping**

The UN department of peacekeeping has worked hard to integrate women into its missions. They have assigned gender advisors and are integrating a variety of specialized training programs and selection methods to address the shortage of women within peacekeeping. Working together with organizations such as UN Women and in accordance with the various resolutions made by the Security Council, the UN department of peacekeeping has worked on a number of ways to ensure equal treatment and consideration of women applying to leadership positions through the use of databases and its gender advisor.

### **Security Council**

The Security Council has played a key role in solving this issue. Its permanent members, the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, and China, have managed to create a total of eight resolutions regarding the issue of the inclusion of women and peacekeeping. These resolutions called for the implementation of a database which would include all female applications to ensure fair selections as well as calling on Member States to organize specialized training programmes aimed at gender-specific issues.

### **Ethiopia**

According to 2017 statistics, Ethiopia is the largest contributor of troops to UN peacekeeping operations. In total, it has sent 8,215 troops, military experts and police officers in 2017. Of these, only 657 were female. Due to its importance in contributing UN peacekeeping troops, Ethiopia has the ability to affect the number of women in peacekeeping operations. Ethiopia has already taken several initiatives to ensure the inclusion of more women in peacekeeping operations by collaborating with the African Union as well as having promised to increase the number of women in the troops it contributes.

### **Bangladesh**

Bangladesh is the second largest contributor of the UN peacekeeping troops, sending 7,502 troops, military experts and police officers in 2007 of which only 134 were female. Like Ethiopia, a change in the men to women ratio could majorly affect the number of women in UN peacekeeping operations. Bangladesh has responded to the UN's call for more women in peacekeeping operations by establishing an all women peacekeeping unit to promote equality in peacekeeping operations and ensure women have an equal chance in the missions.

## India

India is the third largest contributor of UN peacekeeping troops, sending a total of 7, 007 troops, military experts, and police officers in 2017 of which only 42 were female. Together with Bangladesh and Ethiopia, India could make a big difference in the number of women working in UN peacekeeping missions. As a part of solving this issue India has helped UN women organize special peacekeeping training for women, this first training programs that focus specifically on training female officers.

## Timeline of Events

Date	Description of Event
May 31, 2000	Windhoek declaration in Namibia.
July, 2000	Plan for the integration of female leadership in UN peacekeeping operations published.
October 31, 2000	Resolution S/RES/1325 is passed; the first Security Council resolution passed regarding the inclusion of women in peacekeeping.
March, 2010	UN guidelines for the integration of female peacekeeper published.
July, 2010	UN Women established in Beijing.
May 12, 2014	Major General Kristin Lund is appointed as first female commanding officer in UN peacekeeping missions.
October 13, 2015	The most recent Security Council resolution pertaining to the issue of the inclusion of women in peacekeeping is passed.

## Relevant UN Treaties and Events

### Early Treaties and Declarations

- [Windhoek Declaration](#)

### Security Council resolutions

- Security Council resolution (**S/RES/1325**)
- Security Council resolution (**S/RES/1820**)
- Security Council resolution (**S/RES/1888**)
- Security Council resolution (**S/RES/1889**)
- Security Council resolution (**S/RES/1960**)
- Security Council resolution (**S/RES/2106**)
- Security Council resolution (**S/RES/2122**)
- Security Council resolution (**S/RES/2242**)

### Reports Regarding Integration and Training of Female Peacekeepers (UN Peacekeeping)

- [Integrating a Gender Perspective into the Work of United Nations Military in Peacekeeping Operations Guidelines \(2010\)](#) (published by UN Peacekeeping Organization)
- [Women, Peace and Identifying Security: Piloting Military Gender Guidelines in UNIFIL \(2014\)](#) (published by UN Interim Force in Lebanon)
- [Women with a Blue Helmet: The Integration of Women and Gender Issues in UN Peacekeeping Missions](#) (published by UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women)
- [Mainstreaming Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Operations \(2000\)](#)

## Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

When the Windhoek declaration was created in 2000, it was a pivotal moment in the inclusion of women in peacekeeping. It was the first document to recognize the importance of women in peacekeeping as well as to suggest changing recruitment and training methods in order to make peacekeeping more effective. Among the methods presented are raising awareness, the establishment of a gender affairs unit, the integration of gender specialists, as well as calling for the participation of women in ceasefire and peace deal negotiations. The Windhoek Declaration was highly successful, and it managed to bring the issue to the Security Council where the ideas outlined in the declaration were further developed and drafted into resolutions that would implement them.

Since resolution 1325 was passed in 2000, the Security Council has passed seven more resolutions regarding the inclusion of women in peacekeeping operations thus far. These have focused on specialized training and leadership positions for women, as well as encouraging Member States to incorporate gender specialization as part of peacekeeping operations. These resolutions have also suggested, building on the Windhoek Declaration, a database for all female applicants for an unbiased consideration of women for leadership positions.

In addition, the United Nations has assigned gender advisors to all branches and organizations of the United Nations to ensure equal treatment and a fair selection process. After these major publications which started the movement, all peacekeeping missions and organizations involved have published guidelines and plans to integrate the solutions outlined in the Security Council resolutions. Some of the most important of these documents include Mainstreaming Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Operations, which details a plan on the issue of women leadership positions specific to peacekeeping operations, and the guidelines published in 2010 which detail plans for the general integration of women in peacekeeping operations.

The Integrating a Gender Perspective into the Work of United Nations Military in Peacekeeping Operations Guidelines published in 2010 is a detailed report which implements the solutions stated in the Security Council resolutions. It provides detailed plans for the integration of women in all aspects of UN peacekeeping missions, including training and fieldwork. The guidelines are effective in that it provides a more concrete set of ways to include women in peacekeeping in specific areas. The guidelines are used by all UN peacekeeping operations around the world, where the commanding officers implement them in order to solve the issue of the inclusion of women in peacekeeping.

## **Possible Solutions**

Possible solutions for this issue include advocating for Member States to set a quota for how many women are hired as part of UN peacekeeping and leadership positions therein. This quota would place a control such that applications submitted by women are considered equally to men. To encourage women to join peacekeeping operations, UN peacekeeping should be advertised as a humanitarian rather than a military mission, emphasizing the importance of the protection of and aid to women in conflicted areas. The training programmes should train not only women but also men in the areas of gender specialization, and the different humanitarian needs.

Other methods for the integration of women in peacekeeping operations are the inclusion of women in field work. All previous solutions have focused on the overall inclusion of women in peacekeeping, but

further solutions should specify areas in which more women are needed such as gender-specific medical expertise. This will also open up positions for women to lead these training programs, so it has two positive effects. These training programs will also ensure fair selection, as women will now have the same training opportunities as their male counterparts.

Placing more women in leadership positions is crucial in this issue. Despite the efforts of the UN to create a fair system for the selection process, very few women are currently in leadership positions. It was not until 2014, fourteen years after the Windhoek declaration, and that the first woman was given the command and Major General. The lack of women in leadership positions is not necessarily caused by lower credentials, and often perfectly capable women are disregarded for higher ranking positions. Giving more women leadership positions would encourage more women to join as they are shown that UN peacekeeping operations are not exclusively male jobs.

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## Appendix or Appendices

I. <http://bestdelegate.com/>

(Best Delegate) *Provides a lot of useful resources and information about MUN*

II. <http://www.un.org/en/databases/index.html>

(United Nations Databases) *Links to databases for resolutions and previous conferences*

III. [Women and Peacebuilding](#)

(Women and Peacebuilding) *Helpful document covering all background information regarding the issue.*