

Peace Support Operations

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One approach to alleviating tensions, supporting a ceasefire or a peace agreement or creating a buffer zone between hostile groups is to organise a **Peace Support Operation (PSO)** to foster and reinforce conditions for sustainable peace. Since 1948 the **United Nations (UN)** has deployed 59 PSOs to conflict zones worldwide. Regional organisations, such as the **African Union (AU)**, also operate PSOs. The role and function of PSOs varies in each setting and has evolved over the past 50 years. This chapter provides an overview of PSOs, focusing particularly on the role of women in UN PSOs, the impact of these operations on women in local communities and the potential for women peacebuilders to engage with UN PSOs.

1. WHAT ARE PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS?

The term **Peace Support Operation (PSO)** describes organised international assistance initiatives to support the maintenance, monitoring and building of peace and prevention of resurgent violent conflict. There are two categories of PSOs: **peacekeeping** and **peace enforcement**. Peacekeeping operations monitor and support the establishment of peace, usually in the context of a peace agreement and peace enforcement operations create conditions for peace and are permitted to use force.

Most PSOs are authorised by a UN Security Council resolution under the **UN Charter**. Peacekeeping operations are generally authorised under Chapter VI and peace enforcement operations under Chapter VII. A UN Security Council resolution can authorise a UN PSO, or a regional organisation or coalition of willing states to undertake a PSO. **UN Security Council resolutions** determine the PSO's mandate, which defines the operation's core tasks. A mandate may be altered only by passing a new Security Council Resolution, usually if conditions have changed in the conflict-affected country or region in which the PSO is based.

Over the past two decades, PSOs have adapted to deal with the changing nature of conflicts in different regions of the world. Mandates range from the traditional monitoring of ceasefire agreements and conducting disarmament, demobilisation and

reintegration programmes, to protecting civilians from fighting factions, to the newer mandates for **nation building**, through which governing structures and the security sector are totally rebuilt. Peace enforcement operations where multinational forces are permitted to use force to establish peace are relatively recent phenomena, including the operations in **Afghanistan** and **Kosovo**.

PSOs are usually conducted in the context of a larger effort to reform and rebuild a nation, which can include confidence-building measures, power-sharing arrangements, electoral support, strengthening the rule of law and economic and social development.

Key standards and principles on which all forms of international peacekeeping mandates are based include:

- **International Human Rights Law** based on the the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights, as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- **International Humanitarian Law** based on customary international law and treaty rules governing the conduct of armed conflict. The Hague Convention of 1907 and the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Additional Protocols of 1977 form the core of this

body of law. The **Hague Convention** provides rules for how armed conflict is to be conducted (the law of war), whereas the **Geneva Conventions** provide rules relating to the protection and treatment of prisoners of war, the sick, and wounded as well as civilians (see chapter on human rights).

- **The UN Charter** gives the UN Security Council the power and responsibility to take collective action to maintain international peace and security, based on

the fundamental principle of non-discrimination. It requires that PSOs plan and implement strategies to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights for all, and that such plans and strategies take into account the different situations women face during and after armed conflict. This includes ensuring women's equal access to food, aid and the means of economic subsistence in addition to access to justice mechanisms and opportunities for political participation.

Peace Support Operations and Mandates in 2004¹

REGION	OPERATION COUNTRY	MANDATE
Africa	Burundi	Ceasefire monitoring; disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR)
	Cote d'Ivoire	Monitor ceasefire; DDR; protect UN personnel and local civilians; support humanitarian assistance; assist in human rights issues; support implementation of peace process; support law and order
	Liberia	Support implementation of ceasefire agreement and peace; assist in human rights issues; DDR, Security Sector Reform (SSR)
	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Monitor implementation of ceasefire agreement; protect civilians under imminent threat; DDR
	Ethiopia/Eritrea	Monitor Cessation of Hostilities Agreement; support (administrative and logistical) Boundary Cooperation; demining to support demarcation
	Sierra Leone	Support implementation of peace agreement; DDR; support national government; support humanitarian assistance; support elections; provide security for airports, government buildings, and DDR sites; coordinate with and support national law enforcement authorities; protect civilians under imminent threat
	Western Sahara	Monitor ceasefire; oversee exchange of prisoners (ICRC); implement repatriation (UNHCR); identify qualified voters; organise free and fair referendum, and proclaim results
Americas	Haiti	Stabilisation operation: support transitional government to develop secure, stable environment; SSR; DDR; protection of civilians under imminent threat; assist restoration and maintenance of rule of law; support constitutional and political processes to foster democratic good governance; support and monitor free and fair elections; support transitional government to promote and protect human rights, particularly of women and children; monitor and report on human rights, including returning IDPs and refugees
Asia	East Timor	Assist until operational responsibilities are fully devolved to national authorities
	India/Pakistan	Monitor ceasefire
Europe	Cyprus	Supervise ceasefire; maintain buffer zone; undertake humanitarian activities

	Kosovo	Promote the establishment of self-government; coordinate humanitarian and disaster relief of all international agencies.
	Georgia/Abkhazia	Verify compliance with ceasefire agreement and separation of forces; protect and promote human rights
Middle East	Golan Heights	Maintain and monitor ceasefire between Israel and Syria
	Lebanon	Support national government to restore control and confirm withdrawal of Israeli forces
	Middle East region	Monitor ceasefires; supervise armistice agreements; prevent isolated incidents from escalating
Central Asia	Afghanistan	Support transitional government; monitor and support elections; monitor human rights ²

2. WHO CAN CALL FOR A PEACE SUPPORT OPERATION?

The international community usually looks to the **UN Security Council** to authorise PSOs, since it is responsible for this in accordance with the UN Charter. Governments or civil society representatives can request PSOs. Where there is no legitimate government in place, or in situations perceived to require an urgent response, the UN Security Council can act independently to protect civilians or international security.

Once a request has been made either in writing or by a representative government and/or civil society delegation, the UN Secretary General or head of the regional peacekeeping organisation will request the Security Council to assess and discuss the need for intervention and the legitimacy of the request. An assessment operation may precede or follow this debate. If Security Council members agree to act, a mandate will be drawn up for the peacekeeping intervention, a plan developed and resources allocated according to this mandate.

If concern for a specific country or region is raised by Security Council members, the same procedures will be followed. Outcomes may include negotiations with representatives of the country for potential UN peacekeeping involvement. This may result in a resolution requesting that country to meet certain standards of disarmament or protection of civilians within a set time. If those standards are not met within the timeframe, the Security Council will discuss potential intervention to ensure international protection standards are upheld. A second resolution

may then be passed endorsing intervention or extending the deadline for compliance.

There are frequently difficult situations such as in **Israel** and **Palestine**, where the Palestinian authority representatives have requested intervention and the Israeli government has blocked any UN intervention. In this situation, the UN has not intervened, but has made certain requests through a Security Council resolution on Israel to uphold international human rights protection standards with regard to their handling of Palestinian civilians.

A similar situation developed in **Sudan**, where civil society representatives were calling for UN intervention while the government was against international intervention. The UN Security Council's initial response was to draft a resolution requesting the Sudanese government to disarm the rebels in the north who were killing and displacing those from the south and to ensure the protection of all citizens according to international human rights and humanitarian conventions.

3. WHO IS INVOLVED IN PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS?

The **UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)** is the implementing body for PSOs and the **UN Department for Political Affairs (DPA)** is usually the lead UN agency in political peacebuilding operations. The UN Secretary General (SG) directs and manages PSOs and reports to the Security Council on progress. UN PSOs are generally established as part of an overall UN

mission led by Special Representatives of the Secretary General (SRSGs).

A number of important regional bodies also engage in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, including the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** and the **Southern African Development Community (SADC)**; the **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)**; the **North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)**, which has been very active in eastern and central Europe and currently in **Afghanistan**; the **Organization of American States (OAS)** in Latin America; and the **Caribbean Community (CARICOM)** in the Caribbean.

These regional bodies are more culturally and economically appropriate than external organisations in many peacebuilding contexts. PSOs led by a regional organisation or a coalition of willing states are separate from the UN, but are often conducted in partnership with a UN mission. Their peacekeeping or peace enforcement functions are usually endorsed by a UN Security Council resolution. For example, in **Afghanistan**, the Security Council authorised an international coalition to maintain a military presence while setting up a UN political mission to support the transitional government. In this case, the military coalition presence was not under UN command but had UN endorsement. In contrast, the US- and UK-led military coalition intervention in **Iraq** in 2003 did not have the endorsement of the UN Security Council, which created tension within the international community and criticism of the unilateral action of states, undermining the authority of the UN.

PSOs have different components and personnel in accordance with the human resources needed to implement the mandate. All operations usually include a military component, an international civilian police component (CIVPOL) and civilian personnel, who may be responsible for issues such as monitoring the protection of human rights, providing humanitarian assistance, assisting in the drafting of new legislation and coordinating logistics. In addition, a range of international and local humanitarian personnel may be running food relief programmes, infrastructure support programmes, or refugee camps. International humanitarian personnel

are often coordinated by separate UN entities or other international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and may only liaise informally with the PSO.

THE RESOURCES FOR PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS

Member states of the UN or of the regional bodies are responsible for committing military personnel, civilian police and civilian personnel on a voluntary basis. Senior military officers and military observers are directly employed by the UN, usually on loan from their national armed forces. Civilian police officers serve on the same basis as experts on missions paid by the UN. Peacekeeping soldiers are paid by their own governments according to their own national rank and salary scale. Countries volunteering uniformed personnel to PSOs are reimbursed by the UN at a flat rate of a little over \$1,000 per soldier per month. Civilian police and other civilian personnel are paid from the peacekeeping budget established for the operation.³ The UN also reimburses countries for equipment.⁴ However, the UN or regional organisation is in turn dependent on the core contributions of their member states to cover these financial costs.

Researchers and peacebuilding experts have raised the concern that military forces from UN member states are not the appropriate personnel to be employed in PSOs, since they are trained to be aggressive. An additional concern is that some UN member states subcontract their commitment to provide peacekeepers to **private security companies**. These are legal companies, often run by former military personnel, that provide security and protection services to paying clients. The use of such companies in PSOs creates another layer of unclear lines of accountability and line management, as illustrated when an employee of one such company, the US-based DynCorp, was fired for reporting allegations that officials and personnel serving on the UN PSO in **Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH)** were frequenting nightclubs that were part of a trafficking route and where women were being held against their will.⁵ The same company has subsequently been awarded a contract of \$50 million by the **US State Department** to provide police officers in **Iraq**.⁶

The use of private military and security companies has been increasingly debated in recent years, due in part to mercenary involvement in security companies.⁷

While there are international and regional conventions outlawing the use of mercenaries,⁸ the international legal framework has been slower in addressing private security companies. The **UN Commission on Human Rights** has taken steps recently to address this issue by passing a resolution on *The Use of Mercenaries as a Means of Violating Human Rights and Impeding the Exercise of the Right of Peoples to Self-determination*.⁹ However, the human and financial resources required to monitor the implementation of this resolution have not been allocated.

To address issues of accountability, some peace advocates have proposed that the UN should train and equip an independent peacekeeping force, but this again would be dependent on donor government resource allocation.

ACCOUNTABILITY OF PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS TO LOCAL POPULATIONS

Local communities often see the presence of a PSO as a show of concern by the international community for the safety, security and protection of civilians suffering in situations of violent conflict.

Local communities should be made aware of the mandate and role of the PSO through the local media. Most operations include a **public information office** responsible for handling public enquiries from local citizens and undertaking outreach functions. Sufficient resources should be allocated for the operation to work according to the mandate, and the head of the operation is required to submit reports regarding implementation of this mandate to the UN Security Council or regional peacekeeping body.

PSOs work according to agreements between the international organisation and the host state, called **Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs)**. Peacekeepers are also required to act according to established codes of conduct.¹⁰ This includes the **UN Peacekeepers Code of Conduct** and the **Peacekeeping Handbook for Junior Ranks**. However, both lack guidance or warnings as to the serious legal consequences of conduct which may amount to a serious crime, such as sexual exploitation or rape.¹¹ Military and civilian police participate in UN PSOs under terms carefully negotiated by their national government that volunteered them, and they remain under their government's authority. A gap exists in

standard codes of conduct that apply to all peacekeepers and humanitarian workers as well as monitoring adherence to existing codes. The only all-encompassing international justice system is the **International Criminal Court (ICC)**. However, under UN Security Council Resolution 1422, peacekeepers from states that have not signed the ICC are exempt from its jurisdiction.

Every PSO has a **disciplinary office** or an **ombudsperson** that can be approached with complaints if abuse is experienced or witnessed by other peacekeepers or local community members. The **UN Inter-agency Standing Committee** has also established a **Task Force on the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises**. The purpose of this Task Force is to develop recommendations aimed at eliminating sexual abuse and exploitation by humanitarian personnel through;

- development of common codes of conduct and standards of behaviour for humanitarian workers;
- capacity and mechanisms for protection against sexual exploitation and abuse; and
- improved mechanisms for delivering assistance.

Other studies on the protection of children in peacekeeping processes¹² emphasise the importance of PSOs in channeling the outcomes of reported violations by individual peacekeepers back to the parties involved.

Ensuring the protection of the human rights of civilians and conflict prevention are central to the UN Charter on which all peacekeeping mandates are based. The participation of civil society in these activities is crucial in terms of engagement and monitoring to ensure that the PSO is effective.

STRUCTURES IN PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS ADDRESSING GENDER AND WOMEN

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security mandates that women be consulted at all levels and all stages of peacebuilding processes. PSOs are an important part of this process. Of the sixteen UN DPKO-led PSOs active in 2004, nine have established positions for **Gender Advisers** or **Senior Gender Advisers**, seven of which were filled in mid-

“United Nations peace support operations must guarantee that the protection of women’s human rights is central to all actions that promote peace, implement peace agreements, resolve conflict and reconstruct war-torn societies.”

Sherrill Whittington, Former Chief, Gender Affairs Unit, UNTAET¹³

2004. These are personnel with expertise in methods and strategies for understanding, documenting and addressing the different impacts of conflict on men, women, boys and girls and who focus on these issues in the context of the PSO. Four other PSOs in 2004 had a **Gender Focal Point**.¹⁴ This is a person who is the contact point for gender issues, but they are not necessarily gender experts and usually perform another task in the PSO. These different gender positions have supported a range of activities including:

- continued gender-awareness training for peacekeeping personnel, who normally rotate on a six-month basis;
- training police on women’s human rights and CEDAW;
- initiatives to support the political participation of women in election processes; and
- consultation with local women on DDR initiatives and the specific needs of women and girls in this process.

In the PSO in **Sierra Leone**, the Gender Advisor was based in the Human Rights Unit; from this position she was able to set up a **Women’s Task Force on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission**, which focused on gender-based violence during conflict. One of the policy recommendations from the Task Force was that psychosocial support be provided to victims of gender-based violence. The Task Force also concentrated on the achievement of gender balance in the **Special Court and Truth and Reconciliation Commission**.¹⁵

Despite the existence of instruments to support gender-aware practices, more is needed to ensure that the issues are fully integrated into PSOs. Despite DPKO’s commitment to the implementation of Resolution 1325, **Gender Units** (a team of UN civilian personnel focusing on addressing the different needs of women, men, boys, and girls) have been incorporated into PSOs on an ad

hoc basis, often as a result of lobbying by civil society groups, supportive governments and UN Agencies such as the **Office for the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI)** and the **United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM)**. Gender advisers and focal points often have few resources allocated to them and insufficient status, making the task even more difficult for individuals within the UN system who are committed to promoting women’s protection and participation. The 2002 UN operation in **Afghanistan** included the post of Senior Gender Adviser, but the position was filled only temporarily for two months and then downgraded to Gender Adviser. The Gender Unit to the UN operation in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** has consisted of a Senior Gender Adviser, two other professional Gender Adviser posts, as well as two UN volunteers and national staff. Although this is a relatively large gender unit, the staff have a vast country to cover in a situation where many different militia groups and combatants use gender-based violence as a systematic weapon of war and very little infrastructure exists to access victims or develop protection strategies.

The expectation, with the appointment of a Gender Adviser at the **UN DPKO Headquarters** in 2004, is that the task of gender mainstreaming throughout all PSOs will become more systematic. However, its success is largely dependent on the commitment of sufficient budgetary commitment from UN member states.

4. HOW DO PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS AFFECT WOMEN?

The arrival of a PSO brings with it resources, people and equipment intended to assist in supporting and securing sustainable peace. With the drafting of a peace agreement and the initiation of political processes such as the development of a new constitution and new accountable governance systems, potential is created for women’s support and engagement in equitable ways that were not possible prior to or during the conflict. There is a chance to redress social injustices and impunity for crimes committed during war. A PSO can support and monitor the passage of such processes, if women are able to collectively develop and communicate their priorities. In **East Timor**, the Gender Unit of the peacekeeping mission worked with local women’s

groups to draft legislation on domestic violence and increase the gender balance within the local police. In contrast to these positive effects, PSOs can also generate dependency on their human and economic resources and, if not managed well in terms of building local resources and capacity, violence can resurface with the departure of the PSO.

PROMOTING THE RULE OF LAW AND GENDER JUSTICE

One example of what a PSO can do to support women is the promotion and development of a gender-equitable justice system. When PSOs are mandated to help strengthen or rebuild rule of law institutions and to establish administrative, legislative and judicial infrastructures, significant opportunities are created to strengthen access to and protection of gender-inclusive human rights and human security. In this context, promoting gender justice is a critical function of PSOs.

Gender justice is the protection and promotion of civil, political, economic and social rights on the basis of gender equality. Gender justice necessitates that the rights themselves cover the specific gender needs of men, women, boys and girls and that all have equal access to these rights irrespective of gender.

The International Community recognises **gender-based violence**, including rape and sexual torture of women and girls, as a weapon of war. In the southern part of the South Kivus in Eastern **DRC**, there are villages where local women's networks¹⁶ have reported that all the women and girls have been systematically raped by different militia groups.¹⁷ Such atrocities impact the individual, household relations and the whole community. Critical medical, economic and psychosocial needs can be addressed by PSO outreach initiatives in such situations. It is also important that these cases of abuse are documented and followed through to ensure non-impunity of those responsible for such violations. It is vital that outreach initiatives and UN fact-finding missions include consultation with women's groups to understand their perceptions of the conflict situation and their priorities for addressing them.

PSOs can and must foster a culture of gender justice and accountability in the implementation of their

mandates in the communities in which they operate. At a minimum, this means avoiding compounding gender inequalities that exist already. This approach is supported if a peacekeeping operation has a Gender Adviser, Gender Focal Point or Gender Unit to monitor and ensure a gender-aware approach and sensitivity in all aspects of the operation.

NEGATIVE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS

The arrival of a PSO has considerable impact on the local economy. The salaries of peacekeepers are generally well above those of the community, and local entrepreneurs have been seen to adjust prices for accommodation and goods accordingly to increase their profits. This in turn may be negative for the local population, which can no longer afford such facilities and goods. A situation of dire poverty, which is most often associated with conflict-affected regions, also encourages desperate means of survival. For women and girls this has sometimes culminated in forced prostitution. Unfortunately, since PSOs are largely composed of unaccompanied men earning significantly more money than local nationals, this provides many potential prostitution clients and further entrenches prostitution as a sustained survival opportunity. A study by the UN Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) in 1995 found that the incidence of rape and prostitution falls significantly, with the presence of women personnel in PSOs.²⁴

PSOs have also been described as vectors for the spread of HIV/AIDS (see chapter on HIV/AIDS). A local community in **Mozambique** in the conflict-affected border areas with **South Africa** claimed that Zambian peacekeepers brought HIV/AIDS into their rural communities.²⁵ The number of prostitutes in Phnom Penh reportedly rose from 6,000 to 20,000 during the UN peacekeeping operation in **Cambodia**. One troop-contributing country found that 25 percent of its peacekeepers were HIV positive upon their return home.²⁶ The UN has mainly focused on protecting peacekeepers from contracting the virus by encouraging condom use and abstinence. However, Resolution 1308 and especially 1325 mention the need to address the issue of local women being infected by peacekeepers and HIV/AIDS awareness in general through peacekeeping interventions.

The Challenges of Building a Culture of Gender Justice and Accountability through Peace Support Operations: East Timor and Kosovo

The PSOs in **East Timor (UNTAET)** and **Kosovo (UNMIK)** have been multifaceted operations in which the UN has executive governing authority. The operations have involved assisting in the restructuring of police and military forces, capacity building for the judiciaries, electoral assistance and the drafting of a new constitution. In both situations, the legal instruments establishing the authority of the interim administrations included the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** among the guiding human rights instruments to be applied by the governing bodies.¹⁸

Efforts to bring a gender perspective to the work of the **Serious Crimes Unit** were undertaken. In **Kosovo** this included forming a **Gender-Related Crime Team** linked to the **Serious Crimes Investigation Unit**. This team investigated sexual and gender violence committed as part of the widespread and systematic attack against the civilian population during the 1999 violence. This has resulted in several indictments, including for acts of rape and sexual violence.¹⁹

The UNTAET operation was characterised by close interaction with the local population and especially women's groups. Local women successfully lobbied for the Gender Unit when UN financial backing for it was not initially allocated.²⁰ Once in place, the Gender Unit organised consultations, workshops and training with women's groups and incorporated the Women's Platform for Action, adopted by women's groups after the end of the conflict, as part of its work plan. The unit worked to help women gain a strategic foothold and supported their involvement in legislative and electoral processes, drafting key policy documents and using the framework of CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action and later Security Council Resolution 1325. The unit later became the **National Department for Women**, once governance was officially handed over to the East Timor government.

Gender-sensitive provisions in the Constitution were among the successes of the unit and its local partners that established the Women and Constitution Working Group. In association with the Gender Unit, the Working Group held consultations throughout **East Timor** on basic issues of concern to women. This process yielded a Women's Charter of Rights.

Other rule of law initiatives supported by the Gender Unit included the establishment of a Gender and Law Working Group that brought legal professionals and civil society experts together with gender focal points to review and advocate for legislation in accordance with international human rights norms from a gender perspective. The unit also helped organise and support gender training for the judiciary and other legal and law enforcement professionals.

In contrast, in **Kosovo**, UNMIK was widely criticised by women's groups for marginalising women's voices and further jeopardising an already precarious situation in the post conflict scenario. One example was the use of many UN officials of *Leke Dukagjini*, a source of customary law in Kosovo dating back to the sixteenth century, as opposed to reviewing contemporary legislation drafted during the Socialist era.²¹ *Leke Dukagjini* promoted situations that are in direct contravention to CEDAW, the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**, as well as other international and regional human rights instruments. The code also made it difficult for women to own and inherit property and further characterised children as the property of the father and stated that if the father dies, his family inherits the offspring. Women's groups reported that several UN officials were referring to this source of customary law for guidance in implementing their mandate in Kosovo.²² In one incident a UN official argued with women advocates that Kosovo wasn't ready to recognise women's rights.²³

Financial and Legal Responsibility for “UN Children”²⁷

To date, the UN has not taken steps to address the issue of children conceived by personnel serving in UN missions. The issue of children being fathered by military troops serving away from home has been well documented (see chapter on children’s security).²⁸ In **Cambodia**, estimates place the number of children fathered by UN peacekeepers at 25,000.²⁹ In **Liberia**, the prevalence of children fathered by peacekeepers was considered so serious that several NGOs were established to deal with the matter. Estimates vary, but some reports project that at a minimum 6,600 children were fathered by soldiers serving in the UN Observer mission in **Liberia**.³⁰

Often the mothers and the children born of these encounters face persecution, scorn and stigma in their communities subsequent to the departure of a PSO. There are a myriad of political, psychological, economic and social issues for the children abandoned by their UN fathers, including rights of nationality. Abandonment of children is a direct violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.³¹

Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation

Human trafficking is illegal and in this respect differs from prostitution, which is legal in many countries. Trafficking is a serious form of exploitation and abuse that constitutes a gross violation of fundamental human rights. Victims are primarily women and girls.

Trafficking refers to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, use of power or position of vulnerability or giving payments or benefits for control of another person. – UN PROTOCOL TO PREVENT, SUPPRESS AND PUNISH TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS, ESPECIALLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN, 2003

There have even been instances of UN personnel acting as traffickers or using trafficked women for prostitution. Trafficking is driven by a variety of factors including:

- poverty and desperation among local populations (particularly young women);
- organised criminal networks involved in human trafficking (especially for the sex trade);
- lack of systematic accountability or penalties for peacekeepers violating their code of conduct; and
- no application of anti-trafficking policies by the peacekeeping operation.

A weakness in the system is that UN personnel are above the local law. Personnel caught trafficking or

committing any other crime are sent home to their country of origin. The choice of whether to pursue legal proceedings and punishment is left to their country of repatriation.

The DPKO has recognised that PSOs trigger human trafficking rings in the regions in which they operate because of the mass influx of a relatively wealthy, predominantly male peacekeeper population potentially interested in purchasing sexual and other services from trafficked women and girls. Recognition of this reality has led DPKO to start developing strategies to pre-empt and prevent trafficking. Efforts are being made in some operations to appoint an **Anti-Trafficking Focal Point** and to encourage a systematic approach of reporting to ensure that victims are protected. In **Kosovo**, a **Trafficking and Prostitution Investigation Unit** was established in 2000 within UNMIK police, composed of international police and members of the Kosovo Police Service. Local women’s groups have played a critical role in monitoring trafficking incidences in their communities and reporting abuses to the Anti-trafficking Focal Point or the Personnel Conduct Officer in the PSO.

In the PSO in **Liberia** (UNMIL), the **UN Civilian Police (CIVPOL)** appointed a female trafficking officer with a team of seven CIVPOL officers. The trafficking officer and her staff raided nightclubs and rescued women and girls who had been trafficked. However, the NGO **Refugees International** reported that there were no follow-up procedures to protect women who choose to testify against the traffickers or

assistance for the women in terms of temporary shelter and repatriation.³² The trafficked women were being handed over to local NGOs, who did not have sufficient resources to support or protect them. Local NGOs also raised the concern that the trafficking task force was all male, apart from the head trafficking officer. This did not encourage trafficked women to speak openly about the sexual and other abuses they may have experienced. To address these concerns Refugees International recommended that:

- UNMIL modify its law enforcement approach to human trafficking by working more collaboratively with NGOs and supporting organisations, in compliance with UN policy;
- UNMIL immediately appoint a community focal point for sexual exploitation and provide this person with adequate staff support and resources. Disciplinary action should be enforced for those found guilty;
- the Special Representative of the Secretary General instruct the CIVPOL trafficking officer to follow all UN policies regarding human trafficking;
- UNMIL begin sensitising CIVPOL and other staff on the many dimensions of trafficking;
- CIVPOL ensure that any interviews with women be conducted in a safe and secure environment by a female police officer;
- CIVPOL recruit more women officers to work on its trafficking team; and
- CIVPOL begin working with other organisations to address the issue of Liberians working in brothels and to provide them with equal access to protection.

It can be difficult to gather enough evidence to substantiate an allegation of sexual exploitation, whether through trafficking or forced prostitution. Victims are often pressured by their families to keep quiet. It is extremely difficult to investigate allegations and to maintain the victim's right to protection and privacy, as well as an employee's right to due process. The head of the PSO in Liberia was explicit about a "zero tolerance" policy on sexual exploitation.³³ He emphasised repeatedly that any member of the UN community who was caught having sex with someone under 18 would be repatriated. To address problems with trafficking, UNMIL also made some notorious

nightspots off limits and enforced a midnight curfew for UN staff.³⁴ Despite these strict prevention initiatives the head of operation expressed his frustration at not being able to follow through cases of abuse beyond making recommendations to DPKO. He did not know what happened when the peacekeepers were sent back to their home country.

In the UN PSO in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** (MONUC), the Senior Gender Adviser's Office cooperated closely with the Senior External Affairs Officer to address allegations of sexual exploitation of Congolese women and girls by UN peacekeepers.³⁵

States that contribute peacekeepers must ensure that personnel are:

- trained in trafficking and sexual exploitation issues;
- able to recognise its occurrence;
- aware of the anti-trafficking laws and policies that exist;
- familiar with accountability mechanisms that exist if they engage in abusing locals;
- checked for their own criminal record; and
- part of the solution and not the source of the problem.

DPKO has developed manuals for sexual exploitation awareness for pre-deployment training of all staff. DPKO should assist by sending gender and trainers to countries that lack this facility and the training should be followed up at regular intervals. Methods to improve managerial approaches in PSOs, using personnel conduct officers and safety and security personnel, are being developed by DPKO. Efforts are also being made to build stronger capacities for criminal investigations and follow-up of breaches at all levels.³⁶

These efforts are commendable. However, there is still a need for an overarching systematic accountability mechanism for the various actors involved in PSOs (civilian police, military police, military, private security and humanitarian workers). In practice, there is little consistency on how and why cases are selected and what action is taken to follow-up allegations of abuse, or punishment of individuals found guilty of committing abuses. Clear transparent

mechanisms are required for reporting, analysing and investigating disciplinary matters. The conduct of disciplinary proceedings and follow-up in PSOs at headquarters and with member states require strengthening at all levels.

5. HOW DO WOMEN CONTRIBUTE TO PEACEKEEPING?

Women as Decision-Makers: Women can play an important role in determining the mandate and scope of PSOs. In **South Africa**, women parliamentarians got involved during post-apartheid discussions on the country's role in peacekeeping. Their influence helped expand the definition of peacekeeping operations beyond the traditional deployment of troops, to incorporate a more holistic, human security approach. The South African Deputy Minister of Defence has drawn attention to the contributions of women policy-makers: "Women have contributed to the fact that you have to assist with reconstruction...with the rebuilding of communities where there has been violence. In order to have lasting peace, you have to get involved in the development of that country."³⁷

Women as Peacekeepers: There are fewer women involved in PSOs than men, particularly in military and civilian police forces. At the end of 2003, women represented 25 percent of civilian professional staff, 4 percent of civilian police, and 1.5 percent of military personnel.³⁸ This low representation is mainly due to the lack of flexibility to move to a foreign location at short notice, based on women's usual role as primary caregivers in the home. There has also been a past bias to employ men in positions seen as being "too dangerous" for women, as well as a lack of political will to place women in senior positions in PSOs.

Research has nevertheless shown that women have a key role to play in peacekeeping situations.³⁹ This is particularly evident in their engagement with local communities. Victims of sexual abuse feel more comfortable and willing to come forward when faced with a woman civilian police officer. In some cultures, women are strictly prohibited from talking to men who are not male relatives. This can pose a security risk to the woman or any male peacekeeper involved. In view of the need for outreach that

includes women, the presence of women peacekeepers is critical to ensuring that women's perspectives and experiences are known. This has been evident in **Afghanistan** and **Somalia**.

Some of the specific and critical capacities of women peacekeepers were highlighted by a senior female military member of staff at the DPKO. These roles include:

- participating in the design, writing and inception of mandates to ensure there is explicit attention to women's specific support needs;
- training by women civilian police for new police forces in order to set a critical example to the local population; and
- female public information officers ensuring that the collection, analysis and dissemination of gender-specific information addresses the information needs of local women.⁴⁰

Additionally, international studies on women and policing have found that across cultures, women police officers have the following positive attributes. They

- use force less frequently than their male counterparts;
- are less authoritarian when interacting with citizens and lower-ranking officers;
- have better communication and negotiation skills;
- are more likely than male officers to diffuse potentially violent situations;
- respond more effectively to violence committed against women; and
- have significantly lower rates of complaints of conduct, improper use of force or inappropriate use of weapons.⁴¹

Women peacekeepers are also seen as role models, encouraging greater gender balance in emergent democracies. When a Jamaican woman led the UN Observer Operation to **South Africa**, the presence of a black woman leading the operation was an important signal for local actors, particularly the women, who found it empowering and encouraging. The operation had 46 percent women, and studies indicate that they were effective at establishing trust with local

communities.⁴² The PSO in **Guatemala (MINUGUA)** experienced similar success, where the proportion of women to men was just under 50 percent.⁴³

Despite the fact that technological innovations have changed the nature of contemporary warfare, making old-fashioned close combat less likely and leaving the role of the modern soldier more gender neutral, women are underrepresented in all NATO militaries, especially in senior ranks.⁴⁴ In recognition of the crucial gender-specific role played by women in peacekeeping situations, some countries have attempted to further encourage women to join their peacekeeping personnel. In **Norway**, as part of the Defence Ministry's strategy for gender equality, extensive mentoring programmes were launched to encourage women to compete for senior positions in the armed forces. **Belgium** and the **Netherlands** are experimenting with opportunities for part-time work to make it easier for mothers of young children. A recently published family policy action plan for Norwegian armed forces focuses on support for families with members deployed on international operations. In **Denmark**, personnel are given a great deal of control over their work assignments and duty cycle to minimise strains on family life, including taking a temporary downgrading without jeopardising future career possibilities. **The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)** peacekeeping branch is conducting studies into why Canadian women officers do or do not volunteer for peacekeeping duties.⁴⁵ It is important that other militaries and police forces apply similar strategies.

Women in Civil Society: There are a number of examples of women's networks and organisations engaging with peacekeeping issues. At the international level, the UN-focused **NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security**⁴⁶ has:

- supplied lists of women's organisations to Security Council fact-finding missions in the DRC, Burundi, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and Liberia;
- given input to gender briefs for PSOs and mandate development;
- with supportive UN member states, jointly facilitated two Security Council Working Roundtable Discussion on Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security; and

- facilitated Arria Formula meetings, enabling women from conflict-affected regions which the Security Council is focusing on to speak directly to the Security Council about their priorities.

At the regional level, the **Caucasus Women's League** has written a statement to the UN Secretary General to consider the specific protection needs and human rights of women residing in unrecognised states, requesting a woman SRSG for the PSO in the region. **Femmes Africa Solidarité** has been engaging with the African Union in drafting a gender statement, which also integrates gender considerations for peacekeeping. In **Rwanda**, women ex-combatants from the association **Ndabaga** have asked for a role in regional peacekeeping operations in Africa, pointing specifically to the recent Rwandan government's commitment to support regional peacekeeping operations by sending soldiers to help protect African Union ceasefire monitors. They have urged that ex-combatant women be included in such operations; because of their experience of warfare and its particular impacts on women, and their interest in assisting women in conflict situations.⁴⁷

At the national level, the women's organisation **Kvinna til Kvinna** was involved in training peacekeepers on gender awareness and women's rights in the PSO in **Bosnia**. Women's organisations in **East Timor** requested UN support for a fully resourced gender unit in the peacekeeping operation. Once this unit was successfully established, women went further, working with the gender unit to ensure that the constitution and new legal system were gender equitable. In the **DRC**, women's groups are working with the gender unit and the human rights unit, sharing their documentation of cases of abuse and rape.

6. WHAT INTERNATIONAL POLICIES EXIST?

Within the UN system and among member states, there are small pockets of experts who recognise the important role that women can play in peacekeeping and PSOs. There is also increasing understanding of the negative effect that male-dominated PSOs can have on local populations. With regard to PSOs, in **Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000)** the Security Council:

- calls for an expanded role for women in UN field-based operations and especially among military observers, civilian police and human rights and humanitarian personnel;
- expresses its willingness to incorporate a gender perspective into PSOs;
- urges the Secretary General to ensure that field operations include a gender component;
- requests the Secretary General to provide member states with training guidelines and materials on the protection, rights and particular needs of women, as well as on the importance of involving women in all peacekeeping and peacebuilding measures;
- invites member states to incorporate these elements as well as HIV/AIDS awareness training into their national training programmes for military and civilian police personnel in preparation for deployment; and
- requests the Secretary General to ensure that civilian personnel of PSOs receive similar training.

In the **Beijing Plus Five** review of the Platform for Action, UN member states again committed themselves to provide gender-sensitive training to all actors in PSOs. The “institutionalisation of women’s participation” in peacekeeping and conflict resolution was identified as the biggest challenge and it was seen as important and strategic for member states to promote women in peacekeeping through high-level assignments.

The Windhoek Declaration Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations (2000) preceded Resolution 1325 and provided detailed recommendations for integrating gender into areas of:

- negotiations in furtherance of a ceasefire and/or peace agreements;
- mandates;
- leadership;
- planning, structure and resources of missions;
- recruitment;
- training;
- procedures monitoring, evaluation and accountability; and
- public awareness

The declaration is based on the understanding that to ensure the effectiveness of PSOs, the principles of gender equality must permeate the entire mission at all levels, thus ensuring the participation of women and men as equal partners and beneficiaries in all aspects of the peace process, from peacekeeping, reconciliation and peacebuilding, to a situation of political stability in which women and men play an equal part in the political, economic and social development of their country. The declaration makes concrete recommendations.

- The initial assessment mission for any PSO should include a senior adviser on gender mainstreaming.
- All mandates for PSOs should refer to the CEDAW, as well as other relevant international legal instruments.
- Follow-up mechanisms should be established within the mission’s mandate to fully implement gender-mainstreaming in the post conflict reconstruction period.
- Obligatory induction training with regard to gender issues held upon arrival at mission areas should include:
 - a code of conduct;
 - culture, history and social norms of the host country;
 - CEDAW; and
 - handling of sexual harassment and sexual assault cases.
- Accountability for all issues relating to gender mainstreaming at the field level should be vested at the highest level, in the Secretary General’s Special Representative, who should be assigned the responsibility of ensuring that gender mainstreaming is implemented in all areas and components of the mission.
- The current format of reporting, particularly situation reports and periodic reports of the Secretary General, should include progress on gender mainstreaming throughout peacekeeping missions.
- All possible means should be employed to increase public awareness of the importance of gender mainstreaming in PSOs. In this connection, the media should play a significant and positive role.

Resolution 1325 requested the UN Secretary General to submit a report on the progress towards implementation in 2002. This **UN Secretary General’s Report on Women, Peace and Security (2002)** made further recommendations for action with regards to peacekeeping:

- Action 10: Incorporate gender perspectives explicitly into mandates of all peacekeeping missions, including provisions to systematically address this issue in all reports to the Security Council.
- Action 11: Require that data collected in research, assessments and appraisals, monitoring, evaluation and reporting on peace operations is systematically disaggregated by sex and age and that specific data on the situation of women and girls and the impact of interventions on them is provided.
- Action 12: Ensure necessary financial and human resources for gender mainstreaming, including the establishment of gender advisers/units in multidimensional PSOs and capacity-building activities, as well as targeted projects for women and girls as part of approved mission budgets.

The **European Parliament Resolution on Gender Aspects of Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding (2000)** covers a number of areas to ensure the protection of women and girls in conflict-affected regions. In the context of peacekeeping, emphasis is placed on the need to increase the number of women peacekeepers to improve relations with the local community. The resolution covers three areas for implementation:

- the protection of war-affected populations;
- international efforts to prevent and solve armed conflicts; and
- community-based participation in the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts.

Under *International Efforts to Prevent and Solve Armed Conflicts*, the section that most relates to peacekeeping, an increased use of non-military methods of crisis management is promoted, and accordingly it calls on member states and the **European Commission** to:

- recruit more women in diplomatic services;
- nominate more women to international diplomatic assignments and senior positions within the UN and

increase the percentage of women in delegations to national, regional, and international meetings concerned with peace and security;

- ensure that at least 40 percent of women hold posts in reconciliation, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, peacebuilding and conflict prevention;
- undertake systematic gender analysis as an integral part of planning reconstruction efforts and external interventions; and
- promote the establishment of national machinery for gender equality within governments through a **Ministry of Women’s Affairs**, a **Gender Desk**, or an **Office of the Status of Women**.

Under “Community-based Participation in the Prevention and Resolution of Armed Conflicts,” the Resolution stresses the importance of local involvement and ownership of the peace and reconciliation process and in this regard calls upon member states and the Commission to:

- support the creation and strengthening of NGOs and ensure that the warring factions incorporate civil society representatives—50 percent of whom should be women—into their peace negotiation teams;
- promote public debate in post conflict regions concerning gender-based abuses, ensuring that men and women benefit from external reconstruction initiatives in the process; and
- pay particular attention to the specific rehabilitation needs of girl soldiers.⁴⁸

Despite the existence of these international policies and a number of other regional policies supporting gender awareness in peacekeeping, there have been no systematic implementation efforts.

7. TAKING STRATEGIC ACTION: WHAT CAN WOMEN PEACEBUILDERS DO?

At international and regional levels, women can call for:

1. the inclusion of gender-specific needs into all mandates for PSOs and resolutions;

2. gender units to be an integral and well-resourced component of all PSOs;
 3. gender expertise to be a necessary requirement for all heads of peacekeeping operations;
 4. states contributing peacekeepers to ensure that all peacekeepers receive mandatory training in human rights and the protection of civilians, in particular the specific protection needs of women from gender-based violence;
 5. states contributing peacekeepers to encourage the deployment of women peacekeepers and heads of operation;
 6. international bodies responsible for PSOs to ensure that international legal standards relating to sexual and gender violence are included in standard interim criminal codes for use by transitional authorities providing civilian police functions and protection for the local population;
 7. all peacekeeping fact-finding missions and in-country PSOs to consult with women's organisations and build on women's peace-building initiatives, as mandated in UN Security Council Resolution 1325; and
 8. the international media to cover the specific experiences and perspectives of women and girls in all countries where there are active PSOs.
- the Gender Unit, focal point, human rights component or NGO liaison officer. In terms of specific action women can:
1. insist that PSOs consult with local women's organisations and that they support local peacebuilding initiatives as requested in Resolution 1325;
 2. educate civil society on the role and responsibility of the peacekeeping operation in their country;
 3. document and report any abuse to the ombudsperson, disciplinary officer, gender unit or human rights unit. If these do not exist, women can collaborate to call for an accountability mechanism from the head of the operation or approach the local, national and international media;
 4. get involved in the gender-awareness training of peacekeepers in the context of their country and the conflict situation;
 5. report any issues of trafficking in humans to the office of the head of the operation or ombudsperson;
 6. get involved with the planning of DDR initiatives to ensure that gender-specific considerations are properly supported, particularly the reintegration needs of women and girl combatants, dependents, widows and communities to which the combatants are being reintegrated (see section on DDR);

Additionally, gender checklists can be provided for the drafting of mandates and resolutions relating to PSOs either according to a country-specific context or an issue specific context. Such checklists could be channeled to the Security Council through the **UN Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI)**, the **UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)**, or the UN-focused NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security. For specific country contexts, it is also important that fact-finding operations of the Security Council have contact details for representative women's organisations and consult with them. These contact lists can also be channeled to the UN system through the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

At national and local levels, women's organisations can make contact with the peacekeeping operation through

7. report any issues not being acceptably addressed by the peacekeeping operation to the UN-focused NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security and develop collaborative multilevel advocacy strategies to change the situation;
8. work with Gender Units to ensure they are consulted and included in all formal and informal peace processes facilitated by the peacekeeping operation. They can call for regular meetings, briefings, and appropriate media dissemination of information in the local language; and
9. call for a visit and report from the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and refer issues of abuse and violence to national CEDAW reporting focal points.

WHERE CAN YOU FIND MORE INFORMATION?

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ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIVPOL	United Nations Civilian Police
DAW	Division for the Advancement of Women United Nations
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DPA	United Nations Department of Political Affairs
DPKO	United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
MINUGUA	United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OAS	Organization of American States
OSAGI	Office for the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women of the United Nations
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PSO	Peace Support Operations
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SOFA	Status of Forces Agreements
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations
UN	United Nations
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
UNOMIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia
UNTAET	United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor

ENDNOTES

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