

## **Enhancing Security:**

### **Women's Participation in Security Forces in Latin America<sup>1</sup>**

#### **Introduction**

Women In International Security is joining forces with US Southern Command to develop a *regional partnership tool* to advance security outcomes in Latin America. A growing body of research shows that countries that are more gender equal are more prosperous, peaceful, less corrupt and viewed as more legitimate because they adhere to foundational principles of democracy; equality and justice for all.

Gender equality has been recognized as a core principle of human rights in foundational international, regional and national legal texts. The UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) set human rights standards that explicitly apply to every human being “without distinction of any kind, such as (...) sex (...)”<sup>2</sup> Latin American diplomats, legal scholars and activists have been at the forefront of the development of these global Human Rights frameworks.<sup>3</sup>

These legal instruments as well as the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) have been the basis for the economic, social and political empowerment of women, including their entry in national security forces—the military and the police.

Support for the increased participation of women in the security sector received an important boost in 2000, when the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325). The resolution called on all UN member-states:

- 1) Increase the representation and participation of women in conflict prevention and conflict resolution processes, including in security institutions (military and police);
- 2) Integrate gender perspectives in the analysis of peace and security issues; and
- 3) Adopt special measures to protect women and girls from all forms of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict settings.

Since 2000, the UN Security Council has adopted nine more resolutions that have reinforced and refined what is now known as the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda.

Regional and security organizations as diverse as the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU), and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) have developed organization-wide policies and action plans to incorporate guidance from the WPS agenda into

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<sup>1</sup> This project was undertaken at the request of US Southern Command. It is part of the US Department of Defense's efforts to advance security outcomes with partner nations.

<sup>2</sup> In the Southern Hemisphere the legal framework for human rights even predates the UDHR. The American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, (adopted in May 1948 in Bogota, Columbia) was the first human rights instrument that recognized equal rights for all people. It was followed in 1969 by the American Convention on Human Rights. The 1969 American Convention on Human Rights requires states to adopt domestic legislation to give effect to these rights.

<sup>3</sup> They were particularly important in integrating Human Rights in the UN Charter and the UDHR.

their deliberations and actions.<sup>4</sup> The Organization of American States (OAS) has not yet formally adopted the WPS framework, However, the Inter-American Commission of Women has worked on all aspects of the WPS agenda, most notably the participation of women in political life, women’s human rights and gender violence, women’s economic empowerment, and a gendered approach to human or citizen security.<sup>5</sup>

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was an early adopter of the WPS agenda and issued both an Action Plan and a Strategic Directive that committed to the 3I’s: <sup>6</sup>

- **Integration:** making sure that gender equality is considered as an integral part of NATO policies, programs and projects guided by effective gender mainstreaming practices;
- **Inclusiveness:** promoting an increased representation of women across NATO and in national forces to enhance operational effectiveness and success; and
- **Integrity:** enhancing accountability with the intent to increase awareness and implementation of the WPS agenda in accordance with international frameworks.”

At the national level, some 84 states have developed National Action Plans (NAPs) and legislation to implement and advance the WPS agenda.

The military and other armed forces are important partners in the implementation of these NAPs. For example, in the United States the WPS agenda is nested within the National Security Strategy “which specifically outlines that societies are more peaceful and prosperous when women and men enjoy the same rights, liberties, dignities, and access to resources.”<sup>7</sup> In its 2020 WPS implementation plan the Defense Department commits to “leverage its tools and resources to help ensure women can meaningfully participate in preventing, mediating, and resolving conflict and countering terrorism.”<sup>8</sup> The Department commits to “support the intent of the *WPS Strategy* through attention to the composition of its personnel and the development of its policies, plans, doctrine, training, education, operations, and exercises.”<sup>9</sup> Lastly, “The Department encourages partner nations to do the same, thereby increasing interoperability and better preparing forces to face the complex challenges of the modern battlefield.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In 2013, CEDAW adopted General Recommendation 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations. This strengthened the links between the WPS agenda and CEDAW.

<sup>5</sup> See Mary K. Meyer McAleese, “WPS and the Organization of American States,” in Sara E. Davies and Jacqui True, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace and Security* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp.413-427.

<sup>6</sup> NATO/EAPC Women, Peace and Security Policy and Action Plan, 2018

[https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2018\\_09/20180920\\_180920-WPS-Action-Plan-2018.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2018_09/20180920_180920-WPS-Action-Plan-2018.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> US DOD, *Women, Peace and Security Strategic Framework and implementation Plan* (Washington, DC: US DOD, June 2020), p.10.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p.11

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p.11. The overarching, long-term US Defense objectives with respect to the WPS agenda are as follows: Defense Objective 1. The Department of Defense exemplifies a diverse organization that allows for women’s meaningful participation across the development, management, and employment of the Joint Force; Defense Objective 2. Women in partner nations meaningfully participate and serve at all ranks and in all occupations in defense and security sectors; Defense Objective 3. Partner nation defense and security sectors ensure women and girls are safe and secure and that their human rights are protected, especially during conflict and crisis.

In Latin America, six countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Paraguay) have developed NAPs. Chile was an early adopter and global leader and published one of the first NAPs in 2009 and published its second NAP in 2015. Uruguay is the latest of Latin American countries in the process of developing a NAP.

Latin American countries have been important contributors (of both military and police personnel) to UN Peace Operations and have had to integrate gender perspectives in those operations.<sup>11</sup> The integration of a gender perspective is also a key objective of US military partnerships, including in the Southern Hemisphere.<sup>12</sup> Yet, there is very little exchange and learning among the US and Latin American military on how best to integrate gender perspectives in their operations and activities. In addition, the number of women serving in the security forces remains limited in both the US and Latin American countries.

For many countries the adoption of the WPS framework has meant greater attention to the role of women in their own security forces (military and police) from both an operational and rights points of view. Many countries and military leaders have recognized that the lack of attention to gender diminishes operational effectiveness and readiness, as well as recruitment and retention.

As societies and nations across the world face unprecedented challenges to gender equality, human security and lasting peace, implementation of the WPS agenda is more important than ever.

### **The Women, Peace and Security Scorecard**

The Latin America Women, Peace and Security Scorecard is a tool to integrate the principles of gender equality and the WPS agenda within the security forces of the countries of Central and South America and in the Caribbean. It is a learning and educational tool that will assist countries in monitoring and evaluating how well they are integrating the principles of gender equality and the WPS agenda into their security policies and organizations. Lastly, the WPS Scorecard is a partnership tool intended to allow countries to work better together.

In sum, the Scorecard has three main objectives.

1. The Scorecard is a **learning and educational tool**. Numerous studies show that there is still little awareness and understanding of the WPS framework. There is much discussion about gender mainstreaming, but many people continue to equate gender with women and gender mainstreaming with increasing the number of women in organizations. Similarly, while there is an increasing awareness within military establishments that conflict affects men and women differently, military and police establishments have a hard time figuring out what this reality means for them in terms of operations and how to convey this to security forces. By collecting data and examining best practices, the Scorecard becomes a powerful analytical, and hence educational tool

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<sup>11</sup> In 2019 Brazilian Navy Lieutenant Commander Marcia Braga received the UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year award for her work in the UN operation in the Central African Republic

<sup>12</sup> See US DOD, *Women, Peace and Security Policy and Action Plan*, p. 7.

that helps develop a greater understanding of gender mainstreaming within military and police structures.

2. The Scorecard is a **monitoring and evaluation tool**. The Scorecard encompasses a simple set of indicators that allow states to evaluate how well they are implementing the principles of gender equality and the WPS agenda in their military and police structures and operations. The Scorecard identifies a limited set of critical indicators and benchmarks that provide a picture of a country's progress toward meeting the objectives of the WPS agenda.

3. The Scorecard is a **partnership tool**. Many inter-, trans- and national security challenges require regional and international cooperation. For states to work well together they need to share common standards. By exchanging data and best practices on gender mainstreaming, states will be able to work together in a more efficient and effective way across the region.

### **Score Card**

(Insert Scorecard here)

### **Methodology and Scoring Protocol**

(Insert final scoring protocol here)