

Costa Rica – Summary Report

WPS National Action Plan (NAP) Status:

Costa Rica is actively developing a NAP. The National Institute for Women is in the lead, but the Ministry of Public Security is actively participating in the development of the NAP.

Overall Assessment: Although Costa Rica does not have a WPS NAP, it has made great strides in addressing women’s inequality and insecurity in the country. It has an active and well-established ministry-level National Institute for Women that provides advice and has oversight over gender mainstreaming in all other ministries. Costa Rica is one of a few nations that has no standing military. Citizen security is provided by the Ministry of Public Security. The government, including the Ministry of Public Security, is committed to gender equality in all communities across the nation. Costa Rica has creative and progressive programs to address gender inequality, including programs that challenge “machismo” culture through education and outreach to men in rural communities.

National Importance/Political Will:

Costa Rica has a National Institute for Women that functions as a ministry. This ministry-level Institute is responsible for gender issues. The Institute has a National Council responsible for decision-making at the national level. Furthermore, the Institute provides advice and has oversight over gender mainstreaming in all of the government ministries, including the Ministry of Public Security.

Costa Rica does not have a Ministry of Defense; instead, it has a Ministry of Public Security responsible for ensuring border security, citizen safety, and law enforcement. The Ministry of Public Security was consulted for this report. The Ministry of Public Security has adopted a Gender Equality and Equity Policy.¹ The objective of the policy is to create an organizational environment and culture that requires the provision of inclusive citizen security, the development of police actions and procedures in partnership with communities and the general public, and the promotion of gender equity and gender equality and the promotion of human rights in all institutional work. This policy has its own action plan that was developed in recent years.²

The General Directorate of the Public Force, which falls under the Ministry of Public Security, is made up of Regional Directorates, which have specific functions on the subject of gender. They receive support from the Office of Gender Equality and Equity located in the Ministry of Public Security and from the Directorate of Preventive Police Programs. The Directorate of Preventative Police Programs provides information and training across the country on the importance of women’s inclusion in public life and their need for security. Similarly, at the Ministry of Public Security, there is an annual operational plan in which actions are established according to the work of each department that focuses on the issue of gender and implementing a gender perspective.

¹ Ministry of Public Security, *Política Institucional de Igualdad y Equidad de Género PIEG – MSP*, (Costa Rica, November 16, 2020), at:

https://www.seguridadpublica.go.cr/ministerio/igualdad_equidad_genero/politica_institucional_pieg.aspx

² Ministry of Public Security, *Oficina de Igualdad de Género*, (Costa Rica, November 16, 2020), at:

https://www.seguridadpublica.go.cr/ministerio/igualdad_genero.aspx

Additionally, the police have a violence against women program to address the prevention of violence against women as well as protection of women.³ This plan was made official through an internal decree that all employees received.

Institutional Policy and Practice:

Strategy, Plans, and Policy

Police force documents have integrated gender equality principles, gender analyses, and gender perspectives into some strategy, plans, and policy and other doctrinal documents at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels.⁴ These principles are also mentioned in field manuals and handbooks. The principles of gender equality/WPS are integrated into police exercises, operations, and other police activities, as evidenced in documents like the Operational Plan of the Office for Gender Equality and Equity.⁵ The police also have manuals and protocols on how to handle gender-based violence, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, and toxic masculinities.⁶ The Office for Gender Equality and Equity serves as a gender advisory office for the police and falls under the Vice-Ministry of Special Units. It does not operate at the highest level and functions more in a human resources capacity. Each police delegation has personnel who are specially trained on gender perspectives, violence against women, and domestic violence. It also provides training for civilian groups that make up community security committees and youth groups.

Gender in the Ranks (Police)⁷

Service	Men	Women	Percent Women
National Police Academy		39	18.8%
NPA Senior Women		5	55%
Public Force		2,613	19.3%
Public Force Senior Women		7	1.5%
Border Police		19	5.5%
Border Police Senior Women		1	20%
Air Surveillance Service		135	21.3%
ASS Senior Women		No Data	21%
National Coast Guard		46	8.6%
NCG Senior Women		7	30%
Drug Control Police		38	21%

³ Observatorio de violencia de género contra las mujeres y acceso a la justicia. *Hostigamiento sexual*. (Suprema Corte de Justicia: Costa Rica, 2019), at: <https://observatoriodegenero.poder-judicial.go.cr/index.php/soy-especialista-y-busco/circulares/hostigamiento-sexual>

⁴ Ministry of Public Security, *Orientaciones Políticas del Ministerio de Seguridad Pública 2020*. (Costa Rica, 2020) at: www.seguridadpublica.go.cr/documentos/orientaciones_politicas_ministerio_seguridad_publica.pdf

⁵ Ministry of Public Security, *Planes Anuales Operativos 2020*. (Costa Rica, 2020), at: https://www.seguridadpublica.go.cr/transparencia/planes/planes_inst/plananualoperativo/plan_anual_operativo_2020.pdf

⁶ See toxic masculinity public force training course. Ministry of Public Security, *Masculinidades*, (Costa Rica), at: https://www.seguridadpublica.go.cr/ministerio/igualdad_equidad_genero/documentos/masculinidad.pdf

⁷ Data from Department of Control and Documentation as of 08/19/2020.

DCP Senior Women		5	No Data
Total Force	12,549	2,890	18.7%

Women serve in all positions and all ranks in the Ministry of Public Security. There is no numerical goal to increase women’s participation, but there are incentive policies to increase women’s participation. The institution has a strong non-discrimination policy, and women are targeted in recruitment advertising.⁸

Work Environment

Family Policies: In accordance with national laws, women receive 120 days of paid maternity leave, including one month before delivery and three months after delivery. Men receive 2 days of paternity leave after the birth of a baby. There are some family leave programs, including a program that allows for leave in the event that a minor child is hospitalized. Costa Rica has national childcare programs that are available to police personnel.⁹

Anti-Harassment and Abuse Policies: Women in the Department of Public Security are protected by a number of provisions that address sexual harassment and abuse.¹⁰ The sexual harassment and abuse prevention program is actively utilized, and it is transparent. The curriculum of the National Police Academy includes prevention of sexual harassment and abuse (they are considered serious offenses).

Equipment and Uniforms: Women receive equipment and uniforms specifically designed for them. Specifically, after women objected to being issued unisex bullet proof vest that didn’t fit them, women-specific body armor was procured and issued to women. Women also receive maternity uniforms as required.

Facilities: Infrastructure with billets and bathrooms for the exclusive use of women is provided. Despite the limitations in police infrastructure, there has been effort to modify facilities to accommodate women.

Training, Education, and Exercises

The principles of WPS are present in all levels of training through thematic content in the subjects of human rights, intrafamily violence, commercial sexual exploitation, and appropriate police behavior.

⁸ Andrea Mora, “Fuerza Pública busca 1000 policías nuevos para 2018,” El País (January 16, 2018), at: <https://www.elpais.cr/2018/01/16/fuerza-publica-busca-1000-policias-nuevos-para-2018/>

⁹ Centros Infantiles de Atención Integral (CINAI), Dirección de CEN CINAI: 60 años contribuyendo con el bienestar de la niñez costarricense. (Costa Rica, May 8, 2011), at: https://www.cen-cinai.go.cr/images/pdf/Informes/LIBRITO_INTERACTIVO_MEMORIA_.pdf and <https://www.cen-cinai.go.cr/index.php/cen-cinai/historia#>

¹⁰ The Ministry of Public Security has documents that require the respect and fulfillment of women's rights, among them we can mention: 1. Executive Decree No. 015-2019 MSP "Declaration of the Ministry of Public Security as an institution with zero tolerance for sexual harassment." 2. Agreement Number 124-2018-MSP “Declaration of zero tolerance for any manifestation of violence against women in the Ministry of Public Security”.

Monitoring/Reporting and Evaluation:

There are monitoring and reporting mechanisms in place for all departments. The public is invited to comment via a website link, but civil society groups do not participate in monitoring and evaluation. Sex-disaggregated data are collected and published annually, and data are tracked over time.¹¹

Recommendations:

At the national level, Costa Rica should deepen and codify its commitment to the principles of the WPS agenda by expeditiously publishing a comprehensive NAP. The police should be given specific goals for advancing the agenda. Monitoring and evaluation should include the systematic use of civil society groups, and all reports should be made publicly available.

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¹¹ See, for example data on femicide, which has gone down steadily in recent years. Poder Judicial, *Feminicidios 2020*, (Costa Rica, October 26, 2020), at: https://observatoriodegenero.poder-judicial.go.cr/images/Estadisticas/Femicidio/Documentos/Femicidio_2020_26_de_octubre-cd4.pdf