

Trinidad and Tobago - Summary Report

WPS National Action Plan Status:

Trinidad and Tobago does not have a NAP but is actively engaged in developing one.

Overall Assessment:

Although Trinidad and Tobago does not have a NAP, they have engaged in a number of best practices for promoting women's participation in government agencies, and a relatively high percentage (29%) of the national police are women. Notably, at the ministerial level, they have a Minister of Gender and Child Affairs with a department dedicated to gender equity and justice. However, the Ministry of National Security, which includes the military and police, is separate from this organization; although there are some gender advisors in the security sector, they do not serve at the highest levels, and their training is informal and on an ad hoc basis.

National Importance/Political Will:

Trinidad and Tobago is a signatory of all international laws and frameworks promoting women's rights, and gender equality is enshrined in the constitution and in laws that are mostly enforced by the police and the courts.¹ The Office of the Prime Minister includes a Minister of Gender and Child Affairs. The purpose of the Gender Affairs Division is to "effectively promote Gender Equity and Gender Justice through the process of Gender mainstreaming in all government Policies, Programs and Projects."² In 2018, the ministry published The National Policy on Gender and Development.³ This comprehensive document outlines the government's goals of promoting gender equality across the nation. However, although the national policy says it applies to "all government and ministry agencies," and it has a section titled "Gender Based Violence and Human Security," it does not spell out specific responsibilities, tasks, goals, or metrics for the Ministry of National Security, which encompasses both the military and police.

Institutional Policy and Practice:

Strategy, Plans, and Policy

WPS principles, gender analyses and gender perspectives are integrated into some strategy, plans, and policy and other doctrinal documents at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. They are also occasionally mentioned in field manuals and handbooks. The principles of WPS are integrated into military and police exercises and operations on an ad-hoc, not a habitual basis, as evidenced by documents including exercise directives and operations orders. Both the military and police have some gender advisors, but only the police have trained gender advisors, and they are not assigned to the highest levels. They serve mostly in human resource departments. Prevention of sexual violence is mentioned in key documents, field manuals, and handbooks of both the military and police.

¹ See Laws of Trinidad and Tobago, *Trinidad and Tobago Constitution* (Trinidad and Tobago) at: <http://laws.gov.tt/pdf/Constitution.pdf>

² See Gender and Child Affairs, Office of Gender and Child Affairs, (Trinidad and Tobago: Office of the Prime Minister, 2020) at: <http://opm-gca.gov.tt/Gender/WhatWeDoatGender>

³ See Gender and Child Affairs, *National Policy on Gender and Development*, (Trinidad and Tobago: Office of the Prime Minister 2020) at: <http://www.opm-gca.gov.tt/Gender/Gender-Initiatives/NationalGenderPolicy>

Gender in the Ranks (Military and Police)

Service	Men	Women	Percent Women
Military	4347	726	14.3%
Senior Military Women			
Police	7,323	2,939	29%
Senior Police Women			

All positions in the military and police are open to women, but there are no recruiting goals to increase women’s participation, and women are limited by policy to 30% of the police force. In fact, there are women waiting to join the police force who cannot get in due to the 30% cap. Women are promoted to senior ranks at the same percentage as they serve across the force. A woman has held the highest position in the police force, serving for a period of time as the “acting” Commissioner of Police.

Work Environment

Family Policies: Women receive 90 days of paid maternity leave and men receive three days of paid paternity leave. Childcare and other family leave policies are available to support members of the military, and they are widely used.

Anti-Harassment and Abuse Policies: There is a sexual exploitation and abuse program in the military, but it is not transparent. The number of reported cases and the disposition of cases is not made public. There is no specific program for the police. However, both the military and police have programs to address sexual exploitation and abuse of civilians in the areas of operations.

Uniforms, Equipment and Facilities: There is women-specific individual equipment, including uniforms and personal protective equipment designed for and issued to all women. There are facilities including bathrooms and billets available for women in military and police facilities.

Training, Education, and Exercises

WPS principles are introduced, but not widely trained, during entry level training. Beyond entry level training, only the military continues to train personnel on the principles of WPS. Personnel receive training only on the prevention and response to sexual violence and sexual exploitation as it relates to civilians in the areas of operations, not as it relates to personnel within their own ranks.

Monitoring/Reporting and Evaluation:

There are some monitoring and reporting requirements for the military, but it is not a national level effort and there are no requirements for monitoring or evaluating gender equity implementation by the police. The police collect some sex-disaggregated data for analysis, but the military does not. There is informal involvement of some civil society organizations in monitoring and evaluating implementation of WPS principles/gender equality in the military and police.

Recommendations:

At the national level, Trinidad and Tobago should deepen and codify its commitment to the principles of the WPS agenda by expeditiously publishing a comprehensive National Action Plan. The military and police should be given specific goals and benchmarks for advancing the agenda.

Both the military and police should immediately develop programs for addressing sexual harassment and abuse within the ranks.

Both the military and police should develop and implement a monitoring and evaluation program with benchmarks and goals to increase women's participation at all levels.

An independent monitoring and evaluation program should be established utilizing civil society groups and the annual reports should be made publicly available.

The restriction limiting women to 30% of the police force should be eliminated immediately.

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