

Forum: Disarmament Committee

Issue: The question of gender equality within the military

Student Officer: Sude Çapraz

Position: Co-chair

Introduction

The United Nations has recognized gender equality as a worldwide issue since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The issue is present in a lot of aspects of life, one of them being the military. The UN recognizes gender equality as a fundamental right, and that it concerns everyone in society, regardless of gender. The distribution of power and influence between genders are not equal at all times and places, and this problem has consequences on the military. The delegates of the Disarmament Committee are expected to discuss this significant issue.

Definition of Key Terms

Demasculinization: The removal of testicles with the aim of reducing someone's masculinity.

Peacekeeping: The agreement on the maintenance of a truce between Member States and organizations, especially by an international military force.

Cyber operation: An interdisciplinary major covering the cyberspace related operations in both technical and non-technical aspects.

Administrative services: The unit in charge of supervising activities while maintaining facilities and such.

General Overview

The world is having trouble changing the existing stereotypical man soldier figure. Throughout the history, man and women did not have equal roles in the military. However, gender equality and diversity within the military has been gaining more attention as of recently. This means not only that more women are being represented in a range of positions within the military, but also that women's role in armed forces is gaining importance in certain western armed forces.

In 2000, the United Nations Security Council implemented a resolution addressing the critical role of women in resolving and preventing conflicts while sustaining the peace. The Committee of Women in the NATO Forces developed a list of possible solutions, which the NATO aims to implement in a variety of areas, one of them being military operations.

On the other hand, there has been an attempt in order to blur gender by a demasculinization in Swedish Armed Forces. The Swedish Armed Forces is a government agency responsible for the military forces of Sweden, which is not a NATO member. Historically, only men were allowed to take part in the organization. However, due to changes in the Swedish political agenda there was a pressure on the organization to make the necessary changes in the operation of the system about the participation of women in military. As can be observed from the table below, the statistics show that women are underrepresented. However, the organization is working to improve women's place in the hierarchy.

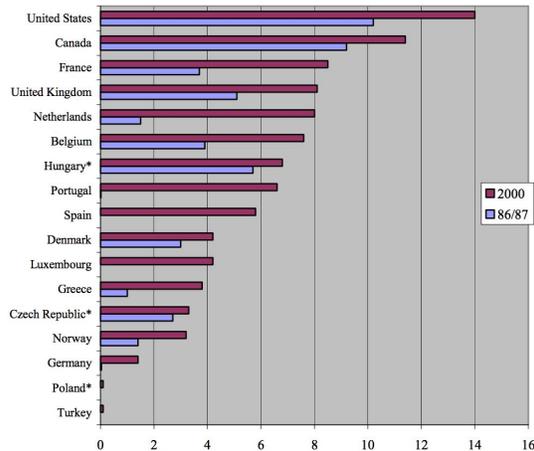
Profession	Total	Women	Men
Officers & Specialist officers	9000	600	8400
Soldiers & Squad leaders	5300	500	4800
Civilian personnel	5400	2150	3250
	19700	3250	16450

(Numbers from Försvarsmakten d, n.d.)

Previous research shows that women are often forced into categories within the military, oftentimes serving as civilian personnel. This separation of roles was also present in the past, when women would usually serve as nurses.

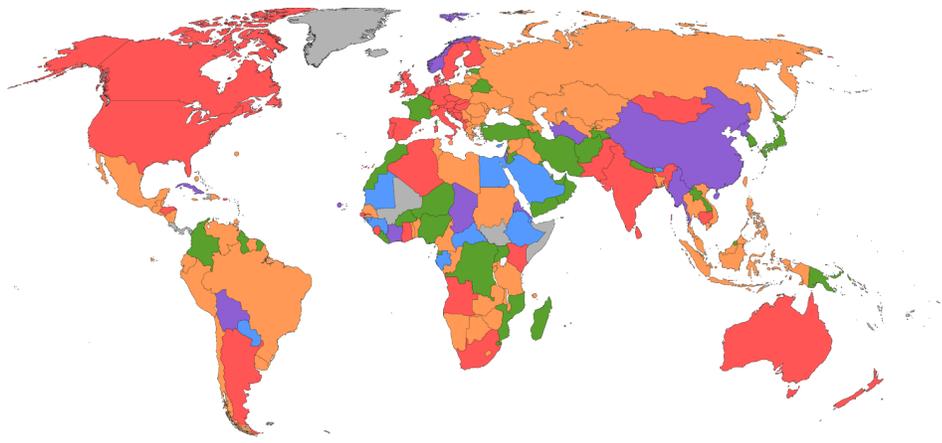
10% of the personnel of French Army are women. Thus, women form %21 of the army's administrative services while forming %57.6 of the health services. Israel, as the only country where military service is mandatory for everyone, is one of the countries who has the

highest rate of women within the military. Women perform the military service for 24 months; whereas for men the period is 32 months. The ratio of gender representation within the Israeli military is 33% women and 67% men.



With the help of the data collected in regarding this issue, in Croatia, a country where mandatory military services is suspended, overall 12.51% of the personnel is women, 10% being the military personnel. Whereas in Czech Republic, the ratio of women in the military is 13.76%. These ratios show that the women are clearly underrepresented within military.

According to the United Nations' indexes regarding gender equality, Norway ranks first in terms of women's equality in the military. In Norway, women had access to military services in 1976. Thus, in 1985, Norwegian women gained the right to hold all military positions available to men. Such positions included working in international combat units, including Afghanistan, or as submarine commanders and fighter pilots. The Norwegian military forces are an example of women being able to hold positions in the military if they want to. The provision of equal opportunities to everyone, regardless of gender, is one of the main issues that falls under the scope of this agenda item. A graph showing the evolution of women's role in the military throughout years can be found below.



The military has always been a traditionally male-dominated sector. However, the advancement in military technology means that military operations are growing more sophisticated, increasing the need for talented military personnel. In light of such developments, denying half the population military employment is not wise.

With more opportunities given to women, delegates should be reminded of the risk of sexual harassment. There should be zero tolerance regarding the issue and precautions should be taken. Therefore, ensuring equal opportunities for both genders regarding the participation in foreign operations is another step that should be taken. The participation of women in such operations will highlight women's roles as team members. Gender diversity will also make contact with local civilians easier. However, keeping participation opportunities equal and managing the process successfully is the greater problem in this case.

Women also face issues regarding the balance between their military career and private life. This critical issue becomes even more important when it comes to motherhood and pregnancies. For instance in Australia, women often leave their career in military upon discovering they are pregnant. While women face such problems in a range of careers, women in military careers are likely to face greater difficulties in such a male-dominated sector. There is a common understanding that most successful military personnel make sacrifices. Regardless of whether this maxim is true or not, it is important to note that employment in the armed forces rarely acknowledges matters such as gender or maternity.

In the World Map above, the colour orange symbolizes countries where women are not allowed to participate in military; whereas in regions shown in blue are the places where women are not accepted within military. In the green coloured regions women are permitted in the military; however, they are not treated equally with men. Red regions are the countries where military service is not obligatory, and women are legally given equal rights as men to serve in the military. In purple coloured regions military service is obligatory.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

The United States of America: As the US Secretary of Defense Ash Carter stated, women have the right to work in all parts within the US military, such as combat jobs and special

units. However, the decision was criticized by some members of the Armed Services Committee. The critics stated that the provision of equal rights to women in the military would decrease the US military's efficiency. Regardless of such confrontations, the USA is one of the few countries where men and women are given equal rights in military service.

Sweden: Since the day the Security Council passed Resolution 1325, Sweden has undergone massive changes. Sweden is one of the most gender equal countries around the Globe. Even though the country is trying to follow a gender equal system within the military, it can be observed that the rates of women's role in military is lower than it should be (13 percent). Therefore, The Swedish Armed Forces took a significant step by organizing a two-day course called Gender Focal Point where military men and women from around Sweden got tips regarding the issue. The course mainly focused on how to infuse their own units with gender perspectives. (Sverigesradio)

Germany: In 1975, the German government gave access to women's participation in civilian operations within military. Since then, women's role in the German military has gradually increased. In 2000, according to the judgement of the Court of Justice of the European Union women gained access to all existing positions and professions within military. Today, 10.5% of the German armed forces are women.

Timeline of Events

2000	Israeli Defense Force (IDF) allowed women to serve in all units of the military.
31 October 2000	The Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 about women's peace and security.
2003	United States task force established an active plan for the implementation of the UNSC resolution.
2006	Canada lost its first women soldier, in combat with Taliban.
2010	The U.S Navy cancels its "male only" policy on submarines.

2011	Australia's defense minister announced that they closed 7 percent of the positions to women within military including special units and infantry.
January 2017	The United States' first female Marines graduated from infantry school.

UN Involvement

The Department of Peace Operations (DPO) and The Department of Operational Support (DOS) promote gender equality and women in different aspects of life; one of them being the military. These departments aim to strengthen the roles and capacities of women within the military. The UN also supports gender guidelines on the guidebook called *Integrating a Gender Perspective into the Work of the United Nations Military in Peacekeeping Operations (2010)*. Therefore, the Security Council Resolution 1325 calls for gender equality at all parts of peacekeeping operations and military.

Relevant UN Documents

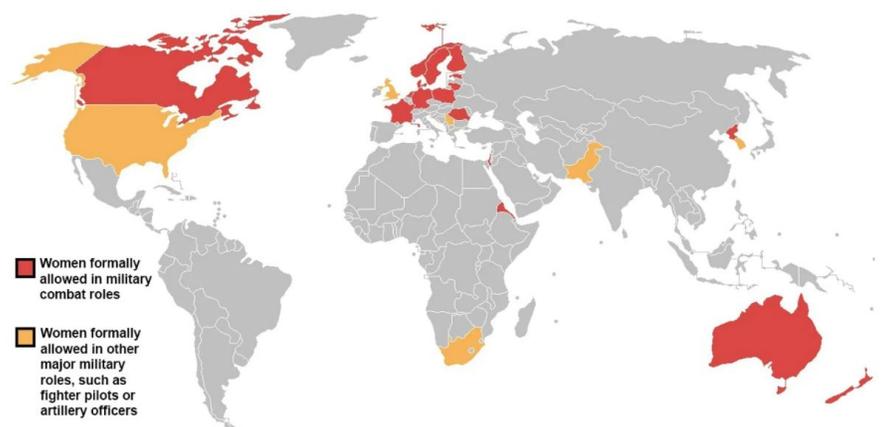
Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system of ECOSOC (23 July 2010, 2010/29) <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4d92e5a42.html>

Strengthening the institutional arrangements for support of gender equality and the empowerment of women of the General Assembly (27 July 2012, 64/289)

<https://www.peacewomen.org/node/90158>

Treaties and Events

In 19 November Civil Military Relation Course was hosted by the Swedish Armed Forces (SWEDINT). The 18-19 June 2018 Nordic Centre for Gender in Military (NCGM) established a seminar about implementing gender equality



(Max Fisher/Washington Post)

within military. Furthermore, Women in Defense (a national security organization) organized a panel about the topic. One interesting feature about the panel was that all of its speakers were male. In the panel, the current issue regarding women's role in military was discussed and the panel took place in people's mind as an unique experience.

To give some information about Member States' laws and policies about the topic, women can take up combat roles within the military, while some countries' policies allow for a wider range of roles, including administrative ones. More detailed information about the matter can be observed in the map above.

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

In April 2018, Captain Anaseini Navua Vuniwaqa of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces, visited the 9th Female Military Officers' Course (FMOC) in India. The course aimed to support UN peacekeeping, while educating military professionals about the gender gap. The course was funded by countries such as Finland, Australia, Norway and the Netherlands, and provided training to over 300 women in countries such as India, China and Kenya.

The Gender Advisor (GENAD) course was established in 2016 and got approved by NATO in 2017. GENAD and Gender Field Advisors (GFAs) both aim to approach to the gender equality issue from the military aspect. The GENAD is responsible for the evaluation and implementation of the gender perspective processes within military. Whereas, GENAD is tasked to make analysis regarding some targeted groups, and the gender gap within military and Area of Operations (AOO).

Mixed Engagement Teams includes female soldiers and interpreters. Even though the idea itself can be a breakthrough, the METs are suffering from insufficient resources. METs could be considered as a temporary solution but it should be improved and possibly supported by Member States and/or the UN.

Possible Solutions

First of all, precautions should be taken regarding the understanding of gender equality as a whole. In a world where the concept of gender equality is yet to be understood wholly, ensuring equality in an area such as the military is likely to be difficult, given the strong

history of sexism and male domination in the sector. Therefore, concerns about the treatment of women and femininity can be solved via special trainings for military personnel. It is a wise idea to ensure that all personnel, including patrol members and unit commanders, are made aware of basic information on gender issues, as well as the expected level of tolerance and equal treatment of women. The trainings can be more effective if they are simple and to the point, rather than complicated. Moreover, a mentorship program can be adopted within military in order to solve the issue and help the ones who have experienced such things.

Trying to find a solution to the ongoing debate on whether women are capable of participating in combat missions or not would also be very helpful. Therefore, the traditional understanding of masculinity and femininity is damaging the operation of military. With the help of understanding these terms correctly and knowing the importance of gender equality; distribution of the roles can be replanned.

Notes from the Chair

This chair report does not contain all information about the issue. For further research you can take a look at the relevant UN documents as well as the links in the bibliography.

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