

## From

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## Gender Perspectives in Peacekeeping: More than Deploying More Women

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The historic [United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325](#) (2000) on women, peace and security (WPS) notes the Security Council's "willingness to incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and urges the Secretary-General to ensure that, where appropriate, field operations include a gender component." Seventeen years later there is still confusion regarding what this means, what it involves, and how to achieve it.

Given that the "[integration of gender perspective remains at the heart](#)" of the Vancouver UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial hosted by Canada in November 2017, it is important to clarify the issues involved.

What should Canada do to ensure robust integration of gender perspectives in peacekeeping operations?

First, deploying more women is a priority and should be supported; however it must be done responsibly.

There have been [global calls](#) for more women peacekeepers. Yet progress has been glacial. As of [August 2017](#), 3.7% of military peacekeepers and 9.5% of police peacekeepers were women.

Initiatives to increase the number of women peacekeepers include [financial incentives](#) to encourage and reward troop contributing countries (TCCs) who deploy more women, more and improved [training](#) for women peacekeepers, mentorship programs, women's professional networks and pipeline mechanisms to identify senior women candidates.

However, it is essential not to take a narrow view of increasing women's participation. The focus cannot be on numbers alone. One must also consider [institutional culture](#), structural, attitudinal and logistical issues that must be addressed in order to ensure that these deployments are successful and not harmful to the women deployed. [Research](#) shows that women peacekeepers are also subject to harassment and abuse. Understanding and addressing issues related to sexism and homophobia in the security sector are critical. Canada's efforts to tackle these issues through an initiative such as [Operation Honour](#) must yield results if we are to be a credible advocate on the global stage. Learnings from these initiatives can also be shared with other TCCs.

Additionally it is crucial to ensure that women peacekeepers have proper training, medical support, equipment, and facilities.

Second, support and funding for the [full range](#) of gender mainstreaming initiatives in peace operations is required. This includes - inter alia - gender analysis across all issues including rule of law, protection of civilians, security sector reform (supported by [gender advisors](#)); consultations with women's organizations (from mission design to withdrawal); including gender issues (including conflict-related sexual violence) in mission mandates; improved gender data; improved capacity building/training on gender analysis and gender perspectives – that [includes participation from women's organizations](#) (including for mission leadership); specific programmes to increase women's participation in post-conflict reconstruction (electoral, judicial, disarmament, etc.); the deployment of women protection advisors; and improved reporting on all of these issues.

Deploying more women will not address the need for gender analysis across mission agendas. Gender advisors (senior, experienced, with the relevant expertise) are essential to support the head of mission in each context.

While there have been promising gender mainstreaming innovations in peace operations in recent years, the [Global Study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325](#) notes that these remain pilot projects and special initiatives rather than the 'core business' of operations. Furthermore, recent developments threaten even this fragile progress. Analysts have [sounded alarm bells](#) that recent budget cuts have hit gender functions in peacekeeping missions particularly hard.

Canada should ensure that, in addition to deploying more women, these issues are given equivalent space and priority attention. Recent Canadian progress on implementing the [Chief of Defence Staff's Directive for Integrating UNSCR 1325](#) and using [Gender Based Analysis Plus \(GBA+\)](#) provide excellent starting points. DPKO should be encouraged to ensure that gender advisor positions are sufficiently resourced and have strong political support.

Third, meaningful progress on [sexual exploitation and abuse](#) (SEA) by peacekeepers, including military, police and civilians, is essential. One of the major stains on UN peacekeeping has been the [longstanding issue](#) of peacekeepers abusing and committing violence against the very people who they are there to protect. Despite universal outrage, this issue has proved [remarkably difficult to address](#).

Numerous recommendations are on the table. AIDs Free World's [Code Blue Campaign advocates](#) for a special court mechanism, arguing that investigation and prosecution must be distanced from internal UN processes. They also recommend the establishment of a Victims' Bill of Rights. The 2015 [High-Level Independent Panel on Peacekeeping Operations](#) (HIPPO) [recommendations](#) included clarification of immunity definitions, improved disclosure of disciplinary actions taken by TCCs, and an adequately resourced victim assistance program. Other [recommendations](#) include clarifying and strengthening the secretary-general's discretionary authority (as outlined in UNSCR 2272), establishing credible deterrents and strengthening accountability for civil perpetrators. What is clear is that progress is desperately needed.

Finally, Canada can push for non-military solutions. As was noted in the [Global Study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325](#): “the value of the women, peace and security agenda is its potential for transformation, rather than greater representation of women in existing paradigms of military response.” Canada’s newly launched [National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security](#) provides useful insights to inform and guide Canada’s approach to conflict resolution and peacebuilding.