

Safer Women, Safer World:

A Fund to Increase the Number of Women UN Peacekeepers and Better Protect Women and Girls in Conflict Situations

Charles Kenny

Summary

- Having more women peacekeepers is linked with large reductions in sexual misconduct by peacekeepers and more sustainable peace.
- The UN could potentially raise the proportion of women peacekeepers to 20 percent for around \$75 million.
- A small multilateral trust fund would offer supplementary payments to troop-contributing countries for each woman peacekeeper provided.

Safer women, safer world

More women peacekeepers make women in conflict, and the world as a whole, safer. Women peacekeepers have unique access to women in host countries, particularly in gender-segregated societies. This has benefits from an intelligence-gathering perspective and in assisting women and girls in conflict-affected contexts. Perhaps as a result, there is evidence that missions with more women personnel are more likely to meet their mandate and bring sustainable peace.¹ In particular, a greater presence of women in peacekeeping operations appears to be associated with lower rates of sexual misconduct by peacekeepers themselves.

An increase in the proportion of women in peacekeeping contingents from zero to 5 percent is associated with a reduction in the count of sexual misconduct allegations by one half.²

We need a new approach

The UN Security Council has recognized the importance of increasing women's participation in peacekeeping, but progress in recent years falls far short of ambition. Security Council Resolution 2242 (2015) set a goal of doubling the numbers of women in military and police contingents of UN peacekeeping operations over the next five years.³ It follows Security Council resolutions and statements by Secretaries-General dating back to 2006 with similar targets. These previous targets have all been missed (see figure 1).

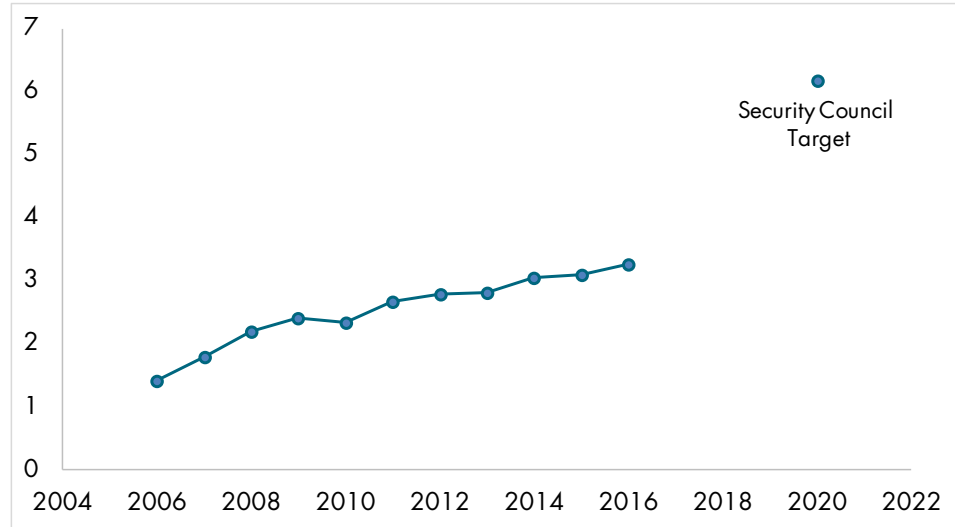
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1. Strickland, R. and Duvvury, N. (2003). Gender Equity and Peacebuilding. From Rhetoric to Reality ICRW Washington DC.

2. Karim, S. and Beardsley, K. (2016). Explaining sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions The role of female peacekeepers and gender equality in contributing countries. *Journal of Peace Research*, 53(1), 100-115.

3. www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2242.pdf

The number of women in peacekeeping missions remains persistently below the UN's target⁴



Using Financial Incentives to Speed Progress

The reason for the low share of women in peacekeeping operations is not simply a lack of women to send. Figure 2 compares the proportion of women peacekeepers in 2015 contingents with the estimated percentage of women in all military forces in 21 contributor countries. Several countries have a smaller proportion of women in their peacekeeping contributions than the proportion of women in their military forces.

One factor is political and/or military leadership that is unwilling to put women in harm's way in conflict situations: UN missions in low-income countries that have seen peacekeeper deaths are far less likely to have high female representation in peacekeeping forces.⁵ But there is growing evidence that women are effective frontline troops—they should not be excluded for a perceived lack of capacity.⁶ The greater success of peacekeeping operations with larger female contingents is further demonstration of that.

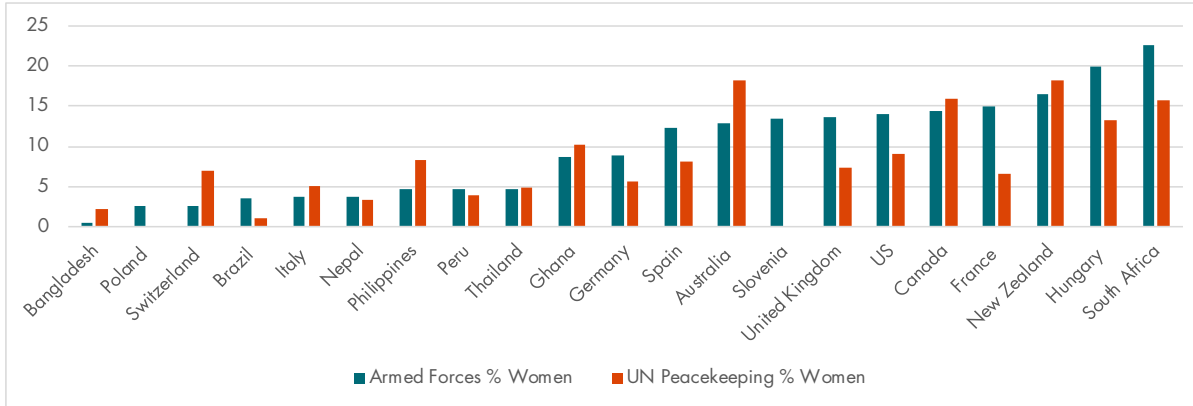
Several countries shown in figure 2 could easily send more women peacekeepers. In addition, countries seeking to increase or begin participation in UN peacekeeping operations could send a clear signal about their support for peace and for gender equality by including a higher proportion of women in their troop contributions than in their own military forces.

The evidence of several past missions is that the UN's favored approach of calling for or requiring greater participation in the specific language in a mission's mandate has limited effect in overcoming resistance. Financial payments may be more effective. Troop-providing countries are responding in part to financial incentives when they provide peacekeepers. The UN pays a fixed amount per troop per month—around US\$1400—and for many countries that is more than it costs to train and provide troops. That is one reason developing countries provide far more UN peacekeepers than

4. Sources listed here: www.cgdev.org/publication/using-financial-incentives-increase-number-women-un-peacekeeping
 5. Karim, S. and Beardsley, K. (2013). Female peacekeepers and gender balancing: token gestures or informed policymaking?. *International Interactions*, 39(4), 461-488.

6. MacKenzie, M. H. (2012). Let Women Fight: Ending the US Military's Female Combat Ban. *Foreign Aff.*, 91, 32.

Estimates of Women as a Percentage of Armed Forces 2000-2011 compared to 2015⁷



richer nations. Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Nepal and Senegal between them provide 30 percent of the UN's total peacekeeping force.⁸ A supplementary payment for the provision of women troops would act as an incentive to those countries to provide more gender-balanced components. It might be set at US\$303 per troop per month (the same supplement now paid for specialist troops) but the exact size of the payment should be a matter of discussion between funders and troop providers.

Supplemental financing could be targeted at operations with characteristics that suggest that greater participation by women might be particularly valuable—operations in low-income countries or countries with a worse history of sexual violence, for example. Additional financial incentives could be provided to countries which provided women officers as part of contingent forces, potentially on a sliding scale dependent on rank.

Costing the Fund

One model for financing payments would involve a stand-alone trust fund financed by voluntary contributions from donors. Such a fund financed to support a \$303-per-month payment to women accounting for 20 percent of total peacekeeping operations would need approximately US\$75 million a year. This compares to the \$8 billion total annual cost of peacekeeping operations. The size of military forces of contributing countries, and the proportion of women in those forces, indicate that sufficient numbers of women troops already exist to easily meet the aim of around 20,000 women UN peacekeepers (approximately 20 percent).

In order to ensure the greatest impact of a larger female peacekeeping contingent in operations and overall operational effectiveness, oversight would be necessary to ensure that women were not placed disproportionately in functions that were confined to base. And increasing women's representation in peacekeeping forces should be one part of a broader response including efforts to ensure greater representation of women in off-base activities and senior leadership of peacekeeping operations as well as greater training and oversight regarding sexual misconduct.

7. Sources listed here: www.cgdev.org/publication/using-financial-incentives-increase-number-women-un-peacekeeping

8. Bove, V. and Elia, L. (2011). Supplying peace: Participation in and troop contribution to peacekeeping missions. *Journal of Peace Research*, 48(6), 699-714.

Key Messages

- Having more women peacekeepers is linked with large reductions in sexual misconduct by peacekeepers and more sustainable peace.
- The UN could potentially raise the proportion of women peacekeepers to 20 percent for around \$75 million.
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Learn more at www.cgdev.org/women-peacekeepers.



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