

WOMEN MANAGING WEAPONS



Perspectives for
Increasing Women's
Meaningful Participation
in Weapons and
Ammunition Management

HANA SALAMA & EMMA BJERTÉN-GÜNTHER

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The Gender and Disarmament programme seeks to contribute to the strategic goals of achieving gender equality in disarmament forums and effectively applying gender perspectives in disarmament processes. It encompasses original research, outreach activities and resource tools to support disarmament stakeholders in translating gender awareness into practical action.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ATO	Ammunition Technical Officer
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
WAM	Weapons and Ammunition Management

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



HANA SALAMA is a Researcher in the Gender and Disarmament programme. Prior to joining UNIDIR, Hana was a consultant at the Small Arms Survey where she published several papers on armed violence monitoring in the Sahel and Sub-Saharan Africa. She also worked with the Oxford Research Group where she spearheaded a process which led to the creation of the first set of international standards on casualty recording. Hana has worked on a number of disarmament campaigns with international human rights and humanitarian NGOs. Her areas of expertise include gender analysis, civilian casualty recording, protection of civilians in conflict, small arms control and disarmament.



EMMA BJERTÉN-GÜNTHER is a Non-resident Researcher with the Gender and Disarmament programme at UNIDIR. Prior to joining UNIDIR, Emma worked on gender-responsive small arms control at the International Action Network on Small Arms. She also worked as a Researcher at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, where she published several publications related to the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, disarmament, and peace processes. She holds a Master's degree in Politics and International Relations with a specialization in Peace and Conflict Studies from Uppsala University. Her areas of expertise include gender analysis of small arms control and disarmament, as well as gender mainstreaming efforts.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the adoption of resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, there has been a strong emphasis by the international community to improve women's participation in decisions related to peace and security. Building on this, a growing number of States, United Nations entities and civil society groups have also called for the full and meaningful participation of women in decision-making in, and implementation of, arms control processes. However, as with most fields related to security and arms control, weapons and ammunition management (WAM) is an area of work in which women are underrepresented. International organizations have increasingly recognized that WAM can play a key role in supporting a country's transition to peace. Despite this, there has been no examination of women's participation in this field.

This study seeks to fill this gap and contribute to efforts towards gender equality by providing an original analysis of gendered patterns of engagement in technical arms control, focusing on professional roles that involve the direct contact with weapons and ammunition, for example stockpile managers, armourers, ammunition technical experts, and explosive ordnance disposal specialists. Based on interviews with practitioners, this study identifies challenges faced by women in this area, as well as good practices for increasing gender equality and diversity in WAM.

Creating a level playing field for women and men is not only the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do. Improving diversity in arms control will likely strengthen its effectiveness. Some national institutions, as well as international/regional organizations and civil society working in WAM, have recognized this and are working towards greater equality in this field. This study addresses some of these examples and serves as an overview on the state of gender equality in WAM.

KEY FINDINGS



Despite a growing number of statements and multilateral resolutions calling for the increased participation of women in the implementation of arms control measures, there are no statistics or studies assessing gender distribution of WAM professionals or the level of women's engagement in this field.



In interviews conducted for this study, practitioners expressed their views that WAM, particularly the technical aspects, is male-dominated field, not only in terms of gender composition but also in terms of the perception of it being a 'man's job' because of technical expertise being associated with ideas of masculinities.



Respondents reported that rigid gender norms shaped their professional experiences and created challenges to women in this field, including gender stereotyping, discriminatory attitudes and policies, lack of adequate infrastructure and unequal access to training opportunities.



Women technical specialists often reported that they were the only woman in their unit within their national military. Similarly, women who have worked in WAM technical roles with United Nations agencies, peace operations or specialized international NGOs also reported that they are one of few women and struggled to gain acceptance from male colleagues, especially in the beginning of their careers.



Respondents highlighted how WAM technical roles are increasingly performed by civilians who have received technical training, such as explosive ordnance disposal training, from outside of security sector institutions. This constitutes a key opportunity to increase diversity in WAM technical roles and to improve women's participation.



Women working in the field shared their experiences of how WAM technical trainings had increased their credibility and respect within the field, especially respect from male peers. Completing technical training is important to overcome gender prejudices, as it offers a validation of their quality as professionals.



Data collected for this study—encompassing 158 WAM trainings delivered between 2015 and April 2021 in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and South-Eastern Europe—show significant gender imbalances among participants, as men comprised 86.5 per cent of the total participants. In technical-oriented trainings, this proportion was even higher, as men represented 88.7 per cent of participants.



The vast majority of participants were government representatives (91.9 per cent), followed by participants from international organizations (4.9 per cent) and civil society organizations (2.7 per cent). Among government officials, women were grossly underrepresented, comprising only 11.7 per cent of participants. The proportion of women increases significantly when considering participants coming from international organizations and civil society organizations, where women comprised 44.4 per cent and 17.6 per cent, respectively.



Gender-disaggregated data on WAM trainers, encompassing 38 trainings, shows that men constituted nearly two thirds of the trainers and facilitators. Despite the limitations of the data, this may indicate that, proportionally, women are more likely to be involved as trainers than as participants in WAM trainings.

GOOD PRACTICES IN PROMOTING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN WAM

This study identifies a number of good practices for promoting gender equality in WAM including but not limited to the following.



In regard to WAM technical trainings, organizers noted that asking for nominations of a woman and a man was more effective than general calls for paying attention to gender balance, which are often ignored. Respondents highlighted the importance of following up with women that had undertaken basic trainings to ensure that they were being included in further trainings and have had equal opportunities to advance in the field.



Respondents highlighted the need to review recruitment processes in international organizations and specialized international NGOs involved in WAM. This includes recognizing diverse professional backgrounds, as well as training and experience gained outside of national institutions, and providing more opportunity for on-the-job training.



In regard to increasing women's participation in WAM-related national institutions such as the police or military, the study identifies a number of good practices including abolishing discriminatory policies and practices, adopting gender-sensitive legislation and policies, as well as conducting targeted recruitment campaigns.



Gender trainings and gender coaching programmes targeting senior officials of national institutions involved in WAM was highlighted as an effective way of promoting gender equality in these institutions.



Establishing and supporting professional associations of women working in national institutions involved in WAM has been identified as a good practice for making women professionals visible and providing them with support for career advancement.



Raising the profile of WAM technical experts who are women and exposing young women to careers in WAM is also identified as a way of increasing women's participation in WAM technical roles.



Donors are identified as key actors to promote equality of opportunity in WAM by making funding for WAM activities conditional on women's participation, and by providing funding towards initiatives which address the barriers to entry for women in this field.



This study asks where are the women in WAM?

It takes a rights-based approach to gender equality in the security sector, meaning that equal and gender-balanced participation at all levels should be seen as a goal in itself.

INTRODUCTION

Weapons and ammunition management (WAM) has become increasingly critical in addressing poorly controlled weaponry and associated ammunition that are impeding sustainable development and negatively impacting humanitarian assistance.¹ Implementation of a strong national WAM framework can effectively disrupt sources of supplies of materiel to non-State armed groups and spoilers, including criminal and terrorist groups, potentially limiting their capabilities that could exacerbate situations of insecurity. In this way strengthening WAM frameworks and practices can have a stabilizing effect and play an essential role in de-escalating conflicts.²

Similarly, to other areas of security and arms control, women are underrepresented in the field of WAM. This study asks where are the women in WAM? It takes a rights-based approach to gender equality in the security sector, meaning that equal and gender-balanced participation at all levels should be seen as a goal in itself.

A growing number of States, United Nations entities and civil society groups have called for the full and meaningful participation of women in decision-making in, and implementation of, arms control processes, in line with the goals of resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. This has been acknowledged in several international commitments related to arms control and disarmament.³ Specifically related to WAM, the 2019 Group of Governmental Experts on Problems Arising from the Accumulation of Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus included “gender mainstreaming of policy and practice” as one of substantive issues to be considered by the Group.⁴ As recognized by both the 1995 Beijing Platform of Action and the women, peace and security agenda, it is important to involve meaningfully both women and men in security-related decisions which will directly and indirectly affect their security.⁵ Meaningful participation refers to

1 UNODA/UNDP, 2021, *Effective Weapons and Ammunition Management in a Changing Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Context*. <https://front.un-arm.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/ddr-handbook-2ed-3.pdf>.

2 Savannah de Tessières, *The Role of Weapon and Ammunition Management in Preventing Conflict and Supporting Security Transitions Preliminary Findings and Key Policy Considerations*, UNIDIR, 2019, <https://www.unidir.org/files/publications/pdfs/the-role-of-weapon-and-ammunition-management-in-preventing-conflict-and-supporting-security-transitions-en-773.pdf>.

3 For example, the outcome documents of the 2018 Third Review Conference of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the 2019 Fifth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, the 2019 Oslo Action Plan of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, among others. This has also been recognized in resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council.

4 GGE on Problems Arising from the Accumulation of Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus, “Issue of Conventional Ammunition under United Nations Auspices: Note by the Secretariat”, UN document GGE/PACAS/2020/2, 31 October 2019, <https://undocs.org/GGE/PACAS/2020/2>.

5 Emily Schroeder et al., *Gender Awareness in Research on Small Arms and Light Weapons*, 2005, https://www.swisspeace.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/Media/Publications/WP1_2005.pdf, p. 6.

moving pass superficial efforts to “include women without genuinely extending them the opportunity to influence outcomes”.⁶

Despite increased efforts towards gender mainstreaming in the security sector and arms control, little attention has been given to understanding the gender imbalance in WAM. There have been no comprehensive studies on women professionals who work in WAM. Similarly, there are limited examinations of challenges faced by women, or good practices that could improve gender diversity in this field. Seeking to address these gaps, this study presents an analysis of the gendered patterns of engagement in WAM, highlighting women’s experiences performing technical roles, such as stockpile manager, armourer, ammunition and technical expert and explosive ordnance disposal specialist.⁷ The purpose is to understand potential challenges they face and to identify good practices for increasing gender equality and diversity in WAM and more specifically in WAM technical roles.

Evidence for this study has been drawn from a literature review, data collection and interviews with women and men working in various WAM roles in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and South-Eastern Europe where WAM plays a critical role in security sector reform processes and post-conflict stability. Interviews were also conducted with international gender experts in WAM and the security sector more broadly.⁸

The first section defines the field of WAM and explains why a gender perspective is crucial to the field. It provides an overview of functional areas, as well as of institutions and roles that are typically involved in WAM at a national level. The second section provides insight into gender balance in the WAM field by evaluating



VILLABOULY DISTRICT, LAO PDR

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An explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) task involving over 90 BLU-24 sub-munitions.

6 Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on Women and Peace and Security*, UN document S/2018/900, 9 October 2018, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/N1831325.pdf>, para. 29.

7 While this study recognizes that gender goes beyond the binary notion of male and female, it restricts itself to the categories of women and men. It does so in view of the limitations regarding empirical mapping of the numbers of non-binary or gender-fluid persons in WAM.

8 For an overview of interviews, see Annex A.

gender balance in institutions related to WAM, such as the armed forces and police forces and assessing the participation of women and men in WAM trainings based on data collected for this study. Based on in-depth interviews with WAM professionals, section three explores current gendered challenges identified by practitioners and academics active in this field. Section four highlights good practices for promoting gender equality and diversity in WAM. The final section summarizes the discussion and offers ideas for new avenues of research and reform in WAM practices. Appendix A gives an overview of the methodology, the data collection and the interviews conducted for this research. Appendix B provides glossary of central concepts for this study.



This study seeks to identify opportunities for greater gender diversity, in line with several international commitments towards gender equality in the labour force, development, disarmament, peace and security.

By providing knowledge and ideas for improving women's meaningful participation in WAM, this study seeks to identify opportunities for greater gender diversity, in line with several international commitments towards gender equality in the labour force, development, disarmament, peace and security. Creating a level playing field for women and men is not only the right thing to do, it is also the smart

thing to do, as improving diversity in arms control will likely strengthen its effectiveness. Furthermore, unlocking professional opportunities for women in WAM has the potential to transform power and gender relations not only among individuals and households, but also at the community level, which is a fundamental aspect of achieving true gender equality.



Women working in this field are contributing to overcome the limited articulation of women as victims and demonstrating the multiple roles that women can play in international security.

1. APPLYING A GENDER LENS TO WAM

Gender norms shape how weapons are seen and used in society, as well as the impacts of weapons and violence.⁹ Applying a gender lens to WAM can help to uncover these aspects. For instance, WAM has been recognized as a means to reduce armed violence and save lives by curbing the proliferation of weapons and ammunition¹⁰ whose impact is gendered and affects men, women, girls, boys as well as people of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, in different ways.¹¹ WAM also helps to prevent unplanned explosions at munition sites, a phenomenon which can have reverberating and devastating impacts on entire communities.¹² Moreover, women working in this field are contributing to overcome the limited articulation of women as victims and demonstrating the multiple roles that women can play in international security.¹³

1.1 WHAT WAM IS AND WHY IT MATTERS?

WAM is the oversight, accountability and governance of arms and ammunition throughout their life cycle, including the establishment of relevant national frameworks, processes and practices for safe and secure materiel acquisition, stockpiling, transfers, end-use control, tracing and disposal.¹⁴ WAM does not only focus on small arms and light weapons (SALW), but on a broader range of conven-

9 Emile LeBrun (ed.), *Gender-responsive Small Arms Control – A Practical Guide*, Small Arms Survey, 2019. <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/O-Handbooks/HB-07-Gender/SAS-GLASS-Gender-HB.pdf>.

10 Savannah de Tessières, *The Role of Weapon and Ammunition Management in Preventing Conflict and Supporting Security Transitions Preliminary Findings and Key Policy Considerations*, UNIDIR, 2019, <https://www.unidir.org/files/publications/pdfs/the-role-of-weapon-and-ammunition-management-in-preventing-conflict-and-supporting-security-transitions-en-773.pdf>.

11 Research on the gendered impacts of weapons and ammunition on people identifying beyond and across the gender binary is limited. Studies that do exist show that these groups often face the same risks as other women/men as well as additional risks due to their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. For an overview of gendered impacts of armed violence and exposure to weapons see Henri Myrtilinen, *Connecting the Dots: Arms Control, Disarmament and the Women Peace and Security Agenda*, UNIDIR, 2020, p. 18. For research on gun violence against gender minorities see Adam P. Romero, Ari M. Shaw, and Kerith J. Conron, *Gun Violence against Sexual and Gender Minorities in the United States*, 2019, <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/SGM-Gun-Violence-Apr-2019.pdf>.

12 See infographic, Quick facts on unplanned explosions at munitions sites (UEMS)* by Small Arms Survey <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/W-Infographics/SAS-UEMS-Infographic.pdf>

13 Salama, Hana, *A Man's Job? Women in Weapons and Ammunition Management*, UNIDIR commentary, 2021 <https://unidir.org/commentary/mans-job-women-weapons-and-ammunition-management>

14 Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS), Module 4.11 – Transitional Weapons and Ammunition Management, <https://www.unddr.org/modules/IDDRS-4.11-Transitional-Weapons-Ammunition-Management.pdf>.

tional weapons, ammunition and artillery, held by State actors.¹⁵

A life-cycle WAM approach refers to the point of manufacture or production through to disposal including destruction at the end of the life cycle. This approach is helpful in identifying relevant stakeholders that manage arms and ammunition at each stage of custody in the supply chain. Previous work by UNIDIR has identified 10 key functional areas of WAM (see Box 1). Even though these functional areas are helpful when understanding the life-cycle perspective, they are not exhaustive. Additional functional areas, among others, can include manufacturing controls, craft production, and artisanal weapons control and management; broader focus on civilian possession; community-based WAM; WAM by authorized civilian or non-public entities (e.g. private security actors); and border controls.¹⁶

The diversion of weapons and ammunition to armed spoilers, including criminal and terrorist groups, poses significant challenges to peace, security and development. WAM can have a stabilizing effect and limit the capabilities of these groups that otherwise could exacerbate situations of insecurity.¹⁸ Poor WAM can threaten the delivery of humanitarian assistance and impede sustainable development, as such, WAM has become an increasingly critical tool for organizations to address these issues.¹⁹

BOX 1 10 key functional areas in WAM¹⁷

1. National coordination mechanism
2. Legal and regulatory framework at national level
3. Transfer controls
4. Stockpile management
5. Marking
6. Record-keeping
7. Profiling and tracing of arms and ammunition
8. Processing of illicit arms and treatment of illicit ammunition
9. Weapons collection
10. Disposal including destruction

15 Although this study mainly refers to WAM for State-held weapons and ammunition or national stockpiles, legislative frameworks, policies and practices related to civilian-held weapons and ammunition may also be considered as part of WAM. See Hardy Giezendanner and Himayu Shiotani, *Reference Methodology for National Weapons and Ammunition Management Baseline Assessments*, UNIDIR, 2021; and Savannah de Tessières, *The Role of Weapon and Ammunition Management in Preventing Conflict and Supporting Security Transitions Preliminary Findings and Key Policy Considerations*, UNIDIR, 2019, <https://www.unidir.org/files/publications/pdfs/the-role-of-weapon-and-ammunition-management-in-preventing-conflict-and-supporting-security-transitions-en-773.pdf>.

16 Hardy Giezendanner and Himayu Shiotani, *Reference Methodology for National Weapons and Ammunition Management Baseline Assessments*, UNIDIR, 2021.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.; and Savannah de Tessières, *The Role of Weapon and Ammunition Management in Preventing Conflict and Supporting Security Transitions Preliminary Findings and Key Policy Considerations*, UNIDIR, 2019, <https://www.unidir.org/files/publications/pdfs/the-role-of-weapon-and-ammunition-management-in-preventing-conflict-and-supporting-security-transitions-en-773.pdf>.

19 UNODA, *Effective Weapons and Ammunition Management in a Changing Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Context*, 2021 <https://www.un.org/disarmament/ddr-handbook-2ed/>.

WAM contributes to reinforcing post-conflict recovery strategies through supporting the regulatory, operational and technical components of security sector reforms; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; as well as enforcing the obligations and objectives of arms embargoes and other relevant instruments.²⁰

The proliferation of unregulated and illicit arms and ammunition causes multifaceted humanitarian and security risks for societies that challenge the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This includes deaths as well as physical and psychological harm (SDGs 5, 11 and 16), internal displacement (SDG 10), disruptions in deliveries of humanitarian services (SDG 2) as well as undermining access to health and education (SDGs 3 and 4).²¹

The exposure to these risks are gendered and impact people with different gender identities differently.²² While men and boys account for the vast majority of the perpetrators of armed violence as well as the deaths caused by weapons, gender-based violence facilitated by diversion of arms and unregulated or illicit arms transfers often results in sexual violence specifically targeting women and girls.²³ Death and injuries of men may lead to secondary impacts due to gendered expectations on women. In many societies, caring for the wounded is overwhelmingly left to women. This often imposes additional care-giving roles, involving unpaid work of caring within the family, that often lead to reduced economical, educational and political opportunities.²⁴

Small arms are used in approximately one third of all femicides. In countries with the highest rates of femicide, more than half of these killings are perpetrated with small arms.²⁵ Research indicates that the presence of a firearm in a home increases

20 See Savannah de Tessières, *The Role of Weapon and Ammunition Management in Preventing Conflict and Supporting Security Transitions Preliminary Findings and Key Policy Considerations*, UNIDIR, 2019, <https://www.unidir.org/files/publications/pdfs/the-role-of-weapon-and-ammunition-management-in-preventing-conflict-and-supporting-security-transitions-en-773.pdf>; and J. Arthur Boutellis, *The Changing Role of Conventional Arms Control in Preventing and Managing Violent Conflicts*, 2018, <https://unidir.org/files/publications/pdfs/-en-725.pdf>.

21 Hardy Giezendanner and Himayu Shiotani, *Reference Methodology for National Weapons and Ammunition Management Baseline Assessments*, UNIDIR, 2021.

22 On the gendered impacts of weapons and ammunition diversion on women and girls, see General Assembly, *Impact of Arms Transfers on Human Rights: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, UN document A/HRC/44/29, 19 June 2020. On the gendered impacts of armed violence and exposure to weapons see Henri Myrtilinen, *Connecting the Dots: Arms Control, Disarmament and the Women Peace and Security Agenda*, UNIDIR, 2020, pp. 14–15.

23 UNODA, “Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament”, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/sg-agenda/en/>, p. 39; On the gendered impacts of weapons and ammunition diversion on women and girls, see General Assembly, *Impact of Arms Transfers on Human Rights: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, UN document A/HRC/44/29, 19 June 2020.

24 Emile LeBrun (ed.), *Gender-responsive Small Arms Control – A Practical Guide*, Small Arms Survey, 2019, p. 65.

25 Femicide is generally understood to as the intentional murder of women because they are women, but broader definitions include any killing of women or girls. Femicide is usually perpetrated by men. Most cases of femicide are committed by partners or ex-partners, and involve ongoing abuse in the home, threats or intimidation, sexual violence or situations where women have less power or fewer resources than their partner.
WHO, “Understanding and Addressing Violence against Women: Femicide”, https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/77421/WHO_RHR_12.38_eng.pdf; and Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium 06.10, “Women, Men and the Gendered Nature of Small Arms and Light Weapons”, 2017, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/MOSA-IC-06.10-2017EV1.0.pdf>.

the risk of violence against women.²⁶ Femicides are often committed by perpetrators previously known by the victim.²⁷ The threat or the implied threat of the use of SALW can also have severe impact on human rights and can be considered a form of gender-based violence.²⁸ Through strong regulatory frameworks and related practices, WAM can play a role in preventing violence against women facilitated by weapons and ammunition. Integrating a gender perspective into WAM could for example include the assessment of whether there are regulations or procedures in place to determine under which circumstance officers are allowed to take service weapons home and assess legislation and practice related to civilian owned firearms.

WAM and specifically strengthened ammunition stockpile management processes can also mitigate the risks posed by unplanned explosions at munition and other sites. Unplanned explosions at munition sites can have devastating and gendered impacts on surrounding communities in times of peace or conflict.²⁹ Inadequate WAM practices such as poor application of ammunition storage standards, record-keeping and oversight can lead to such incidents. These incidents, often occurring in residential communities, involve sometimes hundreds of deaths and injuries per incident, as well as infrastructure damage, affecting men, women, girls, boys, non-binary or gender fluid persons, both in the immediate term and long term.³⁰

26 Small Arms Survey, “Too Close to Home: Guns and Intimate Partner Violence”, in Small Arms Survey 2013, <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/A-Yearbook/2013/en/Small-Arms-Survey-2013-Chapter-2-EN.pdf>.

27 Ibid.

28 See glossary in Annex B for a definition on gender-based violence; on the gendered impacts of weapons and ammunition diversion on women and girls, General Assembly, *Impact of Arms Transfers on Human Rights: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, UN document A/HRC/44/29, 19 June 2020.

29 See “Scale and Scope” in Small Arms Survey, *Handbook on Unplanned Explosions at Munition Sites*, 2014, <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/Q-Handbooks/HB-03-UEMS/SAS-HB03-UEMS-Intro-Part-I.pdf>, p. 9; and updated data as of March 2020, <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/W-Infographics/SAS-UEMS-Infographic.pdf>.

30 Small Arms Survey, “UEMS in Residential Areas”, 2020, <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/V-Fact-sheets/SAS-Fact-Sheet-UEMS.pdf>.

1.2 WHO IS INVOLVED IN WAM?

Based on the functional areas of WAM, as well as broader national security objectives, several institutions and stakeholders may be involved in the budgeting, planning, coordination and implementation of WAM. The primary responsibility for WAM lies with the government of the concerned State, which has the responsibility and right to apply its own national standards to WAM measures within its territory in compliance with relevant international and regional arms control instruments and applicable legal frameworks. To ensure that the planning and implementation of WAM are conducted in accordance with international arms control instruments, standards and guidance (including the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines and the Modular Small-Arms-Control Implementation Compendium), the United Nations offers support and specialist knowledge to national governments.³¹

Usually a national authority takes the lead in coordinating WAM processes with the involvement of several stakeholders. The following national authorities, or their equivalent, are most frequently engaged in the coordination and implementation of WAM:

- ministries of defence, foreign affairs, interior, justice, trade, etc.;
- national security institutions and related agencies like national intelligence, customs, border control, etc.;
- national security services including the armed forces, law enforcement and related services;
- national stakeholders responsible for security sector reform; peacebuilding; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; violence reduction; and sanctions including arms embargoes; and
- national coordinating bodies relevant to WAM such as National Small Arms Commissions.³²

In some contexts, international actors—for example United Nations entities (including peace operations and special political missions and specialized entities), regional and subregional organizations, international organizations and specialized international NGOs—may also be involved in budgeting, planning, coordinating and providing technical WAM capacity to the State.³³

In many countries, national civil society organizations have played an important

31 Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS), Module 4.11 – Transitional Weapons and Ammunition Management, <https://www.unddr.org/modules/IDDRS-4.11-Transitional-Weapons-Ammunition-Management.pdf>.

32 Hardy Giezendanner and Himayu Shiotani, *Reference Methodology for National Weapons and Ammunition Management Baseline Assessments*, UNIDIR, 2021.

33 Based on *ibid.*

role in the formulation of WAM policies and practices by highlighting security concerns and the holistic impact of armed violence on their communities. Through sustained advocacy and influence, many of them have contributed to bringing change in societal attitudes towards weapons, as well as policy changes in arms control by advocating to national authorities on international treaties related to arms control and their implementation.³⁴

The types of roles in WAM vary from one functional area to another (see Box 1 for functional areas of WAM) and depend on the institutional arrangements in a specific national context. They can involve civilian and non-civilian roles, as well as technical or policy roles. This division is not strict and varies from one State to another. Respondents in this study have noted a growing trend of WAM technical roles being filled by civilians who have received training outside of national security institutions, such as through international organizations, specialized international NGOs and the private sector.

This study focuses on functions that involve direct contact with weapons and ammunition such as stockpile management, marking and record-keeping, profiling and tracing of ammunition, processing of seized weapons and disposal (referred to in this document as ‘WAM technical roles’). Technical roles include but are not limited to roles such as stockpile managers, armourers, ammunition technical experts, and explosive ordnance disposal specialists (see box 2 for more information on WAM technical roles). This focus stems from the understanding that women face specific challenges in these areas, where technical expertise has been associated with masculinized norms.³⁵



ED DAMAZIN, SUDAN

Disarmament launches in Sudan

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34 See for example UNODA, *Advocacy by Non-governmental Organizations to Strengthen the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons*, 2018, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/civil-society-20181.pdf>; and *Civil Society Engagement in Disarmament Processes: The Case for a Nuclear Weapons Ban*, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/civil-society-2016.pdf>.

35 See chapters 11–13 in Vanessa Farr et al. (eds), *Sexed Pistols: The Gendered Impacts of Small Arms and Light Weapons*, 2009; and Henri Myrtilinen, “Gender and the Gun: Gender responsive Small Arms Programming”, in Emile LeBrun (ed.), *Gender-responsive Small Arms Control – A Practical Guide*, Small Arms Survey, 2019, p. 71.



Ammunition Technical Experts, often referred to as Ammunition Technical Officers (ATOs) or Ammunition Technicians, conduct technical assessments and provide technical recommendations on improving the safety and security of ammunition stockpiles. This role also involves developing procedures and documentation with regard to ammunition management and practices. ATOs can also be responsible for the final disposal of ammunition. Additional tasks could include delivering training to staff involved in ammunition management.³⁷



Explosive Ordnance Disposal Specialists, often referred to as EOD technical experts, are responsible for developing procedure and documentation with regard to detection, identification, evaluation, render safe, recovery and final disposal of unexploded explosive ordnance. The role may also involve the task of rendering safe and/or disposing of explosive ordnance that has become hazardous by damage or deterioration.³⁸ Additional tasks could include delivering training to staff involved in disposal activities.³⁹



Stockpile Managers/Storekeepers are responsible for the weapons and ammunition that are stored in an armoury or ammunition depot assigned to a unit. The role includes ensuring the physical security of stored materiel and keeping track of the volume and quality of weapons and ammunition (record-keeping) including answering for any missing items and reporting non-functional equipment.⁴⁰



Armourers are responsible for keeping weapon systems functional and safe to use. They conduct repairs and routine inspection of all weapon systems, including in challenging field conditions.⁴¹ This role usually requires lengthy technical training.

36 This list provides an illustration of selected specializations found in national militaries, but it is by no means exhaustive.

37 Consultations with UNODA on UN SaferGuard Management Expert Profiles.

38 International Ammunition Technical Guidelines 01.40, "Glossary of Terms, Definitions and Abbreviations", 2015, <https://unoda-web.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/assets/convarms/Ammunition/IATG/docs/IATG01.40.pdf>.

39 Consultations with UNODA on UN SaferGuard Management Expert Profiles. In addition to EOD training one can receive specialized training as an improvised explosive device (IED) disposal specialist.

40 Small Arms Survey, "Facilitating PSSM Assistance in the Sahel and Beyond", *Issue Brief*, no. 18, 2016, <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/G-Issue-briefs/SAS-IB18-PSSM-Sahel.pdf>, p. 2.

41 UK Ministry of Defense, Armourer definition, <https://apply.army.mod.uk/roles/royal-electrical-and-mechanical-engineers/armourer>.



Women and men have the right to participate in decision-making in, and implementation of, arms control and disarmament processes.

2. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN WAM

Women and men have the right to participate in decision-making in, and implementation of, arms control and disarmament processes. This has been acknowledged in several multilateral resolutions and highlighted in the review processes of many treaties and protocols, as well as by the Secretary-General.⁴² In the specific field of ammunition management, Member States recognized the need to encourage the full involvement of both women and men in ammunition management practice and policy.⁴³ Additionally, the 2019 Group of Governmental Experts on Problems Arising from the Accumulation of Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus included “gender mainstreaming of policy and practice” as one of substantive issues to be considered by the Group.⁴⁴ Despite these efforts, women remain grossly underrepresented in discussions related to weapons. This is also reflected in disarmament diplomacy, as previous research has shown.⁴⁵

Gender diversity, and diversity more broadly, is key to cultivating ideas and perspectives that can contribute to ensuring that WAM policies and practices adequately respond to the different needs of all groups affected by diversion, misuse, and illicit proliferation of arms and ammunition, as well as by unplanned explosions at munition and other sites. In some WAM related areas of work, such as humanitarian demining, for example, it has already been shown that a diverse and gender-balanced work force increases the efficiency and effectiveness of activities and benefits the community as a whole by ensuring a coherent response to differentiated needs and the priorities of men, women, girls and boys impacted by mines. Evidence also shows that mixed demining teams, including both females and males, tend to have fewer injuries.⁴⁶

Additionally, studies from the field of humanitarian mine action have shown that employment of women as deminers has a positive effect on their socioeconomic standing as well as on their families. For example, in Angola, the HALO Trust has developed the “100 Women in Demining” project, an initiative to increase women’s

42 UNODA, “Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament”, 2018, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/sg-agenda/en/>; UNODA, “Disarmament Agenda Implementation Plan Action 37”, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/sg-agenda/en/#actions>.

43 General Assembly, resolution A/RES74/65, 20 December 2019, <https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/A/RES/74/65>, p. 1.

44 GGE on Problems Arising from the Accumulation of Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus, “Issue of Conventional Ammunition under United Nations Auspices: Note by the Secretariat”, UN document GGE/PACAS/2020/2, 31 October 2019, <https://undocs.org/GGE/PACAS/2020/2>.

45 Renata Hessmann Dalaqua et al. *Still Behind the Curve: Gender Balance in Arms Control, Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Diplomacy*, UNIDIR, 2019, <https://unidir.org/publication/still-behind-curve>.

46 United Nations Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes, 2019, https://unmas.org/sites/default/files/mine_action_gender_guidelines_web_0.pdf; and Gender and Mine Action Programme, *Gender-Sensitive Recruitment and Training in Mine Action: Guidelines*, 2013, <https://www.gmap.ch/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/RT-Guidelines-EN-HR.pdf>.

participation in mine clearance. It was observed that the income earned by employed women through this project paved the way for them to pay their children's school fees. The project also enabled women employees to purchase land, to have access to other resources, and to invest in their own education.⁴⁷ These opportunities for women become crucial not least in post-conflict contexts where many men have lost their lives and women are left as the sole provider for their children and families with scarce opportunities to work. Similar studies in Lebanon and Colombia linked women's employment with a change in decision-making power in the household. Employed as deminers, and contributing significantly to the household income, women reported being taken more seriously by their family members and in some cases having a greater influence in decisions regarding money allocation and expenditure in their families.⁴⁸ Improving women's access to the job market has the potential to transform power and gender relations not only among individuals and within households, but also at the community level, which is a fundamental aspect of achieving true gender equality.⁴⁹



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Improving Communication and Advocacy skills of women military officers Training held 2021 as part of *Strengthening Regional Cooperation on Gender Mainstreaming in Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans* project

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- 47 HALO Trust, "Meet Angolan Deminer Luciana", 2017, <https://www.halotrust.org/latest/halo-updates/stories/female-empowerment/>; and HALO Trust, "HALO Nagorno Karabakh celebrates Women's Day", 2016, <https://www.halotrust.org/latest/halo-updates/stories/halo-celebrates-international-womens-day/>.
- 48 Research was conducted in Colombia with the Colombian Army, HALO Trust and Norwegian People's Aid and in Lebanon with Danish Church Aid, Mines Advisory Group and Norwegian People's Aid. See Franziska Ehlert, Zeila Lauletta and Nelly Schläfereit, *Women in Humanitarian Mine Action: Assessing Agency in Families and Communities*, 2016, <https://www.gmap.ch/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/final-report-ARS-2016.pdf>, pp. 30–34.
- 49 Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining and UNDP, *Leaving No One Behind: Mine Action and the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2017, <https://www.gichd.org/en/resources/publications/detail/publication/leaving-no-one-behind-mine-action-and-the-sustainable-development-goals/>, pp. 40–42.

2.1 WHERE ARE THE WOMEN? SEARCHING FOR GENDER-DISAGGREGATED DATA

Following the question posed by Cynthia Enloe, this research sought to ask “where are the women?” in WAM.⁵⁰ Field observations show that women’s participation in WAM is low, but there is no accessible data that can provide a systematic overview of the gender balance in WAM and its technical roles. This creates challenges when aiming to assess the current level of women’s participation as well as monitoring progress towards gender equality.

In many contexts, WAM functional areas, for example stockpile management, marking and record-keeping, profiling and tracing, processing of illicit weapons and ammunition as well as disposal, are usually carried out by national security institutions such as the armed forces and the police. Therefore, it is useful to take a closer look at the levels of women’s participation in these institutions to understand the potential career pathways for women in WAM. However, this study acknowledges that a high representation of women is not necessarily an indication of gender equality. Gender equality requires looking beyond the numbers of women and men and examining the institutional culture to ensure that opportunities are distributed equally. Similarly, a higher proportion of women in security sector institutions may not necessarily lead to more women in WAM. As described below, security sector institutions still maintain a gendered division of labour, where women are more concentrated in certain areas such as in medical and administrative roles. As such this study also considers the role of non-State institutions in increasing gender equality in WAM.

Gender disaggregated data on national militaries is not available for all States and even those that report on women’s participation in the military have substantial gaps in reporting periods.⁵¹ Previous research shows that women are underrepresented in national militaries, and their representation is specifically low in combat positions. The most recent data from NATO members and partner States indicates that women represent an average of 11 per cent of military personnel on active duty.⁵² There are only a handful of States where women make up more than 20

50 Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases; Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, 1989.

51 A notable exception to this are the reports produced by NATO member and partner States to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives, which are produced regularly and offer comprehensive gender analysis on the distribution of women in the different branches of the military. These reports rely on voluntary submissions from NATO members and partner States. See NATO, *Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives*, 2018, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/7/pdf/200713-2018-Summary-NR-to-NCGP.pdf; and Robert Ulrich Nagel, “The Known Knowns and Known Unknowns in Data on Women, Peace and Security”, 2019, <https://www.lse.ac.uk/women-peace-security/assets/documents/2019/WPS19Nagel.pdf>, p. 9.

52 See NATO, *Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives*, 2018, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/7/pdf/200713-2018-Summary-NR-to-NCGP.pdf; and Vanessa F. Newby, and Clotilde Sebag, “Gender Sidestreaming? Analysing Gender Mainstreaming in National Militaries and International Peacekeeping”, *European Journal of International Security*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2020.20>.

per cent of the national armed forces, including the Dominican Republic, Israel, Jamaica, Namibia and South Africa. In that group, Israel stands out, as women comprise 40 per cent of the military.⁵³

Women have historically been restricted to roles in the medical and administrative services and, in general, women have had limited, if any, access to military academies. Today, there remains limitations and restrictions for women when choosing certain branches and services. In many States, women are still



Women have historically been restricted to roles in the medical and administrative services and, in general, women have had limited, if any, access to military academies.

excluded from combat roles and roles that are considered high risk of exposure to combat.⁵⁴ This could be explained by an underlying view of women as inherently in need of protection. As other researchers have noted, this perception tends to devalue women's contribution to national militaries, limit their opportunities for promotion and inhibit their retention.⁵⁵

It is equally challenging to find regional or national gender-disaggregated data for national police forces.⁵⁶ Despite this, it is safe to say that women represent a minority in police forces across the various regions of the world. Similarly to what is observed in armed forces, women tend to be overrepresented in administrative roles. An international review shows how in the early twentieth century the inclusion of women in police forces was seen as desirable based on the assumption about women's gender roles such as community-based work, work with other women, children and the elderly.⁵⁷ These assumptions seem to be persistent and explain the gendered division of labour, which consequently keeps women away from roles where weapons are handled and managed.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Tim Prenzler and Georgina Sinclair, "The Status of Women Police Officers: An International Review", *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2013, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijlci.2012.12.001>.

57 Ibid.

2.2 GENDER (IM)BALANCE IN WAM TRAININGS

As previously noted, WAM is no longer a realm reserved to national militaries and security forces but involves a plethora of organizations that support national actors by providing technical expertise and capacity-building.⁵⁸ Some of these organizations offer trainings that provide increased opportunities for military and civilians to acquire technical skills and to be recruited into WAM technical roles, both to national stakeholders and employees of international/regional organizations, the United Nations and specialized international NGOs. Looking at the gender balance in WAM-related trainings might therefore provide an indicator for future trends on gender balance within WAM and illustrate whether women are being offered opportunities to become technical experts in WAM.

This research sought to obtain gender-disaggregated data of participants in WAM-related trainings. After reaching out to a number of organizations, it was



BRIA, CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

©UN PHOTO

Seized ammunition of ex-Séléka rebels.

possible to gather data from seven organizations, mainly international assistance providers,⁵⁹ covering a total of 158 trainings delivered between 2015 and April 2021 in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and South-Eastern Europe.⁶⁰ The vast majority (149) of the trainings focused on technical areas, including sessions on topics such as stockpile management, marking and record-keeping, profiling arms and ammunition, ammunition technics and EOD. While these trainings also are anchored in policies and strategies of governments and the implementation of legal frameworks, less than 6 per cent (9 trainings) were policy-oriented trainings focusing solely on areas such as gender-mainstreaming, national action plan writing or implementation, legal frameworks like international

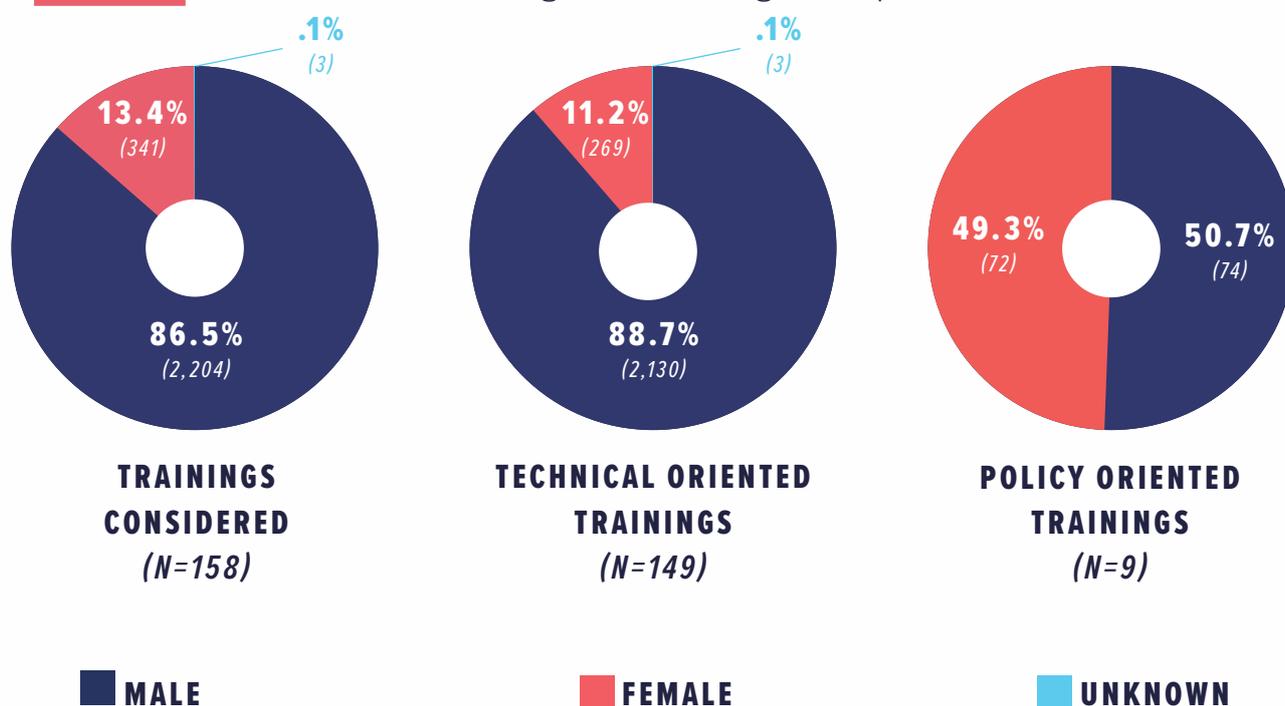
58 Hardy Giezendanner and Himayu Shiotani, *Reference Methodology for National Weapons and Ammunition Management Baseline Assessments*, UNIDIR, 2021.

59 In this study, 'international assistance providers' refers to international organizations, regional and subregional organizations and specialist international non-government organizations.

60 The seven organizations that provided data are the HALO Trust, Kofi Annan International Peace-keeping Training Center, South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the United Nations Mine Action Service Colombia, the United Nations Mine Action Service Democratic Republic of Congo, and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament.

treaties, and obligations as well as national legislations. The consolidated numbers collected by this research are presented in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1 Gender Balance Among WAM Training Participants

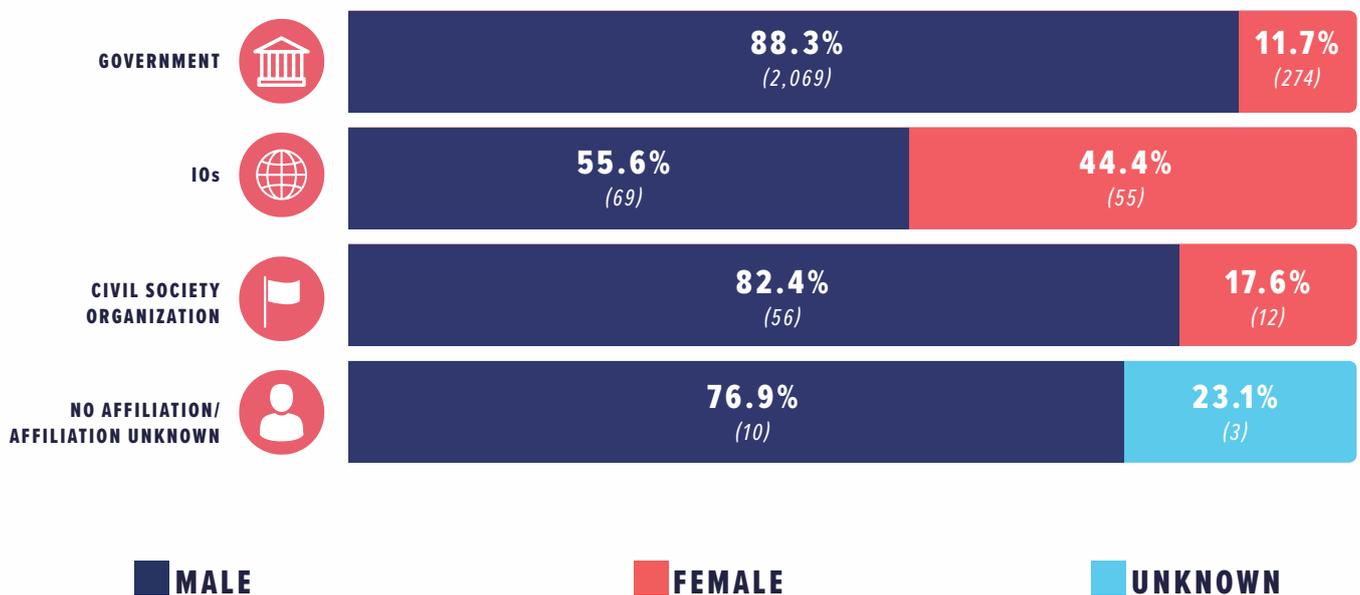
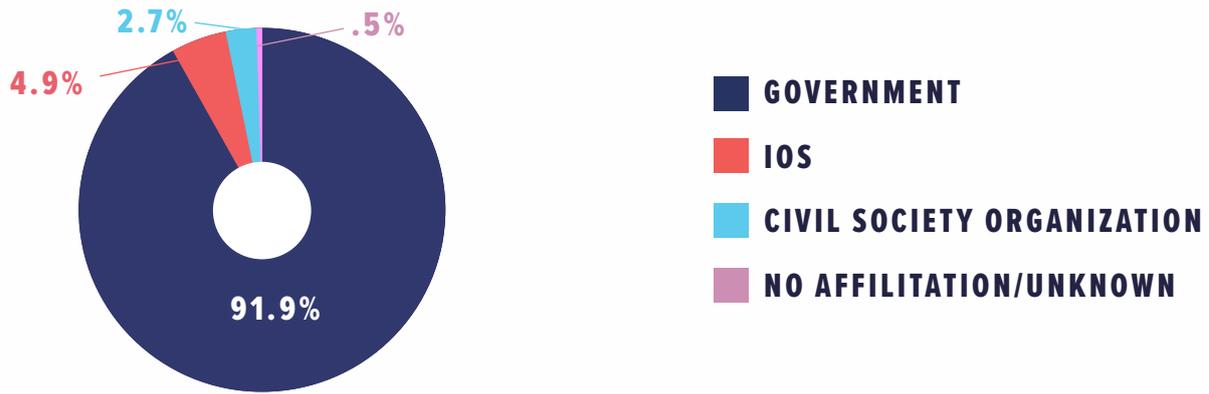


From the data presented in Figure 1, men constituted the majority (86.5 per cent) of participants in overall WAM-related trainings. In technical-oriented trainings, this proportion is even higher, as men represented 88.7 per cent of participants. This is in sharp contrast to the data focused on policy-oriented trainings. In those settings, gender balance has been achieved, as men and women are, on average, equally represented.

While these numbers and average proportions provide an overview of capacity building in WAM, it conceals regional discrepancies. For example, the proportion of women was notably higher in trainings delivered in South-Eastern Europe, where women comprised 28.2 per cent of the participants in technical-oriented trainings.

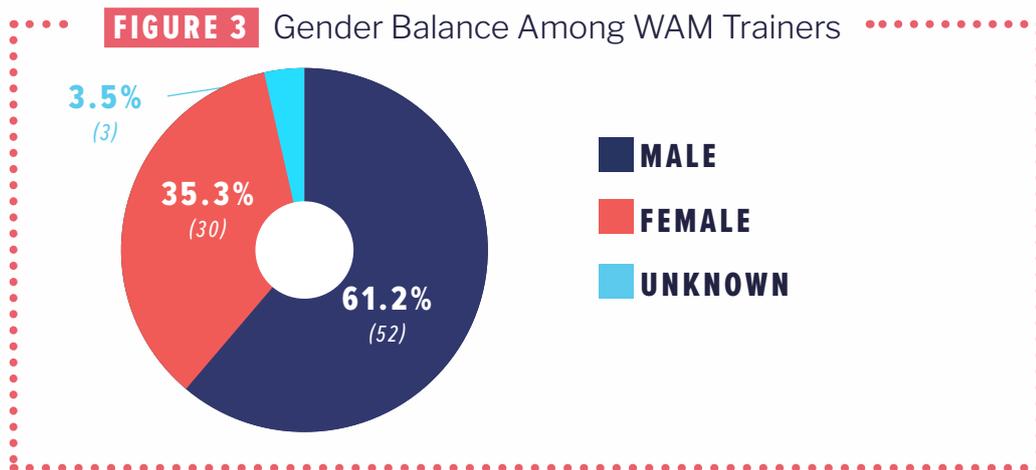
Figure 2 illustrates the proportion of women participants disaggregated by their affiliation. It shows that the vast majority of participants were government representatives (91.9 per cent), followed by participants from international organizations (4.9 per cent) and civil society organizations (2.7 per cent). Affiliation was unknown for 0.5 per cent of the participants. Among government officials, women are grossly underrepresented, comprising only 11.7 per cent of participants. The proportion of women increases significantly when considering participants coming from international organizations and civil society organizations, where women comprised 44.4 per cent and 17.6 per cent, respectively. This data is in line with field observations that the inclusion of non-State actors tend to increase women's participation in arms control and disarmament.

FIGURE 2 Proportion of Participants by Gender and Affiliation



Beyond participants, the research also analysed the gender balance among trainers. Gender-disaggregated data was available for 38 trainings, encompassing instructors as well as external experts delivering presentations. In those trainings, men constituted nearly two thirds of the trainers and presenters, as shown in Figure 3.⁶¹ Although the data sample for trainers is smaller than for overall participants, it may indicate that women are more likely to be present as trainers than as participants in WAM trainings. If true, this could be an indication that these organizations are taking steps towards exemplifying gender equality within their own organization. It can also be seen as an indication that these organizations recognize the value of promoting women as role models to attract more women to the field.

61 The data covers 38 trainings delivered by the following organizations: the HALO Trust, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center, South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the United Nations Mine Action Service Colombia, United Nations Mine Action Service in Democratic Republic of Congo, and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa.



It is important to note that these figures are based on limited data, provided by seven organizations, and only on trainings where gender-disaggregated data was available. Nevertheless, it offers clues about access to capacity-building in this area. In this research, it became evident that not all organizations providing trainings related to WAM collect gender-disaggregated data. It could be argued that the organizations that do not collect such data strive less for gender-balanced participation. If that were the case, it could mean that this data does not reflect the reality of the field, and that the level of women’s participation could be even lower. In any case, these limitations and potential biases serve to underscore the need for more comprehensive data collection and systematic analysis of the relation between gender and opportunities for capacity-building in the field of WAM.



These limitations and potential biases serve to underscore the need for more comprehensive data collection and systematic analysis of the relation between gender and opportunities for capacity-building in the field of WAM.



The field of WAM is male-dominated, not only in terms of gender composition but also in its perception of technical expertise associated with ideas of masculinity.

3. WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES IN WAM

To better understand women's experiences and the gendered dynamics in WAM, 37 interviews were conducted with practitioners working in this area. The interviews were conducted with practitioners with experience of working within the field of WAM in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and South-Eastern Europe, as well as with international gender experts. Although the research focused mostly on women's experience in WAM, both women and men were interviewed and shared their views on gender dynamics of the field. In total, 25 women and 12 men participated in this stage of the research. Among the respondents, 15 were representatives of civil society organizations, think tanks or academia, 13 were State representatives, and 9 were from international organizations.⁶²

Respondents were asked to reflect on questions related to gender balance within their working environment or in WAM, if they or their colleagues faced any challenges in their position due to their gender and what had helped their own career advancement. They were also asked about their experiences of gender norms as well as any barriers or opportunities these presented. This section presents the main themes that emerged in the interviews.



VILLABOULY DISTRICT, LAO PDR

©HALOTRUST

An explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) task involving an unexploded 750-pound air-dropped bomb located 20 metres from a village.

62 For an overview of interviews, see Annex A.

3.1 BEING THE ONLY WOMAN

Respondents interviewed for this study pointed out how the field of WAM is male-dominated, not only in terms of gender composition but also in its perception of technical expertise associated with ideas of masculinity. Women technical specialists often reported that they were the only woman in their unit within their national military. In a few instances, there were one or two other women officers.

They described what it is like to be the only woman in a male-dominated field. A number of women who were technical field managers in stockpile management or held roles as ATO or EOD officers and worked in United Nations agencies, peace operations or specialized international NGOs reported that they had struggled to gain acceptance from male colleagues, especially in the beginning of their careers. One respondent described how people are initially surprised when they see her deliver WAM-related trainings. They could say things like “Oh, really? So, a woman is able to teach these things too?”. She described how they are often looking at her with scepticism in the beginning, and how they give her respect when they eventually realize that she has expertise. Another respondent shared a similar experience about how she was first met with resistance and comments like “Why are we going to listen to a woman? What does she know about small arms?”.

Respondents argued that the long history of male dominance of military institutions creates an institutional culture in which men are considered more fit for the job and women are considered to be breaking taboos when they enter this field.

Women who were working in WAM technical roles from different regions identified that acceptance by male peers is very much dependent on the geographical context and dependent

on experience or training. Some respondents reported having a good relationship with their male national counterparts but felt ignored by national stakeholders in other regions and having a harder time to convince them that they were in charge. These experiences show how women often have their abilities questioned and often are made to feel like they do not belong in the field.



Respondents argued that the long history of male dominance of military institutions creates an institutional culture in which men are considered more fit for the job and women are considered to be breaking taboos when they enter this field.

3.2 HARMFUL STEREOTYPES AND RIGID INSTITUTIONS

There are multiple factors that can explain women's underrepresentation in WAM technical roles. Most women working in WAM technical roles had experienced gender stereotyping within their organization due to what they described as the male and military nature of the field. Respondents described how there seems to be preconceptions that this is a "man's job". For example, one respondent described how she was discouraged when she wanted to specialize as an ammunition technician. She was told by a male military recruiter that "this is a male-dominated job and it is too difficult for you", which only strengthened her resolve.



Most women working in WAM technical roles had experienced gender stereotyping within their organization due to what they described as the male and military nature of the field.

She was told by a male military recruiter that "this is a male-dominated job and it is too difficult for you", which only strengthened her resolve.

Misconceptions of gender equality was another topic addressed by respondents. For example, it was

described how there were cases where military instructors had thought that gender equality meant the same as the protection of women, meaning that women were not invited to do specific exercises or not allowed to do field work that was considered as "too dangerous" for women.

Respondents also pointed to discriminatory policies or laws that might hinder women's participation when it comes to accessing military schools, requirements for recruitments or accessing specific positions, specifically within the military where in some countries technical roles only recently opened to women.

After being discouraged in their own countries, some women decided to pursue an international career in WAM, working for United Nations agencies or specialized international NGOs. They saw limited opportunity for advancement within their national militaries in this field and suggested that more opportunities were available to them abroad.

Since qualifications for technical roles such as stockpile managers, ATOs and EOD officers have traditionally been acquired via police or military training, WAM roles in civilian organizations also tend to be male-dominated. This was recognized by respondents who pointed to the fact that vacancies in international organizations and specialized international NGOs were advertised with the requirement of usually 10 or more years of military or police experience. Respondents highlighted how this requirement tends to severely decrease the pool of candidates, as even the limited number of women who have obtain their qualifications in the military may not have been in these positions for that length of time, due to the fact that many of them are newly trained or have changed their position.

It was recognized that women with such a long experience of the field are hard to find, specifically outside Western European and North American militaries, which not only narrows down the selection process for women in general but also limits the pool of potential candidates in terms of national background. Previous research shows that women in national armed forces tend to stay in the service less time when compared to men as some women might see a military career as being incompatible with family life.⁶³ This indicates a failure on the part of militaries to retain women with a more supportive and flexible work environment, leading to women leaving the military when finding opportunities elsewhere.

Some respondents pointed to work–life balance as an issue. As women are seen primarily as mothers and caretakers with family obligations, both women and men recognized that women often face a bigger challenge in combining family obligations with working in the field. These gendered expectations interfere with career progression, as colleagues may assume that women are not available for missions including travelling. This can affect all women, as one respondent pointed out that she did not have children but still experienced discrimination and challenges in her career based on the assumption that she could become pregnant and have children.

Similarly, some respondents argued that women often are overlooked for career development opportunities, such as trainings or field postings, because they are seen as unavailable due to family and childcare responsibilities.



Women often are overlooked for career development opportunities, such as trainings or field postings, because they are seen as unavailable due to family and childcare responsibilities.

63 See Vanessa F. Newby, and Clotilde Sebag, “Gender Sidestreaming? Analysing Gender Mainstreaming in National Militaries and International Peacekeeping”, *European Journal of International Security*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2020.20>. In contrast, another study based on interviews with subject matter experts in ammunition management describes that women may be more likely to stay longer in their position, reducing the need to constantly recruit new staff and retrain personnel; see Emile LeBrun, “Making Room for improvement: Gendered Dimensions of the Life-cycle Management of Ammunition”, UNODA, 2020, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/gender-dimension-of-lcma/>.

3.3 LACK OF ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE

A common theme in the interviews with WAM practitioners was the difficult working environment. Both men and women stated that the work could take place in remote areas with harsh conditions. To complicate matters, these postings may lack appropriate working conditions and adequate infrastructure for women, such as separate toilets, showers and dormitories.

The lack of adequate infrastructure for women in field facilities may lead to women being assigned to or volunteering for so-called ‘desk roles’. As one respondent pointed out, this can have an effect on remuneration and slow career progression. Extra remuneration is often offered to those who work in hardship circumstances. Additionally, extra trainings are offered to those who serve in the field.

Respondents also reported that in international organizations such as the United Nations or specialized international NGOs, women’s career progression in WAM is hindered by the fact that many of the posts are ‘non-family’ duty stations.⁶⁴ Some women reported that this discouraged them from applying to these positions. Although the conditions regarding ‘non-family’ duty stations can be a barrier for both men and women, they present more of a challenge to women, who due to gendered norms in most societies often are ascribed to be the primary caregivers, and therefore do not have the opportunity to be away from their families for long periods of time.⁶⁵

These experiences describe what often is referred to as the ‘add women and stir’ phenomena, where women are being added into existing structures without changing the existing norms that create challenges for women’s participation.⁶⁶

64 Non-family duty stations are those which are family restrictive due to security reasons. In view of this, family members are not authorized to travel to such duty stations for extended periods.

65 The United Nations System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity confirms this being an issue among employees. A study from 2015 of both men and women shows how two thirds of the staff that left the field did so due to “involuntary” reasons. Family reasons were described as the most common reason. The strategy also describes how the security situation in combination with the designation for family or non-family duty stations are contributing factors to the higher turnover among women working in field mission locations and the lower application rates among candidates that are women. United Nations, *System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity*, 2017, <https://www.un.org/gender/content/strategy>, p. 41.

66 This is also addressed in the United Nations System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity, which emphasizes that it is not enough to add women into existing organizations unless the organizational culture is transformed in order to create an inclusive working environment for all; see the Secretary-General’s remarks to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019, 11 October 2017, <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2017-10-11/secretary-generals-remarks-fifth-committee-general-assembly-proposed>.

3.4 UNEQUAL ACCESS TO TRAININGS

Respondents addressed how WAM technical trainings by international organizations and specialized international NGOs are only reaching a minority of women in national security institutions and other WAM-related institutes. Actors from different regions that organize trainings expressed their concern that participating organizations nominate few women or sometimes only men to their trainings.

A respondent who was part of organizing such trainings described how they reach out to the military and ask for nomination of personnel to take EOD courses. Usually, the military will send a list including only men, which leads the organizers to follow-up with a request to include women as well. Similar stories were told by other respondents describing how they tried to emphasize the need for a gender-balanced representation in the invitations to the trainings. When they, as organizers, pointed out that they wanted a more gender-balanced representation they were often met with comments like “we do not have any women” or “these are the only ones we have.”

Some of the barriers identified for this type of training apply to all genders, for example high cost and travel logistics, which may limit the number of available slots, especially for participants coming from lower-income countries. Moreover, specialized trainings, such as for EOD and ATOs, are mostly available in North America or Europe and are usually only offered in English or French. This can represent a significant obstacle to those in different parts of the world, but it can be a larger barrier for women, who may not be able to travel due to family care obligations. It was emphasized by respondents that providing trainings in local languages will provide more opportunities for women to participate in WAM.

Respondents from different regions described access to training as key to advancing within the field. Women working in WAM technical roles shared their experiences of how training had increased their credibility and respect within the field, especially respect from male peers. Successful completion of WAM technical training and accreditation is important to overcome gender prejudices, as they offer a validation of one’s quality as a professional. As one respondent expressed it, with the trainings she knew that she had “earned the respect of this very male community”. Positions like ATOs and EOD specialists offer women and men the opportunity to be judged by the same technical standards, which can represent a form of equality.⁶⁷

67 Emile LeBrun, “Making Room for improvement: Gendered Dimensions of the Life-cycle Management of Ammunition”, UNODA, 2020, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/gender-dimension-of-lcma/>.

Another concern that was mentioned by respondents was how it can harm women to assign them to WAM roles without giving them the chance to be trained, this can re-affirm harmful stereotypes about women not being suitable to these roles. A respondent compared this with “sending a soldier to battle without arms”. These respondents did not express that they were against giving these positions to women with less experience but pushed for the need to provide them with adequate training.

IN FOCUS The importance of diversity in WAM

All WAM practitioners interviewed for this study agreed that WAM in general would be strengthened and more effective by the inclusion of more women and people of different backgrounds and career tracks. Some also highlighted the need not only to increase women’s participation in WAM technical roles, but also non-military personnel with expertise outside of the military sphere. One respondent believed that there is a tendency among people that are too technically focused to lose sight of the bigger picture. Another respondent, who had a non-military background, described how she translated technical language being used by her colleagues for donors. The respondent pointed out the need for diverse backgrounds in order to facilitate communication with external actors like donors to explain the relevance of their work.

The need to include people with local language skills and different cultural knowledge was also addressed as an important factor to consider that could enhance WAM effectiveness. Working in a conflict-affected environment which was ethnically diverse, one respondent made it clear that local knowledge was crucial to ensure the team’s safety and created possibilities to work in areas that otherwise would not be accessible due to security concerns. Another respondent described how her local language skills and the fact that she was from the region had helped her to be accepted in the community where she was working. She described how she was accepted as “one of them” and had great support from the national actors.

Several respondents highlighted the need for English language skills in order to advance within the field. One respondent argued that the mainly Anglo, white male dominance in WAM has contributed to biases within the field, for example in the recruitment processes. These factors have impacted the diversity of professionals in this field.



The field of WAM, and specifically its technical roles, could be more accessible to women if the employer made it clear that they will offer trainings to learn these technical skills.

4. GOOD PRACTICES FOR PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN WAM

The interviews with WAM practitioners were also useful for identifying good practices to promote gender equality and diversity in this field. This section presents an overview of actions, strategies, programmes, and policies presented by respondents. Although this is not an exhaustive list, it serves the purpose of highlighting positive experiences advancing women's participation in the security sector as well as in WAM more specifically.

4.1 ADJUSTING LEGISLATION AND POLICIES TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY

In many countries military and police institutions have made progress in terms of abolishing discriminatory policies which prohibit women from joining certain branches of service. Some actors have established gender-sensitive policies to ensure work-life balance and to ensure a safe and welcoming working environment. For example, in Argentina, under military law, no training institution is allowed to expel women for being pregnant and the Ministry of Defence also decided that children are not a matter exclusive to women by also granting paternity leave to fathers in the military.⁶⁸ Argentina has one of the highest rates of women's participation in the military in Latin America.⁶⁹ Another example is Sierra Leone's police force, which implemented a comprehensive gender-mainstreaming policy. This policy covers recruitment, training, deployments, representation and human



Improving women's participation in WAM through national policies could support priorities for implementing other international and regional agreements.

resources policies such as maternity leave policies, as well as sexual-harassment policies and sanctions in relation to such acts.⁷⁰ This could explain why Sierra Leone has one of the highest proportions of women police officers in West Africa.

Similarly, United Nations agencies and specialized international NGOs and civil society organizations have gender polices aimed at increasing gender diversity,

68 Red de Seguridad y Defensa de América Latin, Women in the Armed and Police Forces: Resolution 1325 and Peace Operations in Latin America, 2010, <https://www.resdal.org/genero-y-paz/women-in-the-armed-and-police-forces.pdf>, p. 64.

69 Vanessa F. Newby, and Clotilde Sebag, "Gender Sidestreaming? Analysing Gender Mainstreaming in National Militaries and International Peacekeeping", *European Journal of International Security*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2020.20>.

70 Miranda Gaanderse and Kristin Valasek (eds), *The Security Sector and Gender in West Africa: A Survey of Police, Defence, Justice and Penal Services in ECOWAS States*, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2011, <https://www.dcaf.ch/security-sector-and-gender-west-africa-survey-police-defence-justice-and-penal-services-ecowas>, p. 15.

promoting a safe and welcoming environment for women and ensuring all policies related to leave, benefits and advancement are gender-sensitive.⁷¹ However, the extent of the application of these policies remains a challenge for several reasons. This includes the national context in which they work, if there are limited opportunities to change prevailing cultural norms and gender stereotypes with regard to women working in WAM, or sufficient prioritization of gender policies by management. Respondents from Africa and South-Eastern Europe described that national actors increasingly recognize that improving women's participation in WAM through national policies could support priorities for implementing other international and regional agreements, such as the women, peace and security agenda and the Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons of the Economic Community of West African States. In view of this positive experience, more States could integrate goals to increase women's participation in WAM into existing national strategies on regional and international frameworks such as in national action plans on resolution 1325 and national commissions on SALW.



WESTERN BALKANS

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Gender Trainers at the 2nd Regional Gender Training of Trainers Course in the Western Balkans conducted in 2015 as part of the *Strengthening Regional Cooperation on Gender Mainstreaming in Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans* project

71 For example, see, UNMAS gender policies UNMAS, 2019, United Nations gender guidelines for mine action. https://www.unmas.org/sites/default/files/mine_action_gender_guidelines_web_0.pdf

4.2 OFFERING GENDER TRAININGS AND COACHING PROGRAMMES

In order to change the organizational culture to make it more inclusive, respondents from different regions highlighted the need for gender trainings targeting all levels of an organization. Since the level of progress sometimes can depend on individuals that are in charge, it becomes important to raise awareness of the consequences of gendered norms among decision makers, technical staff and trainers.



In order to change the organizational culture to make it more inclusive, respondents from different regions highlighted the need for gender trainings targeting all levels of an organization.

Respondents pointed at the gender coaching programme implemented by the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro as an example of a good practice aiming to change gender stereotyping and to boost gender equality

within security sector institutions. The programme, based on experiences from Sweden, has been implemented with the heads of SALW national commissions, as well as the high-ranking officials in the military in the region, as part of a holistic strategy to enhance gender responsiveness of security sector institutions.⁷² The programme aims to increase the competencies of officials relating to gender mainstreaming of SALW control policies and relevant policies and practices in the military. Coaching involves one-to-one discussion with senior officials in an informal setting where gender norms and gender equality in these institutions can be discussed confidentially. Coaching sessions are tailor-made to the needs of the coachee, including sharing good practices from the region on integrating the gender perspective across security sector. The programme has had visible results regarding development and implementation of gender-responsive SALW control policies,⁷³ as well as of relevant policies and practices in the military. One respondent also described how she had seen an increase of women's representation at regional SALW meetings, a change that she saw was introduced over the course of the programme.

72 SEESAC, "What Did We Previously Achieve?", n.d., <https://www.seesac.org/Previous-Achievements-of-Our-Work/>; and SEESAC, "One-on-One Sessions on Gender Equality", 2017, <https://www.seesac.org/News-Gender-in-Security-Sector/One-on-one-sessions-on-Gender-Equality/>.

73 See SALW Control Worldmap, Strategic Documents, SEESAC UNDP, https://www.seesac.org/Strategic-Documents_1/.

4.3 REVIEWING RECRUITMENT PROCESSES

In the course of this research, respondents highlighted the need for fair and open recruitment processes, strategic outreach regarding vacancy announcements, as well as communication campaigns.

A number of national security sector institutions have implemented comprehensive recruitment strategies to attract women candidates.⁷⁴ In post-war Liberia, where services like education had been on hold for years, innovative efforts like the Education Support Programme enabled women between the age of 18 and 35 years old who had completed ninth grade to earn the equivalent of a high school degree and to enter police training. The intensive training programme that offered transportation, housing stipends and lunches rapidly contributed to a significant increase of women in the Liberia National Police. Between 2007 and 2008, women's enrolment increased from 5 per cent to 12 per cent.⁷⁵ The South African Police Service is another example of an institution that has recruited a higher representation of women. Between 2008 and 2015, women's representation in the service increased from 17.9 per cent to 37.5 per cent in top management positions and from 20.7 per cent to 34.8 per cent in senior management positions. This was possible due to implementing targets and networking programmes, and reserving places for women in trainings and leadership programmes, in addition to a government commitment to gender equality as part of its implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.⁷⁶

As part of the project on Strengthening of Regional Cooperation on Gender Mainstreaming in Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans,⁷⁷ SEESAC supports the ministries of defence in the region to review their human resources policies. With the help of gender-disaggregated data they analyse and identify institutional and cultural barriers to the inclusion and career advancement of women in the military. The project explores how the ministries can increase the gender-responsive recruitment and the retention and implement activities such as campaigns to make military professionals more attractive to women. As a result, the ministries of defence participating in the project have reported an increase of women in

74 Douglas Yeung et al., *Recruiting Policies and Practices for Women in the Military: Views from the Field*, RAND Corporation, 2017, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1538.html. For information on how to attract women to peace operation see Sabrina Karim, *MOWIP Methodology: Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations*, 2020, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/MOW-IP_Methodology_2.pdf.

75 Laura Bacon, "Liberia's Gender-Sensitive Police Reform: Improving Representation and Responsiveness in a Post-Conflict Setting", *International Peacekeeping*, vol. 22, no. 4, 2015, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2015.1059285>, p. 377.

76 Lisa Denney, "Policing and Gender", Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2020, <https://www.dcaf.ch/tool-2-policing-and-gender>. South African Police Service, "Overview on the Women Empowerment Interventions in SAPS and Women Network Programmes", n.d., https://www.saps.gov.za/resource_centre/women_children/overview_women_network.php.

77 See Strengthening of Regional Cooperation on Gender Mainstreaming in Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans (II phase), SEESAC UNDP, <https://www.seesac.org/Strengthening-Regional-Cooperation-on-Gender-Mainstreaming-in-SSR-in-WB/>.

uniform. In 2012, women made up between 3.3 per cent and 6.1 per cent of ministry of defence and armed forces personnel in the Western Balkans, while in 2019 the representation of women ranged between 6.2 per cent and 9.5 per cent.⁷⁸

In view of these experiences, relevant actors could also review their recruitment and make requirements for technical roles more inclusive of different types of professional backgrounds and take into account experiences gained in non-military or police settings. These efforts should be accompanied by adequate physical infrastructure for women and a work environment free from discrimination and sexual harassment. Equally important are practices that accommodate family life by recognizing that both women and men as well as non-binary or gender fluid persons have family caregiving responsibilities and by, for example, granting sufficient parental leave regardless of gender.



LOMÉ, TOGO

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Launch of the UNREC Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) project, financed by the EU.

78 UNDP SEESAC, *The Second Regional Study – The Position of Women in the Armed Forces in the Western Balkans*, Forthcoming.

4.4 ASKING “WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?” AND FOLLOWING-UP WITH THEM

Respondents suggested that offering intensive trainings in the WAM area directed to women could improve women’s participation in the field. Efforts are currently being made by some organizations and States to localize trainings and to offer it in more languages to promote more women and more diverse participation in these trainings.

Practitioners that offer technical trainings on WAM mentioned how the framing of the invitation can impact the gender balance. Respondents described how their organizations had started to use more specific language in their invitations. Asking actors to specifically send both women and men is stronger compared to asking them to “consider a gender balance”, which could be easily ignored. One of them claimed that this had proven to give results but that it still depends on the number of women in the national military in question. One respondent described how the organization she worked for always insisted on including women in trainings on physical security and stockpile management. They followed up with women that underwent such training in the past to see if they were still active in the field. If these women still were active, they ensured that these women be included in further trainings. A result of this proactive approach is the development of informal networks of women professionals that can be easily reached and invited to join WAM-related assignments.



Asking actors to specifically send both women and men is stronger compared to asking them to “consider a gender balance”, which could be easily ignored.

4.5 MAKING WOMEN PROFESSIONALS VISIBLE

The visibility of women and promoting them as role models in this field were topics raised by respondents as an important way to change perceptions of gender stereotypes and to increase women's participation. This approach is supported by previous research suggesting that vertical segregation excludes women from leadership positions and limits their capacity as mentors and role models that could inspire other women in the field and thus encourage retention.⁷⁹ Respondents suggested this could be done at the university and high school levels to promote careers in WAM by inviting women in WAM technical roles to participate in such events. It was suggested that increasing exposure to WAM roles within security institutions and international organizations could be a way to attract a more diverse pool of candidates. Increasing visibility of WAM roles could be done through informal information sessions and training which would familiarize both women and men to the language of WAM, which can often be regarded as "a technical black box". This study also shows the importance of gender-disaggregated data for monitoring progress towards gender equality and making women visible in the statistics on the field of WAM. It is important that national actors, international organizations and international NGOs, as well as private actors, compile gender-disaggregated data in order to monitor progress towards implementation of international commitments on women's participation in arms control and disarmament.

Respondents noted professional associations for women as an example of good practice towards women's inclusion in the security sector. In West Africa, police-women's associations are a crucial source of support for policewomen that offer both professional and personal support to their members.⁸⁰ The most prominent example of this at the regional level is the establishment of the women police officers' network in South-Eastern Europe, which is working towards regional strategies for better recruitment and integration of women into police forces.⁸¹ Respondents emphasized how these associations have played a role in giving women a platform to enhance inclusion in police forces and to increase women's visibility in the field.

79 Vanessa F. Newby, and Clotilde Sebag, "Gender Sidestreaming? Analysing Gender Mainstreaming in National Militaries and International Peacekeeping", *European Journal of International Security*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2020.20>.

80 Miranda Gaanderse and Kristin Valasek (eds), *The Security Sector and Gender in West Africa: A Survey of Police, Defence, Justice and Penal Services in ECOWAS States*, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2011, <https://www.dcaf.ch/security-sector-and-gender-west-africa-survey-police-defence-justice-and-penal-services-ecowas>.

81 *Establishing the Southeast Europe Women Police Officers Network*, Southeast Europe Police Chiefs Association, 2010, <https://www.seesac.org/f/tmp/files/publication/827.pdf>.

4.6 INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CIVILIANS IN WAM

Respondents highlighted how WAM technical roles can be performed by civilians who have received training in ammunition technical roles and EOD from outside of security sector institutions, through international organizations such as United Nations agencies and specialized international NGOs, or the private sector. This constitutes a key opportunity to increase diversity in WAM technical roles and to improve women’s participation. Including WAM as part of protection of civilians’ strategies and humanitarian response plans during post-conflict could serve to further highlight the importance of the field and to attract more diverse stakeholders, including more women.

Respondents described how some organizations have implemented a model whereby women civilian national employees were trained alongside military personnel in their host countries for WAM technical roles. This was also argued to work as a method to demystify the field of WAM and as a way to make the field more inclusive. Respondents noted that sometimes “technical jargon” in the field could be excluding for people that are not seeing themselves as working in a technical field. It was suggested that the field of WAM, and specifically its technical roles, could be more accessible to women if the employer made it clear that they will offer trainings to learn these technical skills. A respondent who received EOD level III trainings through a United Nations agency described how it provided her with knowledge, but most of all the training changed the way others in the sector perceived her.



Including WAM as part of protection of civilians’ strategies and humanitarian response plans during post-conflict could serve to further highlight the importance of the field and to attract more diverse stakeholders, including more women.

4.7 ENGAGING MEN AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

In order to increase women’s participation respondents highlighted the need to engage men, who fill the vast majority of technical roles in WAM. Several women that were interviewed for this study described how important it was for them to have supportive colleagues. One respondent described how a man once refused to meet with her because she was a women. She considered herself lucky to have the support of her manager, who told her that if the man did not meet with her, he would not meet with anyone from the organization. The importance of support from male peers emphasizes the role that men play in creating a good working environment and addressing discrimination in order to increase women’s participation in the field and in implementing international agreements. Several initiatives have been established to promote and to engage men in support of gender equality.



Women’s underrepresentation is not a ‘women’s issue’ but an issue that concerns everyone and thus requires a transformative change of the organizational culture.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe’s (OSCE) ‘Men for Gender Equality’ programme is one example—the Organization’s ambassadors and military attachés have made specific efforts to engage men in promoting gender equality and to promote an inclusive

and bias-free organizational culture by promoting equal treatment and opportunities for women and men in the OSCE’s region.⁸²

All the men that were interviewed in this study recognized the challenges that women face in the field. Some witnessed how this required that they had to be aware of gender stereotyping. One male manager pointed out how it was important to make sure that his staff knew how to report inappropriate behaviour or sexual assault and that he had to be prepared to step in. Another respondent described an increased openness among his colleagues for the need to gender-mainstream their work. This emphasizes the importance to acknowledge that women’s underrepresentation is not a ‘women’s issue’ but an issue that concerns everyone and thus requires a transformative change of the organizational culture. The various examples in this study show how WAM working environments can be transformative and therefore able to change into inclusive environments with the right conditions in place.

82 See OSCE Men for Gender Equality, OSCE, [https://www.osce.org/secretariat/OSCE-Men-for-Gen-der-Equality](https://www.osce.org/secretariat/OSCE-Men-for-Gender-Equality).

4.8 DONORS DRIVING CHANGE

Donors were also mentioned by respondents as having a potential role in putting pressure on increasing the numbers of women in the field. Respondents emphasized how donors could play a key role in demanding gender balance or requiring that an organization would not be eligible to get funds for WAM projects unless certain policies were implemented. This approach seemed to be successful in practice. Respondents that received funding for WAM projects expressed how they had to report back to donors on gender-related data and how this increased attention led to more efforts to include women in WAM-related work. This external pressure can also support employees within the organization that are working for women's increased participation.

Respondents also addressed the need for funding in order to ensure that the right conditions are in place to increase women's participation in the field. The Elsie Initiative Fund for uniformed women in peace operations is an example on an initiative where donors have taken an active role in offering assistance and incentives for States contributing troops and/or police in peacekeeping.⁸³ Such initiatives could also be extended to improve women's meaningful participation in WAM-related activities.



Donors could play a key role in demanding gender balance or requiring that an organization would not be eligible to get funds for WAM projects unless certain policies were implemented.

83 The Elsie Initiative Fund, hosted by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and funded by Canada, was launched in 2019. It seeks to enable more uniformed women to be employed in peace operations by identifying and overcoming barriers for their employment. In its first programming round, \$8–12 M were agreed to be allocated to different initiatives to accelerate the pace of change in security institutions, such as conducting barrier assessments. For more information see <https://elsiefund.org>.



Gender diversity, and diversity more broadly, are key to cultivating ideas and perspectives that ensure WAM policies and practices adequately respond to the different needs of all groups affected by the proliferation of arms and ammunition.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on interviews, data collection and a literature review this study has provided an analysis of the gendered patterns of engagement in WAM and identified barriers and opportunities for greater gender diversity in the field of WAM.

All practitioners interviewed agreed that WAM would be strengthened by the inclusion of more women and people of different backgrounds and career tracks. Gender diversity, and diversity more broadly, are key to cultivating ideas and perspectives that ensure WAM policies and practices adequately respond to the different needs of all groups affected by the proliferation of arms and ammunition. However, as this study has showed, women tend to experience institutional obstacles that hinder them from enjoying the same opportunities as men in this field.

This study identifies good practices and presents several initiatives that address the above-mentioned challenges in order to increase women's participation in the security sector, as well as in WAM more specifically. Women's participation in these roles has the potential to change the perception of women as the victims of violence into active participants in arms control, enabling them to play a transformative role in changing gender stereotypes in their societies.⁸⁴



Systematically assessing participation on a regional or country basis would be essential to guide the formulation of policies and guidelines related to gender-sensitive training and recruitment in the field of WAM.

Systematically assessing participation on a regional or country basis would be essential to guide the formulation of policies and guidelines related to gender-sensitive training and recruitment in the field of WAM. This includes the need to collect gender-disaggregated data on all functional areas of WAM,

both regarding the people that perform the work of WAM as well as the beneficiaries of WAM-related outcomes. In line with objectives on increasing women's participation in United Nations peace operations,⁸⁵ further research should be done looking at the specific gender dynamics of WAM in peace operations in order to better inform strategies to encourage women's participation in WAM during

84 See for example Marion Provencher and Laura Biscaglia, "The Socioeconomic Impact of Employing Female Deminers in Sri Lanka", Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, 2020, https://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/GICHD-resources/rec-documents/GICHD_Sri_Lanka_Study.pdf.

85 See Action for Peacekeeping, Uniformed Gender Parity Startegy 2018-2028, United Nations Peacekeeping, https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/uniformed_women_infograph-ic_150520_updated.pdf.

peace operations, which in some contexts plays a significant role in WAM national strategies and implementation.

A number of women interviewed for this study expressed that they saw limited opportunities for advancement within their national militaries in this field and decided to pursue an international career in WAM, working for United Nations agencies or specialized international NGOs. This indicates the need for further examination of what national institutions and international assistance providers can learn from each other in order to increase women's participation in WAM.

The increased acknowledgement that WAM technical roles can be performed by civilians who have received training in ammunition technical roles, EOD and other roles from outside of security sector institutions constitutes a key opportunity to increase diversity in WAM.

This study shows examples where civilian personnel with non-military backgrounds have been trained alongside military personnel for WAM technical roles in order to demystify the field and make it more inclusive. Moreover, the experiences that were shared in the interviews indicate the need to understand how discrimination and biases within technical roles in WAM are expressed through an intersectional perspective, meaning how gender also intersects with other social identities such as ethnicity, religion, age, disability/ability, sexual orientation and race.⁸⁶



Increasing women's participation in technical roles requires a transformation of organizational cultures in order to build an inclusive working environment where women are no longer made to feel like they do not belong.

Meaningful participation is a fundamental aspect of the rights-based approach to ensure that all genders are represented at all levels of decision-making, policy processes and implementation. The findings of this study indicate that increasing women's participation in technical roles requires a transformation of organizational cultures in order to build an inclusive working environment where women are no longer made to feel like they do not belong. This is key to ensuring the implementation of international commitments such as the women, peace and security agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals, and international commitments on arms control. This study brings to light the need to investigate how diversity can contribute to cultivating ideas and perspectives that ensure that WAM policies and practices adequately respond to the different needs of all groups affected by the proliferation of arms and ammunition.

86 Leslie McCall, "Complexity of Intersectionality", *Signs*, vol. 30, no. 3, 2005, <https://doi.org/10.1086/426800>; Kimberle Chrenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex", *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989, <http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8j>.



GAO, MALI

Inspecting stored (temporary) weapons in DDR process

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ANNEX A. METHODOLOGY

As part of this research, 32 phone interviews were conducted between October 2020 and April 2021. Additionally, five respondents provided written answers to a questionnaire.

Respondents were selected based on their involvement in different functional areas of WAM and their affiliation with a range of institutions active in this space, including civil society organizations, United Nations entities and specialized international NGOs, as well as in ministries of defence/security, armed forces, national security forces and national coordinating agencies such as national commissions on SALW.

Among the respondents, 15 were representatives of civil society organizations or academia, 13 were representatives of Member States, and 9 were representatives from international organizations. In total, the respondents comprised 25 women and 12 men with experience and knowledge of the regions of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and South-Eastern Europe. A list of institutes and States that participated follows.

INTERVIEWS

Civil Society Organizations, Think Tanks and Academia

Asociación para Políticas Públicas, Control Arms, Danish Refugee Council (Libya), Fondation Suisse de Déminage Colombia, Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, The HALO Trust, Small Arms Survey, Sierra Leone Action Network on Small Arms, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Cameroon.

Member States

Albania, Argentina, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Guyana, Mali and Serbia.

International Organizations

South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) Central African Republic, UNMAS Colombia, UN mine action service MONUSCO.

DATA ON WAM-RELATED TRAININGS

In addition to the interviews, this study includes analysis of data on WAM-related trainings. The data was provided by seven institutes and reflects trainings that were held in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and South-Eastern Europe

between 2015 and April 2021. A list of institutes that provided data is presented below.

The HALO Trust, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center, South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) Colombia, UN mine action service MONUSCO, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa.

ANNEX B. GLOSSARY

EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL

The International Ammunition Technical Guidelines define explosive ordnance disposal as the detection, identification, evaluation, render safe, recovery and final disposal of unexploded explosive ordnance. Explosive ordnance refers to all munitions containing explosives, nuclear fission or fusion materials, or biological and chemical agents. This can include bombs, warheads, mines and similar items or components explosive in nature.

The role may also involve the task of rendering safe and/or disposing of explosive ordnance that has become hazardous by damage or deterioration.⁸⁷

GENDER

Gender refers to the roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate or as a ‘norm’ for women and men and girls and boys, as well as non-binary or gender-fluid persons.

Gender norms are socially constructed differences—as opposed to biological differences (sex)—and they function as social rules of behaviour, setting out what is desirable and possible to do as a male or female in a given context.

In most societies, gender norms have resulted in differences and thus inequalities between women and men in terms of their socially assigned responsibilities, roles, access to and control over resources, and decision-making opportunities.⁸⁸

GENDER ANALYSIS

Gender analysis is a critical examination of how differences in gender roles, activities, needs, opportunities, rights and entitlements affect men, women, girls, boys, non-binary or gender-fluid persons in certain situation or contexts. Gender analysis examines the relationships between genders and their access to and control of resources and the constraints they face relative to each other.

Gender analysis can be integrated into all sector assessments or situational analyses to ensure that gender-based injustices and inequalities are not exacerbated by interventions and that, where possible, greater equality and justice in gender relations are promoted.⁸⁹

87 International Ammunition Technical Guidelines 01.40, “Glossary of Terms, Definitions and Abbreviations”, 2015, <https://unoda-web.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/assets/convarms/Ammunition/IATG/docs/IATG01.40.pdf>.

88 UNIDIR, “What is Gender?”, <https://unidir.org/gender-perspective>.

89 This is an expanded definition based on that of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; see <https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/showentry.php?eid=49>.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-based violence is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed gender differences, including homophobic and transphobic violence against those who defy gender norms. GBV encompasses violence against women and girls, violence against men and boys, and violence against persons with other gender identities.

It can include sexual, physical, verbal, psychological and socio-economic violence. The nature and extent of specific types of GBV vary across cultures, countries and regions. Examples include rape, forced pregnancy, sexual exploitation, abuse, enforced prostitution and sexual slavery.⁹⁰

GENDER EQUALITY

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys, as well as non-binary or gender-fluid persons. Equality means that a person's rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on their gender. It implies that the interests, needs, and priorities of everyone—men, women, girls, boys, non-binary or gender-fluid persons—are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups.⁹¹

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men, girls and boys, as well as non-binary or gender-fluid persons of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a way to make everyone's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that men, women, girls, boys, non-binary or gender-fluid persons benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.⁹²

90 See fact sheet on Gender in the ATT, UNIDIR, 2019, <https://unidir.org/publication/fact-sheet-gender-att>.

91 This is an expanded definition based on that of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; see <https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/showentry.php?eid=54>.

92 This is an expanded definition based on that of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; see <https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/showentry.php?eid=61>.

PHYSICAL SECURITY AND STOCKPILE MANAGEMENT

Physical Security and Stockpile Management involves ensuring adequate physical storage infrastructure, and improvements in stockpile management and accounting—ranging from procedures governing the access of personnel to stocks, assessment and surveillance of ammunition stability and conditions, to the physical separation and storage quantity limits of different types of explosive materiel.⁹³

SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325

Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction. It stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. It urges all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations peace and security efforts. It also calls on all parties to conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict.⁹⁴

SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Small arms are, broadly speaking, weapons designed for individual use. They include revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, submachine guns, assault rifles and light machine guns.

Light weapons are, broadly speaking, weapons designed for use by two or three persons serving as a crew, although some may be carried and used by a single person. They include heavy machine guns, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft guns, portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles, portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems, portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems, and mortars of a calibre of less than 100 millimetres.⁹⁵

93 Savannah de Tessières, *The Role of Weapon and Ammunition Management in Preventing Conflict and Supporting Security Transitions Preliminary Findings and Key Policy Considerations*, UNIDIR, 2019, <https://www.unidir.org/files/publications/pdfs/the-role-of-weapon-and-ammunition-management-in-preventing-conflict-and-supporting-security-transitions-en-773.pdf>.

94 See United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), S/RES/1325 (2000), <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/720/18/PDF/N0072018.pdf?OpenElement>.

95 See International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, UNODC, <https://www.unodc.org/documents/organized-crime/Firearms/ITI.pdf>.

TECHNICAL ROLES WITHIN WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION MANAGEMENT

This study defines technical roles within WAM as functions that involve the direct contact with weapons and ammunition such as stockpile management, marking and record-keeping, profiling and tracing of ammunition, processing of seized weapons and disposal. Technical roles include, but are not limited to, professions such as stockpile managers, armourers, ammunition and technical experts, explosive ordnance disposal specialist and project managers.

WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION MANAGEMENT

WAM is the oversight, accountability and governance of arms and ammunition throughout their life cycle, including the establishment of relevant national frameworks, processes and practices for safe and secure materiel acquisition, stockpiling, transfers, end-use control, tracing and disposal. WAM does not only focus on small arms and light weapons, but on a broader range of conventional weapons, ammunition and artillery.⁹⁶

96 Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS), Module 4.11 – Transitional Weapons and Ammunition Management, <https://www.unddr.org/modules/IDDRS-4.11-Transitional-Weapons-Ammunition-Management.pdf>.

Women Managing Weapons examines the gendered patterns of engagement in weapons and ammunition management, highlighting women's experiences performing technical roles, such as stockpile manager, armourer, ammunition and technical expert and explosive ordnance disposal specialist. Based on quantitative analysis and interviews with practitioners, this report offers an overview of women's participation in technical arms control, including main challenges as well as good practices for fostering gender equality in this area. By providing knowledge and ideas for improving women's meaningful participation in WAM, the report seeks to unlock professional opportunities for women in WAM and transform power and gender relations not only amongst individuals, but also at institutional levels, which is a fundamental aspect of achieving true gender equality.

