

peace-keeping operations in 1993.¹⁰ Women in the British Armed Forces are currently serving in support roles in the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and in UNPROFOR in the former Yugoslavia.¹¹ Also, women volunteers have served in a military contingent on loan from Finland to the United Nations. Currently, women from the Danish Home Guard and the Armed Services are assigned to UN peace-keeping forces and operations in the Balkans.¹² Finally, the first French female military officer has been serving with UNPROFOR in Sarajevo as a media spokesperson for the United Nations.¹³

Another factor which may contribute to women's participation in peace-keeping is the presence of women in top-level decision-making positions in the military. Examples are the former Minister of Defence in Finland, Ms. Marta Elisabeth Rehn, and the former Deputy Minister of Defence in Poland, Ms. Danuta Waniek. Similarly, women occupy civilian leadership positions in the United States Department of Defense. For example, Ms. Sarah Sewall is the first person to occupy the recently created position of Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Peace-keeping and Peace Enforcement Policy.

Civilian police forces - a role for women

One area in which improvement in the low percentage of women's representation might be achieved is in the civilian police components of UN peace-keeping operations, as there are more women officers in civilian police forces than there are women in the military. However, the average participation rate of women in UN civilian police forces is 0.7 per cent (see table 2, page 3). One reason for this very low percentage is that many UN police officers are on loan from military police units, an occupational category where women are largely underrepresented. Should Member States shift to contributing civilian police, given the growing presence of women in the national civilian police forces in many countries, this could result in greater female participation in UN peace-keeping operations.

Statistical data on police personnel in national settings from 1986 indicate that on average women constituted 11 per cent of the civilian police forces in 33 nations, both developed and developing (see table 4, page 5).¹⁵ Although the highest percentages of female police officers were found in Finland (22.1 per cent), the United States of America (21.1 per cent) and Portugal (21.1 per cent), a number of developing countries also demonstrated significant percentages. By using civilian police officers, the current level of women's participation in UN peace-keeping missions could be increased, as has been the case in Cyprus, where women comprised 16.7 per cent of the civilian police forces in the UNFICYP mission in 1993 (see table 2, page 3). A woman also has served as police commissioner in Kismayo, Somalia.¹⁶

Multi-purpose peace-keeping mandates and the expanding role of women

As a result of the significant increase in the civilian components within peace-keeping missions, new roles and expanded opportunities for women's participation have evolved. Women have served as legal and political advisers, civilian police officers, election and human rights monitors, and information specialists and administrators. They have been involved in promoting national reconciliation and democracy, refugee repatriation, and humanitarian assistance. Women have also served as team leaders in human rights and election-monitoring missions and, in a very few isolated cases, have been in decision-making roles, supervising international and local personnel.

Between 1957 and 1991, women constituted from 5 to 23 per cent of the international civilian staff serving in UN peace-keeping operations for which data are available (see table 5, page 7).¹⁷ In 1993, 11 of the 19 UN peace-keeping missions had significant civilian components, and one third of the international UN civilian staff were women. The 12 missions with the highest percentages of women were all established since 1990. In contrast, 5 of the 7 with the lowest percentages were established more than 15 years ago,