

of UN peace-keeping operations, and until recently these operations were almost entirely military in nature.

Statistics gathered from a number of Member States which contributed troops to military peace-keeping missions indicate that only 5 of the 6,250 troops who served between 1957 and 1979 were women. During the period 1957-1989, out of a total of approximately 20,000 military personnel, there were only 20 women.<sup>2</sup> These served mainly as nurses in medical units. Between 1989 and 1992, the total number of women rose to 255, still representing little more than 1 per cent of military personnel (see table 1, page 2). Despite the increased presence of women in national militaries and, more specifically, as officers in combat units in at least four countries, women in UN peace-keeping still comprised only 1.7 per cent of military contingents in the 17 peace-keeping missions active in 1993 (see table 2, page 3).

#### Changes in women's participation in national militaries and UN peace-keeping

"One of the most striking characteristics of militaries themselves is that they are almost exclusively male."<sup>3</sup> This is a question of both numbers and culture. The small number of women in UN military peace-keeping operations is partly explained by national policies which discourage the participation of women in the military and, more specifically, in combat roles. Many countries continue to prohibit women from military service, and only a few allow women to serve in combat roles. In only 5 out of 25 reporting countries do women comprise more than 10 per cent of military personnel.<sup>4</sup> Only a few countries have permitted women to serve in the military for a sustained period, while some have opened up to women only recently (see table 3, page 4).

The United Nations has no detailed policy on women in peace-keeping. Notably, the United Nations did not specifically request women peace-keepers until 1994. However, in UN document A/50/691, paragraph 59, the Secretary-General has recommended to the General Assembly, inter alia, a target of 50 per cent women in UN field missions. A number of UN officials have indicated to Member States that the Organization would welcome more women soldiers, but the UN has little control over the selection and allocation of peace-keeping troops. Member States control their own national militaries and determine policies regarding who receives combat training and which units are assigned to peace-keeping duty. Once political approval has been obtained within Member States, decisions regarding which units are selected for peace-keeping duty are the prerogative of the highest-ranking military authority in the country, generally the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces. Consequently, in spite of recent UN requests for women peace-keepers, contributing Member States still may restrict or prohibit women's participation in UN peace-keeping.

Table 1. Member-State contributed male and female personnel in UN peace-keeping missions by office/enlisted/other for selected years, a/ 1957-1992.

Male=Male F=Female	Total		Officers b/		Enlisted c/		Other d/	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1957-1979 e/	6205	5	509	0	5673	5	23	0
% women		0.1		0.0		0.1		0.0
1989-1992 f/	17463	255	2051	39	14945	186	467	30
% women		1.4		1.9		1.2		6
Total 1957-1992 g/	23668	260		39	20618	191	490	30
% women		1.1		1.5		0.9		5.8

#### Notes:

a/ Available data for personnel contributions to missions of select countries (e.g. Austria, Brazil, Canada, Fiji, Finland, France and the United Kingdom)

b/ Military officers include all ranks Lieutenant to Colonel.

c/ Enlisted personnel include all ranks from Private to Master Sergeant