

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA IN PEACE MISSIONS

— Contribution to Maintaining
Peace in the World —



Centar za sigurnosne studije - BiH
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BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA IN PEACE MISSIONS

- Contribution to Maintaining Peace in the World -

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**STRENGTHENING OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES THROUGH SHARING
THE EXPERIENCES OF PARTICIPANTS IN PEACE MISSIONS**



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*“The opinions contained in this publication do not necessarily reflect
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AF BiH	Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANSF	Afghan National Security Force
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CFLI	Canada Fund for Local Initiatives
CSS	Centre for Security Studies
EU	European Union
FPU	Force Protection Unit
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MINUSTAH	United Nations Stabilization Mission In Haiti
MoD BiH	Ministry of Defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NTM-A	NATO Training Mission Afghanistan
PSOTC	Peace Support Operations Training Centre
RS	Republika Srpska
RSM	Resolute Support Mission
STEP	Strengthening Institutional Capacity Through Sharing the Experiences of Participants in Peace missions
UN	United Nations
UNFICYP	United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
UNMEE	United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNMIS	United Nations Mission in Sudan
UNMISET	United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan



POUPART, Isabelle Ambassador of Canada to Bosnia and Herzegovina

Dear readers,

As a determined peacebuilder, Canada has a long history of contributing to international peace, security and stability. In fact, a few months ago, we commemorated the 60th anniversary of the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson, Canada's 14th Prime Minister, for his proposal to establish a United Nations peacekeeping force to resolve the 1956 Suez Canal crisis. The implementation of Pearson's plan, which saw a United Nations Emergency Force sent to the region to separate the warring parties, is largely credited with pulling the world back from the brink of war in the Middle East. This is why Pearson is commonly considered a father of modern peacekeeping, and this led to Canada becoming a peacekeeping nation.

For decades, peacekeeping has helped provide protection to millions of vulnerable people affected by conflicts. However, the context of modern peace operations has changed. Today's conflicts are intractable, more dangerous and more complex. The change in the nature of peacekeeping missions has directly affected the role of peacekeeping forces who have become active participants in peacebuilding.

It is in this context that the Government of Canada hosted the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial last November in Vancouver for a discussion focussed on innovative approaches, including when it comes to providing military capabilities and training programs, enhancing the protection of children and increasing the participation of women in peace operations.

This last point is of particular importance to the Government of Canada given the demonstrated link between the involvement of women in peace operations and the achievement of long-term, sustainable peace. Not only did Canada launch its 2nd National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security two weeks prior to the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial, but in Vancouver, our Prime Minister also announced the Elsie Initiative on Women in Peace Operations, which is aimed at providing assistance and incentives to increase the proportion of women deployed in UN peace operations.

But where does Bosnia and Herzegovina fit in all of this? Bosnia and Herzegovina has been contributing to joint international efforts to establish and preserve peace and stability in the world for 17 years. Experiences and lessons learned by both female and male members of military and police structures during the post-conflict transition in Bosnia and Herzegovina can also be of great importance for international peace support operations. Last November, it proved very rewarding for me to see Bosnia and Herzegovina among the group of initial endorsers of the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers – an initiative championed by retired Canadian General Romeo Dallaire.



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I am therefore very pleased that Canada, through its successful cooperation with the Centre for Security Studies, will facilitate efforts aimed at strengthening institutional capacities through sharing the experiences of participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina – both men and women - in international peacekeeping missions. By sharing candid and sincere observations about their own experiences and the challenges they have faced, the participants in this STEP project make an important contribution to the ongoing discussion about improving the effectiveness of peacekeeping. They also demonstrate that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country actively and directly contributing to peace and security worldwide.

As the Ambassador of Canada to Bosnia and Herzegovina, I was honoured to be asked to make a personal contribution to this valuable project, and I hope that reading this publication will inspire many young people, especially young women, to become determined peacebuilders and to build a safer world.

Best regards,

Isabelle Poupart
Ambassador of Canada to Bosnia and Herzegovina



PREFACE

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has actively participated in the most important peace missions and peace-support operations around the world since 2000. Participation in peacekeeping missions from BiH was first taken by both female and male police officers in the countries of East Timor, Haiti, Cyprus, Liberia, Sudan and South Sudan. A year later, female and male members of the Armed Forces of BiH were deployed in the missions in Ethiopia and Eritrea, Congo, Iraq, Afghanistan, Mali and the Central African Republic.

The publication ***"BiH in Peace Missions - Contribution to Maintaining Peace in the World"*** has data on the number of members of the police structures and the Armed Forces from BiH who participated in peacekeeping missions, classified by gender, as well as data on the number of currently deployed participants from these structures. Included is an equal number of interviews with women and men who are members of military and police structures, sharing their rich and valuable experiences in peacekeeping missions, as well as the words of experts who spoke about the importance of the process of participating in missions and reintegration of participants in the working environment after the end of the mandate. The publication also includes recommendations for strengthening the capacity of institutions for deploying future candidates to the peace missions and we hope that this research will serve to all readers, especially those interested in participating in the peacekeeping process.

At the same time, we use this opportunity to thank the Government of Canada, which financially enabled the realization of our project through the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives, interviewees who participated in the project, as well as security and defence institutions that provided the requested data, thus making an important contribution to the realization of this research, as well as the project itself.



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ANALYSIS



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INTRODUCTION

The Centre for Security Studies (CSS) has the honor to present a report on the results of the research carried out within the six-month project "Strengthening Institutional Capacity Through Sharing The Experiences of Participants In Peace missions - STEP", financially supported by the Canadian Government through the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI).

The main objective of the project is to promote and familiarize the public with the participation of members of BiH military and police structures in peace missions, with a special emphasis on gender equality and the improvement of the deployment process, participation and adaptation after the end of the mandate of the mission members. Also, the project sought to determine whether and to what extent the police agencies and the Armed Forces of BiH (AF BiH) use the experience and knowledge of persons who participated in peace missions and operations, in order to improve the capacity and deployment of future candidates to peace missions. Another goal of the project was to empower gender equality through the presentation of examples of successful participation of women and men in peace missions around the world.

The project included two main activities. The first activity consisted of conducting 10 interviews with persons who participated in peace missions and those responsible for recruiting, training and deploying personnel to peacekeeping missions. The second project activity was related to collecting data and researching the participation of members of the police structures and members of the AF from BiH in peace missions, about the peace missions in which they were engaged, as well as about the currently deployed participants from these structures in peace missions.

In the analysis of the obtained data, we tried to provide qualitative assessments of the participants' gender structure, as well as the ratio of the number of soldiers, non-commissioned officers and officers who have so far participated in peacekeeping missions. The most significant and most interesting data of the research are presented below.

Key Findings

The collected data show that BiH, by participating in peace missions and peace-support operations for the last 17 years, significantly contributes to conflict prevention and peace-building activities around the world. BiH began its first mission in 2000 by deploying members of the police structures in the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET), followed by sending members of the AF BiH to the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) in 2001. In addition, BiH has taken part in 11 different peace missions under the auspices of the UN, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU), and its engagement is still active in several of these missions.

Between 2000 and 2017, a total of 276 police officers participated in UN peace missions, out of which 43 were women (15.58%). The largest number of female and male police officers was recorded in the mission in South Sudan, where, until now, 70 men and 16 women members of police structures participated. However, it should be noted that in all the peace missions in which BiH participated, the most numerous participants were men. A similar trend is noted in the example of the participation of members of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and AF BiH in peace support operations and peace missions around the world. Between 2001 and 2017, out of a total of 1,222 members of the MoD and AF BiH who participated in peace support operations and peace missions

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around the world, 96% were men. Although women have great capacity to make important contributions to peace and security, they made up only 4% of the total participants deployed from security and defence sectors to conflict prevention and peace building missions. Women also only made up a small percentage of the officer and non-commissioned officer members of the MoD and AF BiH that took part in previous peace support operations and peace missions.

It is encouraging to see that the overall number of women engaged in this area is increasing from year to year, especially in terms of women police officers from BiH participating in UN peace missions. In the time period from 2000 to 2005, the percentage of women police officers participating in the mission in East Timor amounted to 3 percent. This percentage has significantly increased in the coming years, when women of these structures from BiH took part in missions in Haiti, Cyprus, Liberia, Sudan and South Sudan. Currently, 36 police officers from BiH are deployed in peacekeeping missions, out of which 28 percent are women. Compared to the previous period, there is also a slightly higher percentage of women from the defence sector in UN peace missions and peace-support operations in which BiH is currently participating. In these missions, 66 members are deployed, out of which 5, or 7.58% are women, and most of them are in the rank of privates. It is also worth noting that the MoD of BiH has provided the support of several psychologists for all members who are leaving for missions, as well as for their families. The process of work with each member going to the mission lasts intensively for a year and a half, and psychological support is available all the time to members of their family. However, members of BiH police structures who go to peace missions still do not have an adequately developed psychological support program, especially after returning from the mission, which in most cases makes their integration into the primary environment even more difficult. Support from psychologists to family members of police structures is also underdeveloped.

Finally, the collected data shows that civil servants, in the role of civilian experts, from the ministries of interior at the level of entities and cantons, as well as from state police agencies have not participated in the peace missions in the past period. For this reason, the competent institutions in BiH would be encouraged to design and enable a means for their participation in peace operations in the upcoming period.

National Context

BiH has become a country which is working on strengthening the peace and stability in crisis areas. Today, BiH shares the burdens, risks, obligations, and benefits of collective security with member states of organizations such as the UN, NATO and the EU, which are in charge of initiating and implementing peace support operations.

BiH's first participation in an international peace mission was in 2000, at which time it sent both female and male police officers to participate in the East Timor Peace Mission. A year later, the AF BiH for the first time participated in peace support operations by sending members to a peace mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea. BiH police contingents have since participated in peace support operations in Haiti, Cyprus and Liberia in 2004, followed by Sudan and South Sudan peace missions. Members of the police structures and the AF BiH have continued their engagement in peace missions and peace support operations around the world, making it clear that BiH is committed to being a responsible member of the international community by contributing to joint efforts to establish and preserve peace and stability in the world. More precisely, since the beginning of the engagement of the police structures and the AF BiH, almost 1,500¹ members have participated in peace missions and peace support operations around the world, and this number is increasing with every rotation.

The participation, activities, withdrawal procedure and funding for peace support operations and other activities abroad involving members of the AF BiH, police officers, civil servants and employees are regulated by the *Law on Participation of the Members of the Armed Forces of BiH, Police Officers, Civil Servants and Other*



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*Employees in Peace Support Missions and Other Foreign Activities*². This law was adopted post facto, i.e. after the first police officers were deployed to the peace mission in 2000. The law regulates institutionalized procedures for reviewing and making decisions on the participation of representatives of BiH in peace operations and other activities abroad. The same law stipulates that in the process of determining the composition of representatives of BiH to be deployed to operations, it must take into account the expertise, mission requirements, ethnic representation, and other mission-related conditions such as training requirements.

In addition to this Law, the *Rules of Procedures on the Participation of Members of the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces of BiH in Peace Support Operations and Other Activities Abroad*, as well as the *Rules of Procedures for Deployment of Police Officers of BiH to Peacekeeping Operations and Other Activities Abroad* are also significant. All participants in peacekeeping operations are legally obliged to undergo a training process that takes place before and immediately after arriving in the mission. The body authorized to carry out the training is the Peace Support Operations Training Centre in Butmir (PSOTC)³, whose courses are institutionally accredited by the UN and the NATO, which means in practice that they meet the criteria prescribed by the holder of peace operations. During training in PSOTC, representatives of police structures and the AF from BiH prepare and train for work in peacekeeping operations as well as for the many challenges they might face in the field. In addition, the PSOTC also "uses the experience of previous participants in peacekeeping missions in all phases of training, from planning, designing and conducting teaching contents. Most commonly a combination of lectures, discussions and practical exercises is used, and one of the important methods is interactive panel discussions between the persons who were in the mission and the participants of the course. This gives the participants of the course the opportunity to directly ask questions of special interest with regard to the mission"⁴ which is of invaluable importance for further preparation as well as for work in the mission. Thus, the PSOTC, apart from providing education and training for peace support operations, indirectly contributes to the promotion of BiH's interests in the world.

The participation of members from BiH in peace support operations has been rated positively and they can be seen as ambassadors of their country. Their outstanding achievements attracted the attention of world media through various events in missions where they participated, and were rewarded with the recognition by the UN, the NATO and local governments for their professional and committed work.

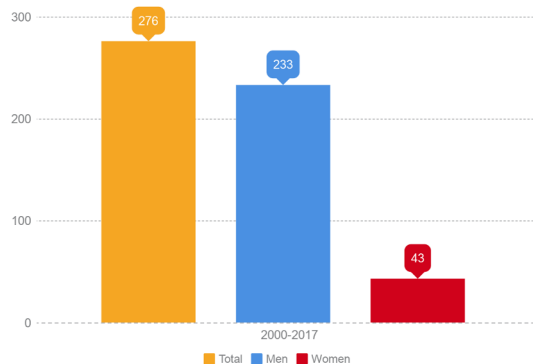
Finally, it is important to emphasize that BiH, through its participation in peace support missions and operations, contributes to the expansion of BiH's international relations through the creation of links and contacts, thereby enhancing dialogue, promoting commitment and strengthening the credibility of BiH.



1. PARTICIPATION OF POLICE STRUCTURES FROM BIH IN PEACE MISSIONS

Police structures of BiH have been actively participating in various international peace building and peacekeeping operations for the past 17 years. Overall, from 2000 to 2017, 276 police officers participated in the UN peace missions, of whom 43 were women (15.58%).

Police officers from BiH were first sent to the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET). Between 2000 and 2005, 31 police officers from BiH participated in that mission, including 1 woman. Thereafter, in 2004, police officers from BiH participated in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), in which, until 2006, participated 12 police officers, of which 3 women.



The gender structure of the BiH police officers in peace missions

Since 2004, members of the BiH police structures have continued to participate in the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and in Liberia (UNMIL - United Nations Mission in Liberia). At the peace mission in Cyprus, members of the BiH contingent were deployed at the positions of leaders of teams for civilian issues, logistics and other leadership positions. Many of them have been in contact with the civilian population and the armed forces of the conflicting parties, due to the nature of the mentioned activities. A total of 47 police officers have participated to date in the UN mission in Cyprus: 39 men and 8 women.

UNMIL was a mission of maintaining peace and strengthening the capacity of local police to provide police service to citizens, especially in vulnerable categories. One of our interviewees, who was deployed to UNMIL, informed that different crimes committed against civilians, especially women and children, such as violence, sexual exploitation, abuse, genital mutilation, and other, represent a long-standing problem in Liberia, to the point where 24 to 30 cases of rape were reported on a weekly basis during her time there⁵. The BiH police officers carried out various tasks in this mission, from police advisers for certain issues, such as the investigation of criminal offenses that were committed mainly against women and children, in which female police officers were mainly engaged, to the positions of team leaders, such as the deputy regional commander. Until now, 81 police officers from BiH participated in the UN Mission in Liberia, including 11 women, of whom many received various awards and acknowledgments from the UN and the local government for their professional and committed work.

One year after the establishment of the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), members of the BiH contingent took part in the mission. The mandate of the UNMIS mission was to build capacities, reform and reorganize the police, and accordingly, the BiH police officers performed various jobs and tasks. They conducted local police training, such as self-defence training, training to strengthen the capacity to identify and detect counterfeit documents, counselling on dealing with various cases, from the respect for human rights to tasks of team leaders and commanders. BiH personnel deployed to this mission were the only ones who worked on planning and coordinating gender equality projects. A total of 19 police officers from BiH, including 4 women, participated in that peace mission. Given that the 20-year-long civil war in Sudan only concluded in 2005, this mission presented significant challenge to the participating police officers.



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With the secession of South Sudan in 2011, new clashes and countless crimes against civilians began, but this did not prevent members of the BiH police structures from being part of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). So, since 2011, from when the peacekeeping mission in the South Sudan began, to date, a total of 86 BiH police officers participated, i.e. 70 men and 16 women.

However, from this information, as well as from the information in the graphic below, it can be noted that the number of female police officers from BiH taking part in peace missions was low, so their most frequent participation to date can be considered precisely in the South Sudan peace mission, where there were 16 women. Still, the encouraging fact is that the percentage of female police officers from BiH in this area has relatively increased, since their participation in the mission of East Timor, and currently stands at 28 percent⁶.

Of the 14 police officers from BiH who had professional and semi-professional positions within the various UN missions, only 4 were women. In Afghanistan, the South Sudan and Brindisi in Italy in the UN Logistic Base 5 police officers were deployed, of which 3 men and 2 women; three of these are still at these missions. Also, in the peace missions in Congo, Cyprus, Libya and Somalia, expert positions were occupied by 9 police officers of whom 2 were women police officers.

Data shows that, until now, state employees, as civilian experts, from the ministries of internal affairs at the level of entities and cantons, as well as from state police agencies, did not participate in peace missions, as BiH still does not have fully developed mechanisms for engaging civilians in peace missions.

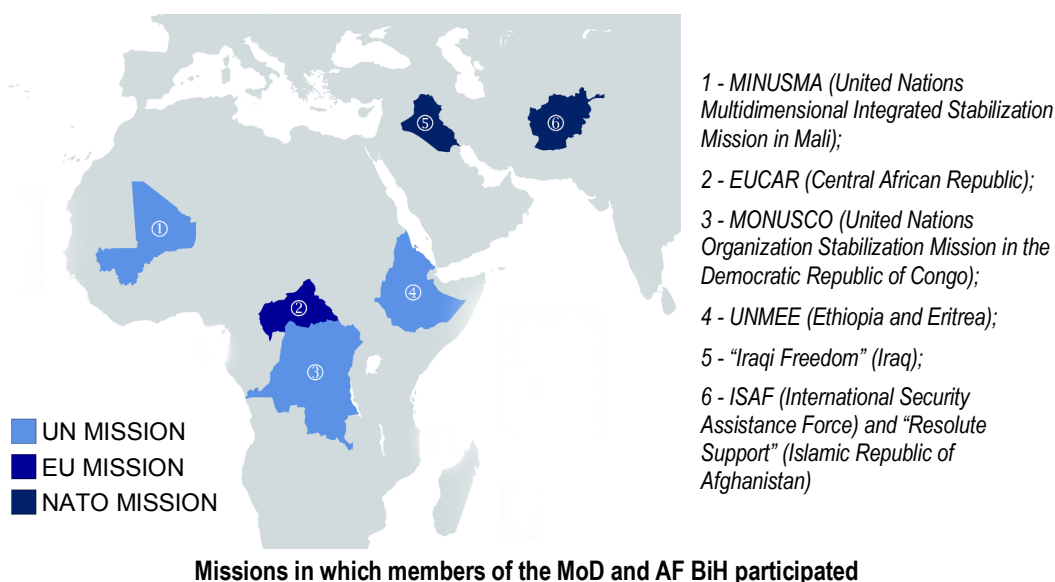


Missions in which police officers from BiH participated

- 1 - UNMISET (United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor); 2000-2005; 31 police officers / 1 woman
- 2 - UNMIL (United Nations Mission in Liberia); 2004 onwards; 81 police officers / 11 women
- 3 - UNFICYP (United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus); 2004 onwards; 47 police officers / 8 women
- 4 - MINUSTAH (United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti); 2004-2006; 12 police officers / 3 women
- 5 - UNMIS (United Nations Mission in Sudan); 2006-2011; 19 police officers / 4 women
- 6 - UNMISS (United Nations Mission in South Sudan); 2011 onwards; 86 police officers / 16 women

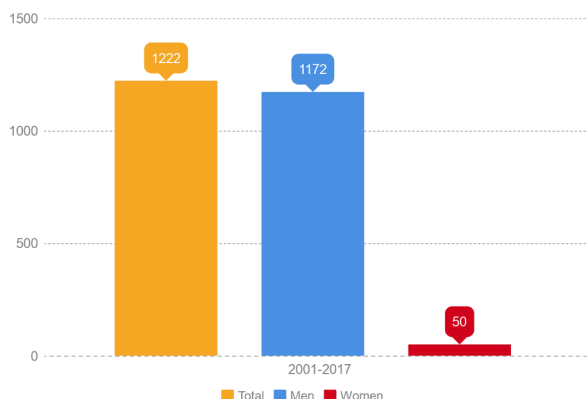
2. PARTICIPATION OF MEMBERS OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND ARMED FORCES OF BIH IN PEACE MISSIONS

Since 2001, members of the MoD and AF BiH have been honoured and privileged to give their personal contribution to the efforts to strengthen peace, stability and security in the world through the implementation of various missions. They participated in and contributed significantly to the activities of building democratic government institutions, strengthening the defence and security sectors, and respecting human rights and freedoms. Within the limits and boundaries of their professional and human capabilities, the MoD and AF BiH continue to provide assistance in crisis focal points around the world. Until now, the AF BiH has been successfully involved in several peace missions, i.e. in Ethiopia and Eritrea, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali and the Central African Republic.



In total, 1,222 members of the MoD and AF BiH participated in these missions, of which 50, or 4%, were women⁷.

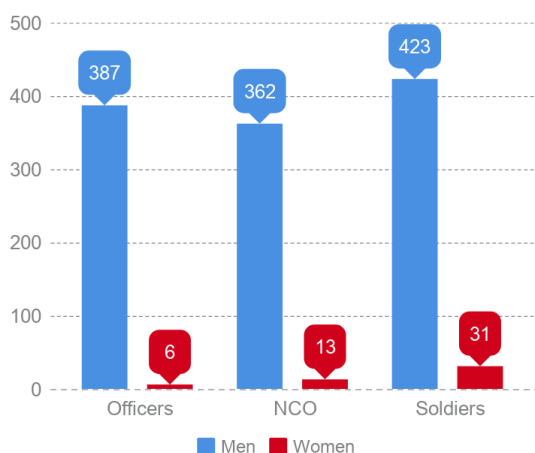
As it can be seen, the female members of MoD and AF BiH have also been represented in a very small percentage in the peace missions so far. Still, it is positive that, in such a small number, they were present in the categories of officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers. Thus, for example, in the previously mentioned missions, there were 6 female officers, 13 female non-commissioned officers and 31 female soldiers.



The gender structure of members of the MoD and AF BiH in peace missions



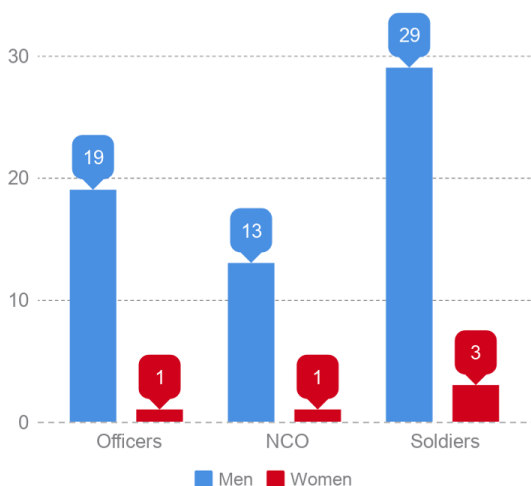
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The gender structure of the officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers from the MoD and AF BiH in peace missions

Currently, the AF BiH has 66 of its members, of which 5 are women in the ranks of soldiers, non-commissioned officers and officers, deployed and engaged in the UN missions and peace support operations in the Republic of Congo, the Republic of Mali and the Central African Republic on the African continent and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Asia.

All members of the MoD and AF BiH who are participating in peace missions and peace support operations have significant support from several MoD BiH psychologists. MoD BiH psychologists are also available for family members of the persons who go to the mission. This form of support is very important and contributes to the fact that the members of these structures are, above all, psychologically well prepared to go to the mission, but also that their families are prepared for the absence of the member who went to the mission.



The gender structure of the officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers from the MoD and AF BiH currently deployed in peace missions



3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the collected information, it is evident that BiH is actively involved in various international peace building and peacekeeping operations, by deploying police and military staff. Over the last 17 years, a total of 1,498 members of the police structures and AF BiH participated in peace missions and peace support operations under the aegis of the UN, NATO and the EU.

The majority of the representatives that BiH has sent to participate in peace missions and peace-support operations have been men (94%). Although research has demonstrated that the full inclusion of women in peace and security activities provides better outcomes, only a small number of female representatives from BiH's security and defence sectors took part in conflict prevention and peace-building processes. However, an encouraging fact is that the percentage of women participating in these kinds of activities has increased year after year, which is especially evident with regard to the number of female police officers from BiH participating in peace missions of the UN.

Going forward, regardless of the observed growth trend in the number of women in peace missions, BiH should promote and strive for a greater participation of women, especially women from the defence sector. The data show the proportion of women from BiH's defence sector that participated in peace missions and peace support operations, 7.58%, is considerably lower than some other countries of the region, such as Serbia, where "the representation of women from the total number of members of the Serbian Army engaged in multinational operations amounts to 10.06%"⁸. Inclusion of a larger number of women in peace mission is not limited to issues of gender equality, but would also positively impact conditions and the greater efficiency of operations at peace missions. Women play a critical role in defending human rights and negotiating peace; they bring different perspectives and priorities to conflict prevention and resolution, and to peace building processes. In addition to this, women communicate more easily with certain categories of the local population and are able to contribute to an increased understanding of the position and needs of the local women's population.

It is also recommended that, in addition to the PSOTC, institutions such as the Ministry of Security and MoD BiH use the experience and knowledge of peace mission participants to a greater extent and establish institutionalized channels for transferring knowledge and experience from peace missions to the system of defence and security. This way, each institution, especially police agencies, who participate in peace missions by sending their members, would assist in coaching and training future candidates for peace missions, which would also contribute to improving their capacity for deploying future participants to missions.

During the pre-deployment training, it is important for all peace mission candidates to become acquainted with the culture, traditions and laws of the country in which they will serve, including local approaches to gender. It is also important for the police institutions to provide an adequate program of psychological support to their members after returning from the mission, and that, following the example of the MoD BiH and AF BiH, which have developed a psychological support program for the families of members of the MoD BiH / AF BiH, they also provide a support mechanism for the families of members of police structures who are deployed to peace missions. Finally, it is recommended that the competent institutions pass amendments to the existing legal provisions and adopt relevant regulations to permit the deployment of civilians from BiH to peace missions.



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NOTES:

1 The data obtained from the Ministry of Security and the Ministry of Defence of BiH in October 2017.

2 Law on the Participation of the Members of the AF BiH, Police Officers, Civil Servants and Other Employees In Peacekeeping Operations and Other Activities Abroad (Official Gazette of BiH, No. 14/2005).

3 PSOTC is a regional training and educational center that participates in the professional development of the AF BiH and supports BiH's contribution to international peace and security through its activities.

4 See more about this in the interview with Mr. Jasmin Cajic, commander of PSOTC.

5 Interview with Ms. Vildana Sedo, a participant in the Peace Mission in Liberia. Ms. Sedo is an investigator at the Stari Grad Criminal Police Department, First Police Administration of Sarajevo, Ministry of Internal Affairs of Canton Sarajevo.

6 Data collected from the BiH Ministry of Security of BiH, October 16, 2017. Currently 36 police officers from BiH are deployed to peace missions, of which 10 are women (28 percent).

7 Data collected from the BiH Ministry of Defence, September 18, 2017.

8 Political Council for implementation of the National Action Plan of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 - Women, Peace and Security in the Republic of Serbia (2010-2015) - Report on the implementation of the National Action Plan of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 - Women, Peace and Security in Republic of Serbia (2010-2015) in 2015, page 30.



INTERVIEWS



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA IN PEACE MISSIONS

"The most important thing is to mentally prepare your-self for going to a peace mission"

ARARANKOVIĆ, Zvezdana
Head of Passport Control Team
Border Police Unit of the
Sarajevo Airport



Picture: Private archive

Where and for how long have you been in a peacekeeping mission and what is your general experience?

Initially I was engaged in the United Nations Mission in Sudan ((United Nations Mission in Sudan - UNMIS) in the period from 24 September 2008 to 24 October 2010, and for the second time I was part of the United Nations peace mission in Southern Sudan (United Nations Mission in South Sudan - UNMISS) from 20 March 2016 to 19 September 2017. During my two engagements, I gained different experiences, since the mandates of these missions are different. The mandate of the UNMIS mission was building capacity, reform and reorganization of the police, while UNMISS's mandate was to protect civilians. However, what is common to these missions is that you get to know cultural differences, which has inevitably enriched me as a person, as well as getting to know other colleagues and the manner in which they perform police tasks.

What types of formal and informal preparation for peace missions have helped you most during your engagement?

Since 2012, all police officers wishing to be part of peacekeeping missions must pass a pre-mission training organized by the BiH Ministry of Security. This training is conducted at the PSOTC in Butmir. Successful completion of this training is one of the conditions that police officers must fulfill in order to be deployed to the peacekeeping mission. As far as informal preparation is concerned, the advice received from a colleague who was already in the UNMIS mission in Sudan was very helpful to me personally.

He suggested the best way to prepare myself and his advice really helped me a lot. Furthermore, a significant aspect of informal preparation was meeting with colleagues who returned from various missions, who gave us presentations on what we can expect upon arrival in the peace mission. In essence, it is most important to be mentally well prepared to go to the peace mission since this is a big change, it's about another continent and stay of several months in a completely different world.

Describe your daily tasks during the mission?

During my first engagement in the UNMIS Mission in Sudan, I performed various tasks and duties, ranging from working with local police, counseling with regard to dealing with various cases and respecting human rights, up to fulfilling the functions of team leader at Juba Airport. I also worked as the Deputy Commander of Juba Sector 1 and as a local police instructor with the aim of building their capacity for identifying and detecting counterfeit documents. During my 18-month mandate, I was also the Commander of the BiH Police Contingent in the Sudan.



During my deployment to another mission at UNMISS in the South Sudan, I worked on civil protection tasks in a camp where displaced persons were accommodated. We performed tasks of control of persons at entry points to the camp and conducted tent inspections in order to find prohibited items and ensure the safety of people living there.

The work of the police team leader, which I performed in the community at the Juba field office, was related to maintaining order and peace within the camp. As a Team Leader, I organized and conducted a five-day training on "Understanding Security Within Camps for Civilian Protection" for 400 members of local police, who, as volunteers, were working with and assisting the United Nations Police Force. I also worked as a trainer within the context of the project "Joint Integrated Police", for a training which lasted for 6 weeks.

What are the advantages and difficulties of being at peacekeeping mission?

Being at peace mission brings a wonderful life experience and professional experience. During the stay at the mission, colleagues both male and female from different countries get to know each other, together with all of their cultural, traditional and other differences. The greatest personal achievement for me is the high quality friendships that my stay in the mission has enabled. To a certain extent, the diversity of working conditions during the stay in the mission is a problem, but after a while you get accustomed to such conditions of work and life. However, the most difficult part of engaging in a peace mission is the separation from family and friends.

What have you learned and what benefits are the result of your engagement in a peace mission?

During engagement in peace missions, one gains a great professional and personal experience. We develop professionally and individually and it very often it happens that, after completion of their mission, colleagues opt for professional engagement in the UN. Also, at mission you meet people of different profiles, make different friendships and expand your work contacts. One of the reasons why police officers decide to join a peace mission is certainly also for greater financial stability.

In your opinion, how important is the engagement of women in peace missions?

Since I was engaged as a woman and a police officer in a peace mission on several occasions, I personally know the benefits of engaging women in this work. In peace missions, women have shown that they can work side by side with their male counterparts under all conditions and are ready to respond to all the jobs and tasks set equally as well as their male colleagues.

What do you think about the position of women in peacekeeping missions and what is your personal experience?

Women are not sufficiently represented in leadership positions in the mission, at least in the case of the UNMISS mission in South Sudan. One of the reasons is that women perhaps do not have enough confidence, depending on the country they are coming from, and their professional profile. I also noticed that some female colleagues are not interested in leadership positions. My personal experience of the peacekeeping mission was excellent, I did all the jobs and tasks in a professional and fair way, conducted myself in a respectful way to my colleagues and the local population, and they treated me in the same way.

Given your experience gained in peacekeeping missions, what are your recommendations for future candidates?

As an instructor in pre-mission training, during trainings, I always advise female and male colleagues to treat others in the way that they would like to be treated, therefore with respect. In leaving for a UN mission, we are, first and foremost, the ambassadors of the UN, the state of BiH, the Ministry of Security of BiH, the police agencies from which we come, and only then individuals, and that is why we must pay attention to how we behave during work hours and in our free time. I can say to my potential colleagues that if they have the desire to be part of the mission, not to give up on that desire, regardless of the working conditions and life of the mission, and if they are ready to give their maximum there is no task to which they cannot respond. The experience gained at a mission is invaluable and do not experience it yourself, nobody can tell you about it.



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“Participation in a peace mission is a tremendous experience that can not be gained anywhere else and that has no price”

BEĆIROVIĆ, Irma
Private First Class
Military Police of BiH

Where and for how long have you been at a peace mission and what is your general experience?

During the period from January to September 2013, I participated in the peace mission in Kandahar in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The mission was military-police in character. Besides me, 26 other members of the military police battalion from Bosnia and Herzegovina took part in the mission, where we were a part of the American contingent. Our task was to escort convoys, and in addition to this, I was part of a team of women who trained Afghan woman police officers.

The experience gained at the peace mission is unique, both in the military field and in private life. As a soldier, you become more capable and more prepared, so I think that each of us, professional soldiers, should go through a mission in order to know why this job is actually done. During the mission, I was most impressed by the way of life, culture, traditions and customs of the local population in Afghanistan.

What type of formal and informal preparation for peace missions was the most helpful during your engagement?

When it comes to formal preparation, before going to the peace mission, we went through a pre-mission training course lasting six months. Part of training was held in BiH, and on two occasions we went to the Federal Republic of Germany and once to the United States. The training involved various aspects of preparation for a peace mission, such as first aid, field work, escort of convoys, and similar. During this phase, through presentations and conversations with colleagues who had already been at the same or similar missions, we became familiar with the way of life in the place to where we were going. Also, during the training, we often had physical fitness checks in order to determine our progress.



Picture: Private archive

As for informal preparation, for me personally, the most important was psychological preparations and the support of the colleagues with who I had been on training, because we were a good team, helping each other, giving advice and encouraging, both before and during the mission. Talking with the psychologist was, of course, of great importance for the preparation, but this other aspect, especially on arrival at the mission, was of invaluable importance, because we as a team were more compassionate and understanding of each other as we were in the same situation.

Describe your daily work tasks during the mission?

The basic work of the military police in the peace mission in Kandahar in Afghanistan was to escort convoys and securing the area, as well as providing assistance in training the Afghan military police. We worked closely with their local police and helped them in their everyday tasks. I was also part of a female staff which was in charge of training woman police officers in Afghanistan, and through this training I noticed that they do not know many things necessary for the work, such as first aid.

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What are the benefits and difficulties of being at a peace mission?

The advantage of being at a peacekeeping mission is, above all, the experience you gain at professional as well as at human plan. During your stay at the mission, you simply mature as a person, change your views on life, and many of the things that were not of particular importance to you up to the time that you left for the mission. For the eight months I spent in the mission, you have the impression that while you are there, you are in another world, you are isolated from everyday things, you do not have a private life and the work routine is the same day after day. Because of this, you are forced to focus on the mission itself, on the work you do and the people around you.

What did you learn and what benefits are the results of your engagement in a peace mission?

The main benefit is that I have acquired very good friends for a lifetime. At they were there for me all the times, as I was there for them, and I will never forget our relationship. As for the job, I progressed as a soldier and gained a very significant life experience. In addition, I also improved my English language, since I used only that language on a daily basis for eight months. As far as finances are concerned, I think that it is one of the reasons why people go to peacekeeping missions, but if someone told me now to go to a mission, which would not be paid or that would be paid half as much, I would still go. Participating in a peace mission is a tremendous experience that cannot be gained anywhere else and that has no price.

In your opinion, how important is the engagement of women in peace missions?

The engagement of women in peacekeeping missions is very important, because many tasks in a mission cannot be done without women. One example is a body search when entering a base, which in the case of a woman, either had to be performed by myself or by one of my female colleagues from the other team. As for jobs and tasks in general, I carried the same tasks as my male colleagues, and it was expected that I perform these tasks as successfully as my male counterparts. So, I never noticed that someone looks on me differently as a woman in the professional sense, regardless of the stereotypes that as a woman you are somewhat scared and that you have to work

a little more in order to prove that you are on the same level with men in this profession.

What do you think about the position of women in peace missions and what is your personal experience?

In a peace mission, women are equal to men, they receive the same amount of money for the work they do and results are expected from them equally. I do not think there should be a division or difference between a man and a woman at a mission. Every woman who participates is ready, and knows why she went to the mission and what she has to do. As far as my experience is concerned, I think the most helpful to me was that I prepared myself psychologically for this role, I knew where I was going and accepted the circumstances there as they were.

Given the experience gained in peace missions, what are your recommendations for future candidates?

At a peace mission, you gain experience that you cannot get here. What I saw and learned there, I could not see or learn anywhere else. My way of looking at the army and life in general has changed a lot and now I even look at my uniform differently. I would recommend to all future candidates that they prepare themselves well psychologically to go to a peace mission, that they successfully carry out all the tasks entrusted to them there, that they protect themselves and others, and that they function as a team because as an individual they cannot do much.



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“The Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina are contributing to world peace with their devotion, professionalism and experience”

BRAJKOVIĆ, Josip
Colonel
Joint Staff of the Armed
Forces of BiH

Where and for how long have you been at a peace mission and what is your general experience?

Up to now, I participated in three different peace missions in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan within the coalition forces. My first participation in the mission was in 2012, within the US-NATO Initiative A-5, NATO Training Mission Afghanistan (NTM-A), which involved all of our neighbouring countries, with the exception of Serbia. The other two missions were within the Force Protection Unit (FPU). Specifically, the second mission, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), was with the Danish contingent, where we were in the south of Afghanistan, carrying out the task of securing a part of the Bastion base, while the third mission, the Resolute Support Mission (RSM), was based at the Bagram base where we also worked on security tasks for the United States military, and gained the huge trust of the coalition partners.

In peace missions, you gain enormous experience while working with different nations and cultures and this is something you cannot replace. By going to a peace mission, every soldier learns and improves a lot, and gains experience that can be a satisfaction for further work after returning to the home country. Personally, I was extremely pleased to learn as much as possible about NATO standards and that today I can apply them in my work with my colleagues at my current job.

What forms of formal and informal preparation for peace missions have helped you most during your engagement?

The AF BiH has norms and standards that each soldier must satisfy in order to go to a peace mission. In general, everyone has to go through three stages of preparations. The first phase is individual, where each candidate personally prepares through adequate literature and through the lessons learned. The

second phase involves collective training, while the third is directly focused on the mission. At a time when I was preparing for the mission in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, I was lucky, because the United States Mobile Team came twice to us in BiH and prepared us. I can say that I learned the most from people who personally went through missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.



Picture: Private archive

Describe your daily work tasks during the mission?

In the first peacekeeping mission I was the Commander of the Headquarters School of the Military Police of the International Mentoring Team NATO - NTM. We conducted various military and police trainings with members of the Afghan National Army (ANA). Specifically, my job was to mentor and supervise the work of the Chief of the Headquarter of the Military Police School ANA. During this mission we worked well together, supervised the training daily, made corrections on the spot, and arranged clear plans for each day of the mission. For six rotations, we were able to sufficiently enable Afghan forces to "produce" military police officers could adequately



perform military police assignments in Afghanistan. Also, I must add that the first mission was totally different from the other two, where we did not have so much everyday contact with the Afghan security forces. FPU missions are specific. I was the commander of the FPU contingent, and the unit I commanded carried out the tasks of securing the staff and buildings of the coalition forces 24 hours a day throughout the mission.

What are the benefits and difficulties of being at a peace mission?

I will begin with the difficulties. Personally, I think it is a real challenge to go to a peace mission for the first time, because spending six months in an unknown area is not very pleasant. You need a good psycho-physical preparation. Along with all the other preparations, as a commander I was individually prepared by psychologist of the AF BiH, as I had a great responsibility in the mission. First of all, I had to be a commander for the soldiers whom I led to the mission, but also, I was their fellow soldier, family and friend, so it's very important that you are psychologically prepared for these roles.

During the mission, one of the difficulties is the separation from the family. Since I am married and have a wife and two children, it was equally important to prepare my family before I went to the mission, because all of my duties were transferred to my wife and children. For me, the advantages of being at a mission are primarily the practice you get in the field, that is to say the possibility of practically adopting NATO standards, as well as being in an international environment where you have the opportunity to perfect your English language skills. I would also add the various friendships I have gained in the mission.

What did you learn and what benefits are the result of your engagement in a peace mission?

As I said before, for me, the greatest satisfaction in the peace mission was adopting NATO standards. In addition, I've also perfected a foreign language, and all of this together helped me to progress in my professional career in the meantime. In engaging in a peace mission, the financial aspect is of course also welcome, but it is not in the first place. I believe that the experience, knowledge and standards you acquire by participating in the mission are benefits that really mean a lot to each participant.

In your opinion, how important is the engagement of women in peace missions?

In essence, in the army, there should be no division between male and female jobs and, personally, I would never make that division. I think there are certain jobs in the army that women can do, and men cannot do. The engagement of women is particularly necessary for work at the entrance registration service in the building, where detailed control of all visitors is required. Similarly, in some missions, such as those in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, one should understand the cultural differences and the perception of women. Therefore, I want to encourage women to enter the army and to apply for deployment to peace missions.

Considering the experience you gained in peacekeeping missions, what are your recommendations for future candidates?

The AF BiH are true ambassadors and professionals around the world, primarily in war-affected areas, where they are doing a very good job. I consider that there is no more honorable work than "being a soldier", and therefore, I encourage all soldiers, officers and non-commissioned officers to apply for participation in peace missions. The experience, knowledge and friendship that you get there is really worth it and therefore sign up and be ambassadors for your countries.



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA IN PEACE MISSIONS

„The Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina follow contemporary trends with regard to engaging women in training for peace missions”

ČAJIĆ, Jasmin
Brigadier
Peace Support Operations
Training Centre at Butmir

What are the conditions for a particular person to apply to participate in a peace mission?

The Rules of Procedure on Participation of Members of the MoD BiH and AF BiH in Peace Support Operations and Other Activities Abroad in Article 22 prescribes:

- The BiH Minister of Defence issues an order to carry out preparatory actions for deployment to peace support operations, based on which the process of candidate selection begins.
- When selecting a candidate, the character of the peace support operation and other activities abroad, expertise, experience and national representation of candidates and the conditions stipulated by the organizer or contingent of which a unit comprising-members of the AF BiH is a part, must be respected.
- Peace support operations and other activities abroad cannot be attended by personnel which is subject to criminal or disciplinary proceedings or by persons who are punished for offenses for which the proceedings are conducted ex officio, nor by persons who in previous missions have been rated as "satisfactory" or lower, or who

have in any way damaged BiH's reputation at a mission.

- Professional military personnel may be deployed in peace support operations and other activities abroad without their personal consent.

Here I would particularly like to point out that knowledge of the English language and completion of a course for peace operations is an unavoidable initial criterion not only for applying for missions, but also during all stages of the selection of the candidate for the mission.

Are there any differences in conditions and training for participation in peace missions based on gender and type of mission?

Gender is not a criterion in selection and training for peace operations. Depending on the mission of the unit or staff group, there is a possibility for a particular person to be assigned to a particular position depending on gender (e.g. search of persons in the operations zone and the like). In order to respect gender equality when selecting candidates, women are given equal opportunities to compete for participation in a peace mission.

What does the training course for candidates comprise, and to what extent is it compatible with the situation on the ground?

Article 23 of the Rules of Procedure of the Members of the MoD and AF BiH stipulates:

- Trained members of the MoD and AF BiH are deployed to peace support operations and other activities abroad.
- The Joint Staff Command regulates the time and location for conducting training of the contingent that is deployed to peace support operations and other activities abroad.



Picture: Private archive

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- The training is conducted before deployment to peace support operations, in BiH and abroad, and if possible in the area of operations. The MoD coordinates the training in the area of operations and abroad with the organizer of peace support operations and other activities abroad, according to the established program and international standards.
- After the training has been completed, and prior to deployment to peace support operations and other activities abroad, verification of the level of training is carried out, with the aim of establishing the ability to execute the mission by the rules of engagement; this depending on the type of participation of the AF in the peace support operations and agreements in force, is carried out by the AF or by the organizer.
- In accordance with the aforementioned article of the Rules of Procedure, and depending on the

mission, training is carried out in BiH and abroad. Training is fully aligned with mission requirements, and the relevance of training, among other things, is ensured by involving members who have fresh experience from a concrete mission in preparing and implementing training for the next rotation.

The extent to which the training is consistent with the situation on the ground and how much it meets the necessary conditions is also reflected in the fact that our courses are institutionally accredited by the UN and the NATO, which in practice means that they meet all the required, i.e. necessary criteria prescribed by the implementer of operations, the UN and NATO. The training program fully integrates the topics and content that are required by the implementer of operations.



Picture: Private archive



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How do you use the experience gained by previous participants in peace missions in order to improve the training of future candidates?

Experience is used at all stages of training, starting from planning, designing and presentation of teaching content. A combination of lectures, discussions and practical exercises is used when conducting the training. For example, in the pre-deployment training for the participation of members of the AF BiH in the UN peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in the capacity of UN military observers, which was realized in September 2017, the previous participants of this mission actively participated in a series of lectures on the operating environment, the mission itself and the experiences gained during its realization.

Furthermore, one of the methods is a panel interactive discussion among the persons who were at the mission and the course participants, where course participants have the opportunity to directly raise questions of special interests about the given mission.

Finally, the persons who were at the mission remain available during the entire preparation of the new rotation/contingent, right up until the final deployment to mission. Also, those who were at the mission are primary candidates for instructor positions in centers such as the PSOTC in Butmir, where they have the opportunity to continue to transfer their experiences through other forms of training related to peace operations, such as integrity building, gender equality, protection of civilians and so on.

Is there a growing trend in the number of women in training for peace missions and what are the benefits of their engagement in general?

A trend of growth in the number of women in training for peace missions definitely exists. The AF BiH follows contemporary trends when it comes to this. The engagement of women in peace operations has several advantages, of which I mention few:

- A significant part of the population in the areas of peace support operations are women and children. Women participants of peace missions communicate much easier with these categories of the local population, and thereby improve operational efficiency;

- Women participants of peace operations provide a different perspective and broaden perceptions regarding the understanding of the operational environment and the possible consequences of certain actions (or omissions) of the peace forces, as they are more able to understand the position of the local female population, their needs and interests, as well as the reactions to possible actions of the peace forces;
- In many areas where peace operations are conducted, it is significantly more acceptable culturally that certain actions, such as the search of persons, detention and the like, when applied to women and children, are carried out by women.

How different is training for those who have already been in peacekeeping missions compared to those who apply for the first time?

Each mission is specific and unique. In this regard, training for a specific mission is specific and unique. In addition, the situation in the operating environment is dynamic and changes with the flow of time, so that training, which was, for example, relevant last year is not entirely relevant this year. Of course, participants who have previous experience should find it easier to follow the training and fulfill the standards set, however the content of pre-deployment training itself does not depend on the previous experience of its participants, but depends above all on the needs of the mission and the current situation on the ground.

***“At a peacekeeping mission,
you gain priceless personal
and professional experience”***

ĐURIĆ, Nenad
Police Officer
Police of the
Brcko District of BiH

Where and for how long have you been at a peace mission and what is your general experience?

As a police officer of the Police of the Brcko District of BiH, I participated in three mandates at the peacekeeping missions in Cyprus (United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus - UNFICYP) with a total duration of 43 months. My experience at this mission was positive, because during my stay, I had the opportunity to gain new work experiences that I probably would not be able to gain otherwise, because of the nature of the job. Also, I had the opportunity and the pleasure to directly work with and cooperate with police officers, members of the army and civilians from other countries, which, especially during my first engagement at the mission, represented a challenge of sorts.

I was greatly helped in this by the experience that I “brought from home” because from 1997 to 2003 I worked and cooperated with members of the UN police who were deployed to the mission in BiH. This experience was great help to me, because through this cooperation I really understood what working in international environment means, which resulted in easier communication and reducing the possibility of errors at work to a relative minimum. I must emphasize that during my first engagement in the peace mission I also gained a completely different experience in the cultural and religious sense.

What forms of formal and informal preparation for peace missions have helped you most during your engagement?

Before my first mission, I could only rely on informal preparation, that is to say, on information available online. I paid attention to information concerning the mission itself, such as the cause and consequences of the conflict, the current political situation, the mission mandate, the tasks and assignments of all the components within the mission. I also researched



Picture: Private archive

the security situation of the wider environment in the country where I would be staying, in order to get as complete a picture as possible. During my later engagements, I was at a great advantage because I already had experience and knowledge from my previous stay at the mission, and I could also rely on the formal knowledge I acquired in the training that is now a standard and a prerequisite for going to peace missions. The pre-mission training for deployment to peace missions is extremely important as it provides participants with the basics about how UN organizations work, as well as on how to work and live in a multicultural environment. I can point out with pride that I have been engaged as an instructor in the training right from the design stage.

Describe your daily work tasks during the mission?

During the mission, I had several functions, such as Training Officer, where I organized and participated in the implementation of the initial course that was mandatory for all new UN police officers when they arrived in the mission zone. As part of my engagement in civil affairs, I worked on jobs that regulate the normalization of civilian life within the buffer zone and the delivery of humanitarian aid. Daily jobs and tasks consisted in controlling and issuing



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licenses for all civilian activities within the buffer zone, accompanying and delivering humanitarian aid, safeguarding of religious gatherings, etc.

I also fulfilled the functions of team leader of one team in the sector, and later of the coordinator of civil affairs team at the mission level. My daily tasks were to ensure the undisturbed work of teams in the field in both operational and administrative terms, as well as their coordination. I was honored to also perform the function of liaison officer where I was in charge of constant contact and the coordination of activities between the UN police and all the partners at the mission.

What are the benefits and difficulties of being at a peace mission?

The benefits of being at a mission are definitely the possibilities of professional training, as it provides the opportunity to work in some new positions and departments that are not typical for our police agencies, but certain experiences can be applied in further work. Another of the important advantages I would emphasize is working and living in a multicultural environment, which enriches you personally. As for the difficulties of being at a

peacekeeping mission, for me personally the separation from my family presented a difficulty.

What did you learn and what benefits are the result of your engagement in a peace mission?

I can say that through my engagement in a peace mission, I expanded my knowledge, especially when planning and carrying out training and courses, and I have also gained new knowledge in the field of civil affairs, humanitarian work and tasks related to the function of liaison officer. Personal benefits of my engagement are new friendships, established business contacts and a higher level of financial stability.

In your opinion, how important is the engagement of women in peace missions?

In my opinion, the engagement of women in peace missions is very important. Women from a significant part of society, and I don't see a reason why more of them shouldn't be engaged in peace missions, especially when we know that there are jobs and tasks that will be carried out far more successfully by a woman. When I say this, I primarily refer to women and children who are mandate recipients in the mission zone, while taking into account certain specifics such as culture, tradition, and laws. In any case, it is important that we understand and accept equal gender representation without any kind of discrimination, and that we work together to achieve the goals of the mission.

Considering the experience you gained in peacekeeping missions, what are your recommendations for future candidates?

My recommendations for future candidates depend on the mission to which the candidates will be deployed, but some general recommendations are that they must above all dedicate time for preparations and research, both with regard to the mission itself, but also to the country where they will be deployed, its laws, culture and religions. I would also recommend them to be open to new knowledge and to be ready to apply it in their environment after they return from the mission. Finally, it is very important to use common sense, to demonstrate a high level of professionalism and integrity, to promote your country and the agency you belong to, because after all over there we are the ambassadors of our country.



Picture: Private archive

*“Going to a peace mission
was a good decision”*

GAČIĆ, Maja
Sergeant
Police Station Teslić
Ministry of the Interior of
Republika Srpska

Where and for how long have you been at a peace mission and what is your general experience?

From August 2013 to August 2015, I was a member of the BiH contingent at the UN peacekeeping mission in South Sudan. For the first seven months I was at the UN base in Bentiu Unity State in the north of South Sudan, and then, after the war in South Sudan began in mid-December, I was evacuated to Juba, the capital of South Sudan. I worked for two months in Juba, at the UN base in Juba, together with other components of the UN mission, on the protection of the civilian population, after which I returned to Bentiu, and then in April 2014, I was re-transferred to Juba where I stayed until the end of my mandate. Going to a peace mission was a good decision, even though there were difficult moments, days when you want to leave it all and go home, because you are too tired or you do not see progress. However, with the help and support of people who are there with you in the mission, you get through such periods, and move on. I can say that I am very pleased with my engagement and work in the mission, which was recognized by my superiors, from whom I got good grades and a positive report.

What forms of formal and informal preparation for peace missions have helped you most during your engagement?

Firstly, even to be one of the candidates who can apply for a peacekeeping mission, you must have at least 8 years of police service, approval from your superiors, which, in my case, was the commander of the police station, the head of the police administration and the Minister of the Interior, in order to enter the procedure and become a candidate. It is also a prerequisite to pass an English language test and to know how to work on a computer, after which the ministry or agency, depending on where you are employed, suggests that you attend a two-week

pre-mission training course for the UN police at the PSOTC in Butmir. After completing the training, if you pass the test and receive a certificate to attest that you have successfully completed the training and the recommendation that you are capable of participating in a peace mission, you can apply for one of the peace missions at which BiH has its own contingents.

I must point out that the members of the Republika Srpska Ministry of the Interior (Mol RS) who want to go to a peace mission have outstanding help and support from the Department for International Cooperation, the Cabinet of the Minister of Mol RS, as well as Minister Dragan Lukac himself. As far as informal preparation is concerned, you need to be aware that you are going to an area or country where economic, social, political and security conditions are extremely difficult. For me, the most useful was the advice of colleagues who were in the South Sudan before me, which helped me to understand what our task at the peace mission is, and what we could expect when it comes to living conditions in that country.



Picture: Private archive



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Describe your daily work tasks during the mission?

Each UN mission has its mandate, and the exact tasks of all the participating members are specified in the mandate. Upon arrival at the mission area, I was deployed at the UN base in Bentiu as a police advisor, where I worked on a daily basis with other UN police (UNPOL) members on counselling and coaching South Sudan's local police with the aim of teaching them how to perform basic police work and tasks.

When the war in the South Sudan began, the mission's basic task became the protection of the civilian population, which sought help in UN bases throughout the South Sudan. Through this alone of the crisis, the task of UNPOL at the very beginning of the crisis became the protection of civilians who were within the UN base, and as participants we had to organize guards at the entrance to the base and conduct patrols through the part of the camp where civilians were located.

After moving to Juba, I worked for nine months in the UNPOL team, which was in charge of protecting civilians, first as a deputy team leader, and later as a team leader. My job was to maintain security inside the camp itself, protect the UN assets that were located in that part, check persons who entered the camp, and offer assistance to all civilian organizations working within the camp, as well as to send reports on the security situation and to take measures and actions. After that, I was liaison officer with the UN military and civilian organizations that carried out the UN mandate in South Sudan, as well as with many non-governmental and humanitarian organizations, which daily carried out activities within their scope within the camps, such as food distribution, the provision of medical assistance, building of accommodation, schools, clinics etc.

What are the benefits and difficulties of being at a peace mission?

The benefits of participating in a peace mission are several. First of all, you learn to work and think in a completely different way from the way you carry out your duties in BiH and at a peace mission. In a peace mission, you are a counsellor that the local police can, but doesn't have to listen to, because there is no way for you to make somebody attend the training or to listen to your advice about what to do, and how in

certain situations, or about how to protect 10 or 10,000 civilians (as there were in the UN camps without weapons, and how to avoid that these same civilians attack you during your duty. The advantage of participating in the mission is meeting colleagues from around the world, seeing their way of working and thinking, and improving your English language while working with them, which we rarely have the opportunity to do in our home country.

The most common difficulties which you encounter in the mission are certainly extremely difficult living conditions, starting with the fact that you stay, that is to say live, in a so-called containers measuring 10m2. You are not able to buy basic food supplies because there aren't any and what you can find at the market, or in shops which exist only in Juba, is very expensive. Malaria is also the biggest health problem. The issues you face are racial, gender and social differences, though the basic rule of the UN is respect for diversity. There have been situations in which your colleagues refuse to obey, because you are a woman, or because you have lower rank, even though at the South Sudan mission, as a rule, the rank you have in your country did not mean a better position in the mission itself, but you progress in accordance with your knowledge, work, and commitment.

What did you learn and what benefits are the result of your engagement in a peace mission?

You learn to respect the opinions, work, and habits of other people who have different cultural perceptions, and who have far greater life problems than you and, generally, then the community in which you live. You also learn to work and live in almost impossible conditions, and I must say that the leaders of the mission were extremely satisfied with the work and efforts of the BiH contingent members. I must point out that the prejudices of colleagues and fellow citizens about us who go to missions are big, because they think we made big money out there, which is actually impossible because of the costs of living at a mission, accommodation, as well as the travel home. The result of my engagement in the mission is that I managed to justify my participation by performing all the tasks entrusted to me and to present my country in the best way possible.



Picture: Private archive

In your opinion, how important is the engagement of women in peace missions?

The engagement of women in peace missions is very important, as well as in police and military structures in BiH, because there are jobs and tasks dedicated exclusively to women. In countries like the South Sudan, women and children are the most vulnerable part of society; sexual exploitation, rape, and children recruited into the military, are everyday occurrences. That is why it is very important that you have women as UNPOL members who will advise the local police what to do in the event of a woman being raped or a woman who is sexually exploited. Also, if you need specific information from the local community, but you have areas where women are strictly forbidden to talk to men, only a woman will be able to obtain the information you need. After all, in most cases, women talk more easily with another woman, especially when violence is the topic.

What do you think about the position of women in peace missions and what is your personal experience?

In a peace mission, gender equality is particularly respected. The most important thing is that you carry out tasks within your jurisdiction regardless of whether you are a man or a woman, and that you respect the principles of the mission. I was the only woman team leader in the camp where civilians were located, not

because I was a woman, but because I did my duties very well. Also, in the organizational structure of the mission in the South Sudan, women occupied high positions and achieved remarkable results. Members of the BiH contingent did the job they were tasked with very well, and we have been praised many times by mission management, especially for commitment during the crisis, when a number of countries withdrew their contingents from South Sudan.

Considering the experience you gained in peacekeeping missions, what are your recommendations for future candidates?

The most important thing is that you are mentally and physically prepared to work and live in very difficult conditions, that you have the support of your family who is suffering because you are absent, especially if you have children, as well as the support of the organizational unit in which you work. You have to get used to the fact that you may not change the situation you found in the mission, but if you succeed in gaining the trust of the people you train and advise, that they come to your trainings or cooperate with you, or if you save only one life, you have succeeded.



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“Participation in a peace mission is the culmination of a military career”

HODŽIĆ, Ahmedin
Non-Commissioned Officer
Military - Intelligence Battalion of the
Armed Forces of BiH

Where and for how long have you been at a peace mission and what is your general experience?

The experience of participating in a peace mission is priceless in itself, because being engaged and working in a multinational environment brings certain challenges, benefits and specifics. From the 2 September 2015 to 14 March 2016, I was a participant in the peace mission in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, at Regional Command North based in Mazar-i-Sherif. In that period, military forces from a total of 21 countries participated in the peace mission, most of which were members of NATO and some were partner countries. During my stay at the peace mission, I encountered new procedures, ways of working and functioning in the NATO environment, as well as new cultures, different traditions, which is in itself very interesting. Occasionally, you encounter certain difficulties in your work, such as adaptation to the climate and getting used to a new environment.

What forms of formal and informal preparation for peace missions have helped you most during your engagement?

The fact that you are selected as a candidate and a participant in a peace mission carries certain obligations you must fulfill before your departure. First of all, I am referring to language education, on-line courses that are required by NATO and so on. Personally, I went through two stages of preparation, as well as one integration training with the contingent of the A-5 initiative. The first phase of the training took place in BiH, and it was implemented by the AF BiH with a duration of 5 days. After that, the second phase of training and the integration training took place in the Republic of Croatia and lasted for 25 days. During the training, you learn a lot about what you should expect in the mission, especially through the experience of colleagues who were already at the missions. The training has its purpose, however,

regardless of how much you've prepared, when you arrive in the mission area, you will face a series of difficulties that you did not pay attention to during the preparations. In the field, you see that theory is one, and practice is another thing. However, a strong will, maximum engagement and dedication to work help you to overcome all obstacles.



Picture: Private archive

Describe your daily work tasks during the mission?

My duties were closely related to the security of the base in Mazar-i-Sherif itself. Our mission was not a combat mission. We were engaged in headquarter duties and all members of the AF BiH, who were engaged in the peace mission, were forbidden to participate in combat activities in Afghanistan. We

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worked with equipment of great value which we had not used before, and the workplace was closed and safe. At the base, we had to wear a military uniform every day, rank insignia, last name, and name and affiliation to the armed forces.

What are the benefits and difficulties of being at a peace mission?

Generally, there are more benefits than difficulties. Participation in a peace mission is the culmination of a military career. The greatest success you can achieve in your military career is to be chosen by your country and to represent it with pride in a peace support operation. This is a great obligation itself because you are honored that you have been chosen to represent your country. Working in a multinational environment where you will meet new cultures, traditions and friends from other countries, is also a great advantage. In addition, you will get to know new standards and working methods. For this reason, being at a peace mission in these sectors represents a priceless life and military experience.

For me, the biggest difficulty during the stay at the mission was the absence of my family, because, no matter how prepared you are for that, during the mission, you miss your family at certain times. It is particularly difficult in the beginning. If, during the mission, you have some significant dates that you usually celebrate with your family members at home, you will feel withdrawn and depressed on those days, but as a soldier, you must be ready to overcome it.

What did you learn and what benefits are the result of your engagement in a peace mission?

I think that participation in a peace mission brings many benefits. Above all, the engagement and work in a multinational environment, where you meet people of different religions, customs and traditions, is a benefit. During your stay at the mission, you will mostly meet persons from NATO countries and you will get to know their standards and ways of working. You will gain new knowledge and experience, and thanks to this, you will have the opportunity to be part of some other international exercises and activities within NATO. The experience and knowledge that you bring back home after completing the peace mission can be used and adapted to your daily obligations in your unit. Also, there is the possibility of advancement and of building a professional career.

In your opinion, how important is the engagement of women in peace missions?

At no time do women in the mission feel themselves to be of less value or have a subordinate role. In the unit in which I participated, about 10 percent were women who participated equally in everyday duties and tasks. In some positions, only women were engaged because the nature of the job was such that only women could carry out those duties, for example carrying out searches of women upon entry to the base.

Given the experience gained in peacekeeping missions, what are your recommendations for future candidates?

All those who have the will and the desire to experience work in a multinational environment should not be in doubt even for a moment, because by participating and engaging in peace missions they can gain more than they can lose. Going to a peace mission gives you the opportunity to gain an invaluable life and military experience. They should not be afraid of responsibilities, because I can say with certitudes that members of the AF BiH are capable and well trained to successfully perform tasks and duties in peace support operations and that they can respond to any challenge at any time and in a professional way.



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“We have developed a program of psychological support for the families of members of the MoD/AF BiH participating in peace missions”

LEŽAJA, Vesna
Psychologist
Personnel Management Command
of the Armed Forces of BiH

In which year was psychologist support to peacekeeping mission participants introduced, and how is support manifested in practice?

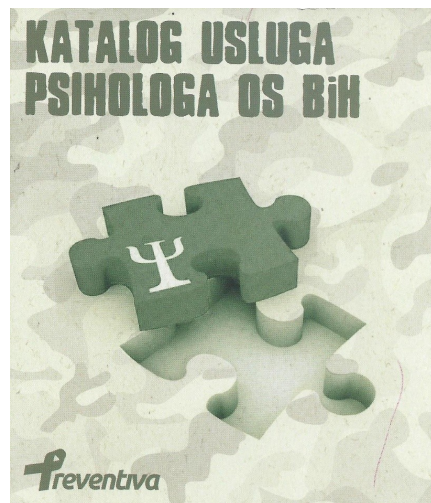
The psychological service was introduced in 2015, and currently there are six psychologists in the AF BiH who work with members who are going to a mission. The process of working with each member who goes to the mission lasts intensively for a year and a half. This implies six months of preparation, six months of stay and six months after returning from the mission. Activities that are conducted with the participants before they go to the mission are education, which is primarily based on control and stress management, family preparation and a series of other activities that help them achieve the necessary psychological combat readiness for the mission. During the preparatory phase, all applicants are given considerable attention and the psychologist is generally available to everyone for individual counseling whenever necessary. At the same time, a psychologist is also available for family members.

The psychologist, who works in the preparation phase of the unit going to the peacekeeping mission, also goes to visit that same unit, which is very well accepted by the participants themselves. It is important for the members of the mission to get to know the psychologist who is working with them, as in this way a different communication is established and in fact they accept psychologist as part of their team. The psychologist is always available to the commander of a unit at a peace mission, for any form of counseling. However, I must point out that the circumstances surrounding psychological support for officers going to UN peacekeeping missions are somewhat different. They stay at these missions for a year and are not deployed in the same workplace, so the psychologist does not go to visit them for organizational reasons. Examples of such missions are Congo and Mali, which none of the psychologists

of the AF BiH have ever visited them. As for adjusting to the period after the mission's end, the same psychologist conducts a debriefing and decompression process with these participants, which is a special process introduced for the purpose of reintegration, rehabilitation, prevention of mental disorders and gradual return of participants in peacekeeping missions to civilian life.

Which characteristics are most desirable in candidates for participation in peacekeeping missions and what does their testing look like? After selection of candidates, what does psychological preparations for a peace mission imply?

The desirable characteristics in candidates for participation in peacekeeping missions are good psychological and physical preparation. In addition, candidates, above all, should have the necessary military knowledge, knowledge of a foreign language and must be familiar with the work procedures in the



Picture: Leaflet "Catalog of psychological services of the Armed Forces of BiH", Preventiva

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mission to which they are deployed. As for candidates testing for participation in peacekeeping missions, it is carried out through different stages where their emotional stability, personal characteristics, the current presence of anxiety and stress, and so on, are assessed.

The psychological preparations of candidates for peace missions implies good social and emotional well-function both, in the unit and in the family. We try to raise their existing capacities to the highest level and those who reach the highest level are chosen to go to the mission. We mainly prepare them through various educational workshops and exercises that we conduct with them, such as relaxation techniques, defusing and psychological debriefing. These are exercises that contribute to reducing tension immediately after a critical event; we also teach them how to recognize the presence of stress in themselves and how to deal with it. Different brochures and guides are available to candidates, where they can learn more about how to recognize symptoms and reactions and how to "keep" everything under control.

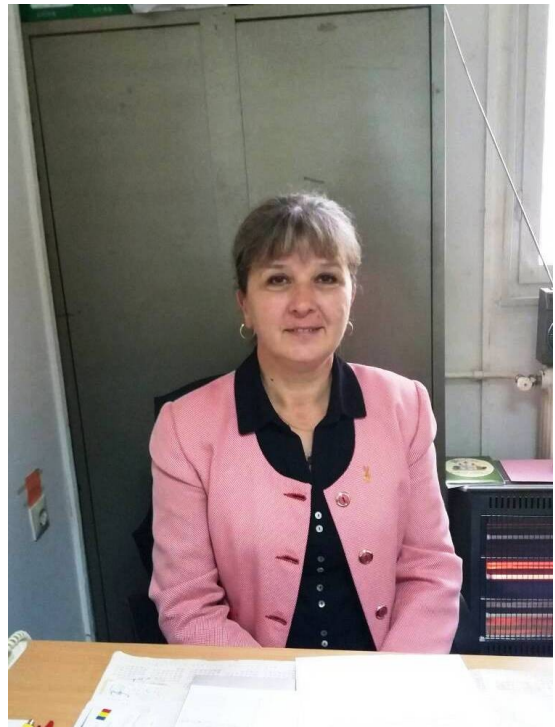
What are the most common challenges faced by people during they stay at a peacekeeping mission, and what type of persons is most likely to seek help after their return from the mission?

The most common challenge for those going to peacekeeping missions is being separated from the family and adapting to new living conditions at the mission. Upon arrival at the mission, candidates first of all, need to physiologically adapt to the different time zone, to a different climate and to a completely different way of functioning in military bases. How much we think that the soldier is well prepared, he still has a sense of vulnerability because he comes to a zone that has been affected by a war and where there is always a possibility of life-threatening situations. The lack of privacy is also a challenge since they generally function in a collective and rarely have the opportunity to be alone. At the same time, separation from the family is particularly challenging because the family, during the stay of members at the mission, functions alone, and sometimes problems arise when family members can't cope. A certain number of people seek the help of a psychologist after returning from the mission. After returning home, approximately, five to seven per cent of men and

women encounter problems in reintegration into civilian and working environments and in principle seek specific advice for their problem.

Are there any examples of such challenges having caused certain psychological problems, and if so, which ones?

There are several examples of the challenges the members of the mission encountered on the mission having caused certain psychological problems. These are problems relating to the family functioning; problems with a higher dose of anxiety and tension, due to which they are unable to return to functioning at home in an easy and simple way; also disorders that accompany anxiety or depression and which result in some addictions, such as alcohol consumption. In general, there have been no cases of post-traumatic stress disorder among the members of the AF BiH who participated in peace missions.



Picture: Private archive



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Does the return from the peace mission make it difficult to integrate a person into their primary environment?

In general, after returning from the mission, soldiers do not have a particularly big problem. They are eager to finish the mission and return to their families. However, what is characteristic of members of other armies, but also with ours, is that in the beginning everyone denies the problems they perhaps have, and only after a month or after half a year, when they become aware of the problem, they seek help. Sometimes there is a problem in that the family finds it difficult to adapt to their renewed presence; members also need time to return to the routines of family life, which differs from the routines they have established at the mission. It can happen that, during the mission, the partner who has stayed at home with the children does not solve a problem which they have with the children or with themselves, so the member who participated in the mission attributes this to himself as his mistake or his fault because he went to the mission. Sometimes children show behavioral regression, achieve poorer grades at school, become disobedient, etc, and all that makes it difficult for the mission member to reintegrate into the family.

Does deployment to a peacekeeping mission have a positive effect on these persons, and if so, how?

Being at peacekeeping missions certainly has positive effects on most participants. First, by going to the mission, they fulfill their wishes, as a soldier, besides being a soldier, also has the desire to go to a mission. Many of them return better, more prepared and (amongst other things) richer for a new life experience. Another positive effect of a mission is a greater appreciation of life and of the way we live it in this area, the establishment of friendly relations between members of our unit, as well as with members belonging to other countries which are at the mission. People returning from a peacekeeping mission are also physically more prepared, as during their stay at the mission they have the opportunity to use their free time for physical preparation, so they are often in good physical condition on returning home.

Has a support mechanism for families of peacekeepers been developed and how often is it used?

We have developed a program of psychological support for the families of members of the MoD / AF BiH participating in peacekeeping missions. Psychologists are already available during the preparatory phase of a unit or a member going to a mission, both for a member and for his/her family. Before the unit leaves, we organize a family day, where the family members of all personnel who are going to a mission stay with us for a day. We organize different workshops with the children, prepare symbolic gifts, such as colouring books which have been specifically designed as a guide and diary for preschool children, in which the drawings show where their father or mother are going and what they are going to do at the mission, but also what they do at home. Family members are provided with the support of psychologists at their location, by telephone or by home visits if necessary. In addition, we have developed a network of cooperation with Mental Health Centers throughout the territory of BiH, which makes it much easier for us to put the family member in touch with the closest Mental Health Center, if necessary. The need of family members for support by a psychologist is usually expressed at the beginning of a mission, until they adjusted, but also during the mission. The reasons are different, sometimes they seek advice, sometimes they need support and motivation, sometimes they need to talk to someone, but also to get real psychological help, which is not very often.

What are your recommendations for participants in order that they find it easier to cope with challenges during their stay at a peace mission?

The basic recommendation is to be physically and mentally well prepared for going to the mission and to have the necessary knowledge and skills, but also to prepare families for the period of absence of a family member who is at a mission. However, life is unpredictable, so if they encounter a problem for which they cannot find a solution, both participants and members of their families need to seek professional help. The psychologists of the MoD / AF BiH are at their disposal.



„The presence of women participants in peace missions improves the social status of women in the country in which the mission is being conducted“

PEPIĆ, Zoran
Colonel

**Peace Support Operations
Training Centre at Butmir**

Where and for how long have you been in a peace mission and what is your general experience?

In the period from 04 February to 04 August 2011, I participated in the peace support operation - ISAF in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Many countries participated in that peacekeeping mission, most of which are members of NATO, 12 partner countries - members of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, including BiH, and 11 non-member countries. I have to point out that the ISAF mission was approved by UN Security Council Resolution 1386 in December 2001 with the original focus on the capital city Kabul and its surroundings with the aim of training the Afghan National Security Force (ANSF), to assist in the transition period in re-establishing and building the institutions of government, with simultaneous primary commitment in the fight against the Taliban.

In October 2003, with the new resolution from the UN Security Council, the decision was made to extend this mission to the entire territory of Afghanistan, and this was gradually implemented. In the period from 2006 to 2011, one of the basic tasks of the international coalition forces led by the United States was intensive combat operations, especially in the south and east of the country in the fight against global terrorism.



Picture: Private archive

My general experience of peace missions is positive. On the one hand, it is a kind of life school, and on the other, a great professional challenge which has to be and an indispensable part of your professional development if you want to achieve everything you wish for. Participation in a peace missions represents first and foremost a great acknowledgement of our country, which from being a recipient of foreign aid has become someone who is able to help countries in a similar situation that of BiH at the beginning of and in the mid-1990s. At the same time, participation in the above mentioned peace support operations is also a great recognition of the AF BiH, which has become an integral part of international forces that have actively participated in maintaining and building peace and stability in the world.

What forms of formal and informal preparations for the peace missions helped you most during your engagement?

Formal preparations for a peace mission were extremely complex but designed and implemented in a superb and professional way. We had complex individual and collective preparations before going to the peace mission. As far as formal individual preparations are concerned, all candidates had to complete a basic course on the knowledge of the general situation in Afghanistan through the NATO special online distance learning program. Without a certificate of successful completion of the above-mentioned course, we could not continue with further preparations. Also, we went through medical examinations, tests and psycho-tests that are an integral part of the procedure for going to a peace mission. A part of the individual and collective preparations was carried out in BiH, organized by the AF BiH and the German Contingent, in whose composition we performed tasks in the zone of operations. These preparations involved the



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realization of various content such as: knowledge and handling of personal weapons and military equipment, procedures for medical protection, atomic-biological-chemical defence, mine and unexploded ordnance handling, military topography as well as other important general contents that every officer must know in order to go to a peace mission. In the second phase of preparation that lasted for two weeks, we went through a training course for the specific duties and positions in the operations zone that was carried out at the NATO Joint Training Center in Bydgoszcz, Poland.

As far as preparation is concerned, lessons on the experiences of the AF BiH staff officers who had already been in the previous three rotations to this peace mission were very useful to me personally and to my colleagues. On that occasion, we were able to get answers to different and specific questions about the mission, which was of invaluable importance for further preparation as well as for work in the mission itself.

Describe your daily work assignments during the mission?

Formally, but also factually, working time in the mission lasts 24 hours a day, depending on the needs and the situations in the zone of responsibility, on the ground, as well as on the demands and orders of superiors. For the first 15 days in the mission, I was on duty as desk officer for planning in the Political and Planning Directorate (J5) in the Regional Command "North" (RCN), which was located at the Marmal base in Mazar-i-Sharif. Soon after the transformation of a part of the organizational structure of the RCN, the Directorate for Capacity Development of the Afghan National Security Forces was formed. In this newly-formed organizational unit, I was appointed as the Head of the Directorate for Capacity Development of Afghan National Police (ANP). Within the Directorate, I had 5 desk officers from participating countries, who were responsible for developing the capabilities of different types of police units in the zone of operations. These units carried out various police-military operations, ranging from the regular tasks of maintaining public peace and order, police training, border check-ups, rapid action forces, up to the special operations against Taliban terrorist forces in the area of responsibility. My basic tasks in the mission, as well as the tasks of the department for which I was responsible, were related to the activities

of receiving and collecting relevant information and reports, their processing for operational purposes, as well as monitoring and analyzing the situation, status and engagement of police forces in the zone of responsibility. On a daily basis, through personal contact, I collaborated with and exchanged information with the ANP Liaison Officer and the superior command in Kabul, both on what was happening in the zone and with other organizational elements of the RCN.

The focus was on the status and engagement of forces related to the preparation, planning, organization and execution of current and future Joint Forces operations on the ground. In addition, we provided assistance to commands and units of police forces in the field, and prepared and organized cooperation with partner organizations, UN police and other important international governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as with relevant domestic security agencies in the area of responsibility.

What are the advantages and difficulties of being at peace mission?

As an officer, I considered the peace missions to be mainly an excellent professional opportunity which I had. The very fact that you have the opportunity to help build peace, security and stability for someone who is in a state of war or in a state of immediate danger of war, where the lives and fundamental human rights of children, women and the population are endangered makes you more satisfied and more fulfilled, both from a professional and a human point of view. By participating in the mission, you have a great chance and opportunity to learn about the high professional norms, standards and working procedures of NATO, which significantly contribute to the military-professional development of each supervisor. During the stay in the mission, you exchange on a daily basis your knowledge and experience with colleagues from the AF of different countries, improve your knowledge of English language, learn about a different country, the different customs and the culture of another people. You have the opportunity to be the ambassador of your country and nation and to present them honorably, proudly and with dignity to the world, along with promoting the ethics of the members of the AF BiH as well as your military profession.

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The greatest difficulty of being in at a mission is certainly the separation from your family. You are separated from it for almost eight months, which is the time period from preparation until the realization of the mission. Working in harsh conditions, such as persistent potential security threats, challenges, stress, great psycho-physical and intellectual efforts, are also the difficulties that a mission brings. There are also the challenges of adapting to the different demands and methods of work that prevail there, as well as the various cultural challenges that you face in the field. But for a real, well-prepared and well-trained professional, this is not a big problem.



Picture: Private archive

What did you learn and what benefits are the result of your engagement in the peace mission?

First of all, you learn from your own example that participation in a peace mission is a kind of exam in professional maturity and the development of every professional soldier. You have the opportunity to contemplate and see the methods and ways of working not only of NATO as a military-political alliance, but also of your colleagues, partners, associates and the representatives of the country you came to. You see the lives of ordinary people, their daily life difficulties and especially other customs and cultures, which in the end makes you richer in every sense.

You learn to be gain the capability of quickly analyzing a situation and proposing specific solutions because you must always be ready to quickly respond to the requirements of a security situation that changes very quickly and easily in the field.

In your opinion, how important is the engagement of women in peace missions?

At the time I participated in the ISAF mission, BiH did not have female representatives, while some countries did have them. The participation of women in peace missions is not only a matter of gender equality, but also the fact that their participation is really important in missions, especially in those parts of the world where women have special treatment in line with the culture, faith and customs of that nation. Therefore, the general trend in all armies of the world, and especially in the peace support operation, is to increase the number of women who are professional military personnel and who will perform specific - appropriate tasks with the female part of that country's population. This significantly opens the door to that segment of the host country's society to be actively involved in building society, democracy, the rule of law and respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms. This greatly improves the position of women and their social status in the country where the peace support operation is being implemented.

Given the experience gained in peacekeeping missions, what are your recommendations for future candidates?

I sincerely recommend that all who want to and are able to apply for participation in peace missions and thus join a significant part of the members of the AF BiH who have so far participated in them. By participating in a peace mission, you get a great opportunity to develop and achieve on a professional and human level. They should work every day on their personal development, and become more actively involved in learning English language as one of the important prerequisites for deployment to missions.

They should also show a strong will, desire and volition in order to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills, through various forms and types of education and training both in BiH and abroad, which will enable them, besides being engaged in a military profession, to have the opportunity to become peacemakers and to contribute to building world peace and stability in crisis areas around the world.



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA IN PEACE MISSIONS

„I am the only woman police officer from BiH up to now who has participated in three peace missions“

ŠEDO, Vildana

Investigator

**First Police Administration of the
Ministry of Interior
Sarajevo Canton**

Where and for how long have you been at a peace mission and what is your general experience?

In the period from 2009 to 2016, I participated in three UN peace missions. My first mission was in Liberia (West Africa), where I was in the period from December 2009 to January 2012. It was a mission of peacekeeping and strengthening the capacity of local police to provide police service to citizens, especially to vulnerable categories. In this mission, together with my team I carried out the work and tasks of a police advisor in operational work and tasks. Specifically, I worked as the team leader of the unit dealing with the investigation of crimes committed to the detriment of mostly women and children. There were criminal offenses such as domestic violence, genital mutilation of women and girls, indecent acts, rape, etc. These criminal offenses were the key problems in Liberia, when we talk about the security of citizens in the country, especially women and children. After my return to BiH from the UN mission in Liberia, I worked on regular tasks and assignments in the Ministry of the Interior of Sarajevo Canton until the end of May 2013, when I went to a mission again, but this time to Libya, where I worked in the position of police gender advisor. I worked in Libya until June 2014, when the full UN staff was evacuated from the country, because of the very poor security situation, the UN mission unfortunately has not yet returned to Libya.

From December 2014 until March 2016, I was working in the UN Mission in Afghanistan as a police adviser for the development of the strategy of the MoI of Afghanistan for police work in the community and the investigation of criminal offenses against women and children, as well as in the development of procedures for the protection of female employees in their Ministry. The UN missions in Libya and Afghanistan were of a more political than of a peace keeping character, and my duties were work on the development of strategies, procedures and rule books

in certain areas, whilst in Liberia, I worked on direct counselling with local police and on strengthening their operational capacity. When I talk about experience in these missions, I would single out the mission in Liberia. Liberia is a country where women are very active in all spheres and generally want to make changes. The fact that in this country the president is a woman, also says a lot. Also, the mission in Liberia was the only one where I really saw that local police officers are happy to implement every decision made and that they were active participants in proposing solutions.

In Libya, I found it a lot easier to work because women were present in the police and in society, and I did not have to struggle with local colleagues with regard to the very idea and importance of women's participation, as well as the importance of the existence of an operational police unit that would deal with the protection of women.

As far as Afghanistan is concerned, it is a country that has a specific culture and you have to make a great deal of effort so that you and your ideas are accepted by the local authorities and population in that country. I personally had to learn a lot about the Sharia law and use it during the implementation of the ideas advocated by the UN.



Picture: Private archive

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA IN PEACE MISSIONS



What forms of formal and informal preparation for peace missions have helped you most during your engagement?

At the time when I went to my first mission in 2009, as a police officer, we did not have formal preparation, except for conversations in the Ministry of Security of BiH. In my case, informal preparations helped the most; where I try to find out as much as possible about the local population, culture, climate, and lifestyle in the country to which I was going through conversations with colleagues who had already been to missions. These are very important things that each of the candidates should know before going to the mission, but, on the other hand, no matter how much you read, you will never be completely ready for what you will find there and you will have a very different experience in every mission you go to.

Prior to leaving for the other two missions, courses were held at the PSOTC in Butmir, where I was also engaged as an instructor for a certain time and could transfer my experience to colleagues and future candidates. I can freely say that my colleagues and all the candidates who went through this course were much better prepared and it was much easier for them to deal with the changes and the things which were waiting for them at the mission.

Describe your daily work tasks during the mission?

As I said before, in my mission in Liberia I mostly worked as a local police advisor in operational tasks and assignments. I was in charge of the unit which investigated crimes against women and children, such as the crime of rape, which is a key problem in Liberia. For example, during 2009 and 2010, between 24 and 30 rape cases were reported on a weekly basis. I must say that it was very difficult for me, both as a woman and a police officer, to accept the reality of life in that part of the world, especially the cases of rape of children by members of their family or closest friends and neighbours, given that this type of crime is not that much present in our country.

In the missions in Libya and Afghanistan, I did not have any contact with operational affairs, because they were political missions and I was mostly dealing with strategic planning for the development of the Mol. In these missions, I worked in plain clothes and wore a hijab, because of my personal security, and the culture and traditions in those countries. In

principle, none of the days in these missions was the same. The working day in Liberia did not end before eight o'clock in the evening, while in Afghanistan and Libya it never ended.



Picture: Private archive

What are the benefits and difficulties of being at a peace mission?

Participation in peace missions had a very positive impact on me. In addition to having perfected my knowledge of English, I believe that I have experienced personal, as well as professional, growth and development. This kind of experience enriches you in the way that you learn a lot about people coming from different environments and cultures, who have other values and different priorities in their lives. Through my participation in the missions, I worked in countries that mostly have a completely destroyed infrastructure and thanks to that I gained invaluable experience in terms of operational knowledge and skills and learned to improvise in situations where there is no technique that would support me in my work, which is regularly available in my country and which I have taken for granted.

As for the difficulties, I must especially point out that during your stay in the mission; it takes a lot of effort to keep your emotional ties and closeness with your family and other persons close to you. Separation from the family is, in my opinion, the greatest difficulty for every participant in a mission. In addition to this, I



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could say that, personally, the life in the camp was very difficult for me, especially in Afghanistan. I would also mention the difficulties after returning from the mission because you need at least 6 months to a year to start functioning properly, as you did before the mission, at home with your family, and at work with your colleagues.

What did you learn and what benefits are the result of your engagement in a peace mission?

I've learned so much in all three missions. During my mission in Afghanistan, I also served the function of the police commissar, in Libya I was working on the draft of a unit for the protection of women and children in the structure of the Libyan Mol and the rule book for this unit, and in Liberia I was the head of the unit at state level; for all these positions and whilst working on them, I had to learn a lot and improve. The benefits of engagement in UN missions are reflected in expanding personal and professional perspectives, training and motivation to build a further professional career. Through participation in peacekeeping missions, I am practically trained not only for carrying out operational police tasks and work, but also for other types of work within the Mol.

In your opinion, how important is the engagement of women in peace missions?

A woman who decides to go to a peace mission must first believe in herself and in her abilities, as it will be expected from her that in her work she will always be up to the task she is set. Given my experience and the experience of other women who have participated in peacekeeping missions, I maintain that women are very capable and that they finish with quality every task confided to them. The engagement of women in peace missions is very important, especially from the operational point of view, because women and children are always the most vulnerable groups in closed societies and crisis areas, and it is much easier for them, when in need of help and protection, to approach women, rather than men in uniforms. On this occasion, I have to point out that the Ministry of Security of BiH, as well as the Ministry of the Interior of Sarajevo Canton have recognized the importance of women's participation in peace missions so that we women police officers from BiH have been given the opportunity to apply and work, and to promote our country and our ministries in the UN.

What do you think about the position of women in peace missions and what is your personal experience?

Each mission gives priority to women, so that sometimes, with the goal of women's representation, especially in security agencies where there are almost no women, there is a positive discrimination in order that women's participation is ensured from the outset. In any case, the UN strives to ensure women's participation in all peace missions in order to represent and protect the interests of women, who are a large part of a society, and to take into account their needs and expectations. The UN provides a completely different atmosphere, opportunities and motivation for women who want to succeed in a professional career and this is the biggest reason I give each of my women colleagues a recommendation to go to a UN peace mission. I also have to praise the Ministry of Security of BiH, which also takes into account and implements the UN system by sending women police officers from BiH, which means a lot to us as representatives of the female gender, and as police.

Considering the experience you gained in peacekeeping missions, what are your recommendations for future candidates?

You have to love this job with your body and soul. If your priorities are your career at home or your family and friends, think well about the reasons for and against, and be prepared for the risk that comes together with your absence. Also, the aspect of personal security in high-risk countries such as Afghanistan and Libya should not be neglected. I would always go again but that is my personal choice. Perfected language skills, cultural awareness, a better understanding of the functioning of the security system, the importance of participation and representation of women in security agencies, are just some of the benefits you gain from being at a mission.

On this occasion, I would like to point out that I am the only woman police officer in BiH up to know who has participated in three peace missions, for which I have to thank the Ministry of the Interior of Sarajevo Canton in the first place, because it actively supports and implements the Action Plan for the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 (Women, Peace and Security), together with the Ministry of Security of BiH.



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