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# WOMEN AND PEACEKEEPING IN ASEAN COUNTRIES



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This research paper was prepared by Dr. Margaret Jenkins with substantive inputs from UNDP Vietnam and the International Cooperation Division of the Vietnam Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

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# ABBREVIATIONS

A4P	United Nations Action 4 Peacekeeping Initiative
AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
DPKO	UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DPO	UN Department of Peace Operations
ERW	Explosive remnants of war
GPOI	US State Department's Global Peace Operations Initiative
IANWGE	UN Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality
IMT	International Monitoring Team, Malaysia
JCLEC	Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation
MANA	Myanmar Anti-Narcotic Association
MINURSO	United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
MONUSCO	UN Stabilization Mission, Democratic Republic of Congo
MPC	Malaysian Peacekeeping Centre
NPMEC	The National Centre for Peacekeeping Forces, Mines and ERW Clearance of Cambodia
PCC	Police contributing country
PKOs	United Nations Peacekeeping Operations
PMPP	Indonesian Peacekeeping Training Centre
POC	Peace Operations Centre, Thailand
POD	Norwegian National Police Directorate
RCAF	Royal Cambodian Armed Forces
SEA	Sexual exploitation and violence
TCC	Troop contributing country
T/PCCs	Troop and police contributing countries
UNAMID	The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNMEM	UN Military Experts on Mission
UNMHA	UN Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement (Yemen)
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNMOGIP	The UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNSG	UN Secretary General
VNDPKO	Vietnam Department of Peacekeeping Operations

# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There has been strong international consensus spearheaded by the United Nations for over two decades on the need to increase the participation of women in UN Peacekeeping Operations. Yet translating this into results on the ground remains challenging.

This background paper, prepared for UNDP Vietnam and the International Cooperation Division of the Vietnam Department of Peacekeeping Operations, offers analysis to support the goal of increasing the full and meaningful participation of women in peacekeeping deployments from ASEAN countries. This paper offers an overview of the policies that have shaped the current demands with respect to women and peacekeeping. This includes the UN's recent move to use financial incentives, and mandatory quotas to increase the numbers of female peacekeepers. Possible implications of the Covid-19 crisis that has emerged during the writing of this report are also considered. The current deployments of female peacekeepers from each ASEAN country are assessed, trends over time are examined, and barriers in the region to the full and equitable participation of women are considered. Unless otherwise noted, all sex-disaggregated data used related to deployments and UN peacekeeping missions (PKOs) is from the UN Department of Peace Operations database.

One challenge with research on women, peace and security issues is that many countries do not make data with respect to recruitment, retention and promotion of women in the military and police services publicly available. Data relating to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment is not necessarily collected or made public, and these issues tend to be underreported. In order to understand these issues and monitor progress, more documentation and transparency are needed. This is especially the case when it comes to going beyond the numbers to further understand the experience of women and men on peacekeeping deployments, and in the armed forces and police services. For these questions, there needs to be monitoring of the different jobs women and men carry out, and the perception they have of their roles, tasks and experience. Did both men and women find their deployments positive? In what ways? What was most challenging and why? Many of the answers to these questions are not documented through exit surveys or other means, but they are key to understanding gender relations related to peacekeeping, and for ensuring the meaningful participation of women.

While there is a long way to go, progress has been made. In November 2009, 90 out of the 3890 peacekeepers deployed from ASEAN countries were women—2.3% of the total deployment was female. Today (as of April 2020), there are 308 female peacekeepers deployed from ASEAN countries out of 4860 or 6.3% female. While the overall trend is clear, the analysis of individual countries reveals mixed progress. Some ASEAN members, such as the Philippines, have decreased the absolute numbers of women deployed, as well as their overall deployment numbers, although the Philippines does maintain a high proportion of female experts on PKOs. Thailand has not increased its relative or absolute contribution of women over the past decade.

Singapore contributed more peacekeepers a decade ago, as well as more women, and currently maintains a small deployment of peacekeepers. Brunei has remained flat for over a decade in terms of the total numbers deployed (around 30) and has rarely deployed women. Laos does not deploy peacekeepers, and Myanmar has not made substantial contributions.

The increased number and proportion of female peacekeepers from ASEAN countries is largely the result of Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia and Vietnam. Indonesia has pursued ambitious targets for peacekeeping generally, including with respect to women. Cambodia and Vietnam have significantly increased their contributions to peacekeeping overall, as well as their absolute and relative numbers of females. Indonesia, Cambodia and Malaysia have deployed the highest numbers of females in the ASEAN region for the past five years.

Increasing the numbers of females, while critical, is only one component of a larger UN objective to promote the meaningful participation of women in peacekeeping operations. A growing body of research has identified possible barriers to women's full and equal participation such as problematic gender norms and biases, sexual exploitation and abuse, the exclusion of women from certain military functions and tasks, gender discrimination in promotion opportunities, lack of family or community support, unpaid care work, and a small eligible pool of women available for deployment. The paper explores possible barriers and argues that to fully understand the factors frustrating gender equality in peacekeeping operations, comprehensive barrier assessments should be carried out for each country of interest.

However, these assessments should not stall efforts that can be taken now. What was clear from the interviews and research carried out for this paper was that UN pressure to increase the number of females on PKOs is palpable, with countries feeling urgent pressure to increase their contributions of women. Although comprehensive barrier assessments are needed, much can be changed through political will and by making gender equality a priority rather than a peripheral issue. For example, there could be incentives and awards within domestic armed forces and police, and accountability at the highest levels for making progress on gender equality and for recruiting more women into all ranks and positions. This could be made part of the "performance compact for those at senior levels" just as it is increasingly for those working within the UN system. As the Chief of UN Police Division's Selection and Recruitment Section explained in an interview: "The women are there and can deliver, I have seen with my own eyes that they can be very strong and successful in every part of a mission. T/PCCs often just need to find them and open the doors for them to participate."<sup>1</sup>

Given the pressure to recruit and promote women for peacekeeping, it is critical that training is delivered to ensure women are highly capable of success in all aspects of peacekeeping. Both men and women also need to be equipped to identify and address problematic gender issues. The urgent need to include more women should not lead to unprepared or unequipped deployments. The paper describes and assesses different training opportunities, and institutions and donors supporting these training initiatives are considered.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Ata Yenigun, Chief of UN Police Division's Selection and Recruitment Section, May 20, 2020.

The paper concludes by putting forward seven recommendations for promoting women's participation in UN Peacekeeping from ASEAN countries.

**1. Conduct barrier assessments** to identify the key challenges frustrating gender equality and female participation in peacekeeping deployments from ASEAN member countries

**2. Create an enabling domestic policy environment** for making progress on women and peacekeeping, such as by incentivizing the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in domestic police services and armed forces.<sup>2</sup>

**3. Aim to field “gender strong”<sup>3</sup> units** for UN PKO deployment from ASEAN member countries.

**4. Identify, utilize and develop training programs** that: (1) provide drills to mixed male-female groups to prepare them for possible gender issues faced on missions, such as sexual exploitation and violence; (2) focus on female participants that need training on specific gaps in skill sets due to often gendered reasons (such as a lack of experience with driving or with firearms); (3) identify promising female police officers and female soldiers for high-level officer or other specialized training programs; and (4) offer bystander training to both males and females to prevent and address gender-related problems among peacekeepers, soldiers and police officers themselves.

**5. Identify and harness synergies between demining groups, especially female demining contingents, and peacekeeping.**

**6. Initiate an “ASEAN Female Peacekeeper Network”:** The objective of this network would be to provide an online forum for female peacekeepers to connect in the region to share career advice, notify each other of opportunities, communicate about challenges they face in their careers and on deployments, and share strategies for addressing challenges.

**7. Launch a “Regional Centre on Women and Peacekeeping”** to catalyze and house many of the activities above. This would fulfill a need within the region for a training, resource and research hub dedicated to making gains on women and peacekeeping, and on implementing the WPS agenda.

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<sup>2</sup> See for example, UNDP, *A Global Handbook: Parliaments as Partners Supporting the Women, Peace and Security Agenda*, UNDP Oslo Governance Centre, 2019

<sup>3</sup> The term “gender-strong” was coined to refer to a unit has substantial representation of women overall and in positions of authority, has provided gender-equity training to all unit members, and has adequate equipment and other material to ensure parity of deployment conditions for female and male peacekeepers. A “gender strong unit” engages both men and women in ensuring the unit promotes gender equality in all of its Mission activities. Global Affairs Canada, *The Elsie Fund for Peace Operations Terms of Reference, 2019-2024*. 14 March 2019. The Elsie Fund offers financial premiums for units considered “gender-strong.”



Photo: UN Photo/ Pasqual Gorriz

## 2. INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the current policy climate for women and peacekeeping at a global level, the commitment and performance of ASEAN countries with respect to women and peacekeeping, and the barriers to making progress that need to be further investigated. Innovative training programs, and international and regional best practices and support for making progress on women and peacekeeping are also identified and assessed.

Although much has been achieved in the two decades since UNSCR 1325 was passed, many have been disappointed at the slow rate of progress and ongoing gender-related problems associated with UN peacekeeping. This has led to many reports being produced, more international conferences and commitments, and further WPS resolutions to try to identify and address the problems, and kickstart progress. Although peacekeeping operations have changed markedly over the past decades, many of the core aims remain the same: to save lives, protect human rights, prevent and respond quickly to human suffering, and work towards lasting peace for all people regardless of sex, gender, age, religion, ideology or any other variables. This paper argues that to achieve these critical objectives, we need to base future action on data that helps us to understand the gender challenges that continue to compromise the effectiveness of operations and that frustrate the full and meaningful participation of women. The recommendations proposed in this paper aim to build this research agenda, share findings with policy makers and practitioners, and equip women and men in the region with the skills they need to participate skillfully, and equally in peacekeeping operations.





Photo: Xaume Olleros

### 3. WOMEN AND PEACEKEEPING: GLOBAL TRENDS AND POLICIES



Photo: Reuters/Romeo Ranoco

**3.1. UNSCR 1325:** Although the UN has adopted many resolutions on gender equality, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), passed in October 2000, was the first dealing specifically with women, peace and security. UNSCR 1325 stressed the “importance of involving women in all peacekeeping and peacebuilding measures” and of incorporating “a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations.”<sup>4</sup> UNSCR 1325 was followed by nine more resolutions, which together constitute the normative framework of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.<sup>5</sup>

To implement this Agenda, UN Member States were encouraged to develop National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security and efforts were made to build the capacity of national policy-makers to translate the international resolutions into reality. The parliamentary handbook, *Parliaments as Partners Supporting the Women, Peace and Security Agenda*,<sup>6</sup> for example, outlines actions that can be taken at a domestic level to make progress on the WPS agenda. With respect to peacekeeping in particular, the handbook mentions that T/PCCs:

“need to ensure that women are included in decision-making and leadership roles in military and civilian peace operations, and that all forces are properly trained in gender-sensitive peace operations, have the skills and resources to address the conflict issues faced by women and girls where they are deployed, and are properly managed to address any shortcomings in these areas (including punishing sexual or gender-based violence committed by peacekeeping troops)”.<sup>7</sup>

**3.2. Emerging Targets:** The Secretary-General’s Report on Women, Peace and Security back in 2002 outlined measures that should be taken to promote gender equality in peacekeeping. The report concluded that “many managers and professional staff are still uncertain about the relevant gender perspectives in their areas of work and as to how they can integrate these perspectives in different areas of peacekeeping,” and it lamented that peacekeeping is still far away from attaining any kind of gender balance in terms of the participation of women.<sup>8</sup> In March 2006, DPKO convened a dialogue with 55 T/PCCs and urged them to “double the number of female service uniformed peacekeepers every year for the next few years.”<sup>9</sup> The UN Policy Directive on Gender Equality in Peacekeeping Operations<sup>10</sup> later that same year continued to advocate for gender balance, and offered suggestions to T/PCCs to increase the recruitment and deployment of female personnel.

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<sup>4</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

<sup>5</sup> 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 and 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), 2493 (2019).

<sup>6</sup> Developed by the UNDP with support from the Government of Norway.

<sup>7</sup> UNDP, *A Global Handbook: Parliaments as Partners Supporting the Women, Peace and Security Agenda*, UNDP Oslo Governance Centre, 2019.

<sup>8</sup> UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary General on Women, Peace and Security*, 16 October 2002, document number: S/2002/1154.

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Peace Operations, *Year in Review: New challenges, New horizons*, p.18, 2006.

<sup>10</sup> DPKO Policy Directive. Gender Equality in UN Peacekeeping Operations. November 2006.

**3.3. Concerns with Progress:** There has been significant political consensus on the need to increase female participation in peacekeeping and for integrating a gender approach for over two decades. There was actually international consensus on this issue among UN Member States even before the passing of UNSCR 1325.<sup>11</sup> Yet in 2009, almost a decade after 1325, the total number of female peacekeepers sat at around 1%.<sup>12</sup> Recognizing that the challenges (as well as progress) were different for the military and police (with military numbers lagging further behind), in 2009, DPKO launched a global effort to increase the number of women police in peacekeeping operations (PKOs). The goal was to increase the proportion of females to 20% by 2014 from the 8% levels of 2009. But by the end of 2014, only 9.5% of UN police were women.

At the 2016 United Nations Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference, Member States agreed to a global target of 15% female military observers and staff officers being deployed by December 2017, and 20% female police by 2020. These targets, like all prior targets, were not met. By December 2017, 8% of military observers and staff officers were women. The proportion of female police according to the most recent 2020 data (June 2020) is 15%. Although it is admirable that ambitious targets for female participation were set and endorsed, it is also concerning that these targets were so far off the mark. Individual states could voice their support targets with few consequences for not meeting them. The repeated failure to reach these goals suggests that political leaders, bureaucrats and advisors alike either did not believe setting realistic targets was important, or were not aware of how difficult these targets might be, and the deeper and structural changes that needed to occur (beyond political consensus) to achieve gender balance.

**3.4. Understanding Barriers, and Offering Carrots and Sticks:** In 2017, UN attention shifted to addressing the “structural barriers that limit women’s meaningful participation in both the uniformed and civilian components of peacekeeping.”<sup>13</sup> Carrots and sticks for successful integration of women were considered with the Secretary General urging for the adoption of “incentives” for enhanced female participation. UN DPO also introduced a new rule in 2018 stating that a T/PCC could lose its spot on a mission if less than 15% of its deployment of military observers and staff officers were female.<sup>14</sup> DPO officials, at all levels, have said they are under significant pressure from the UN SG and others to fulfill gender balance targets within their own divisions and within PKOs.<sup>15</sup> This has led Heads of Mission, Force Commanders and others to return applications, and

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<sup>11</sup> In 2000, the outcome document from the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, “Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century,” called for the full participation of women at all levels of decision-making in peace processes, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. It also addressed the need to increase the protection of women and girls in armed conflict. The Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Operations in June 2000 also was widely supported. The Windhoek Declaration was another critical step leading to the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). See, UN’s IANWGE (Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality), “From the Charter to Security Council Resolution 1325,” <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/taskforces/wps/history.html>

<sup>12</sup> Dharmapuri, Sahana, Not Just a Numbers Game: Increasing Women’s Participation in UN Peacekeeping, International Peace Institute, July 2013.

<sup>13</sup> UNSG, Report of the Secretary-General on Women, Peace and Security, UN Document S/2017/861, 16 October 2017.

<sup>14</sup> M. Ghittoni, L. Lehok and C. Watson, “Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations: Baseline Study,” DCAF Geneva, July 2018, p. 6. See also: M. Brewster, “Canada nearly lost 2018 UN mission because it didn’t have enough women in uniform,” CBC News, Feb 19, 2020.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Ata Yenigun, Chief of UN Police Division’s Selection and Recruitment Section.

request that T/PCCs put forward more female candidates. "If the 25% (female) are not there, we will reject (their application) and go on to the next T/PCC. If they don't have the females, their male officers won't go as well."<sup>16</sup> As one former Force Commander explained, "I had a compact with the UNSG to work towards 50/50 so in a way I had no choice, I had to turn many applications away from my desk."<sup>17</sup>

**3.5. Recent UN Security Council Resolutions Related to WPS:** In April 2019, the Security Council passed the ninth resolution on women, peace and security focused on sexual violence in conflict, UNSCR 2467. This was the most controversial Resolution on WPS, and the only one that was not passed with full consensus. The new element it delivered was a call for the UN to better support local, national and regional efforts to address the needs of survivors of sexual violence in conflict, and for PKOs to partner with women-led and local organizations to better understand, prevent and respond to conflict related sexual violence.

The Resolution also referred to "harmful social norms and practices" and "discriminatory views on women or gender roles in society" which was new language for the Security Council.<sup>18</sup> In October 2019, consensus on WPS was re-established with the passing of UNSCR 2493 which urged all member states to fully implement all of the 9 WPS resolutions.

On August 28th, 2020, the UN Security Council passed UNSCR 2538 by consensus. This Resolution, tabled by Indonesia, is the first resolution dealing specifically with gender and peacekeeping. It calls on all member states, the UN and regional organizations to "strengthen their collective efforts to promote the full, effective and meaningful participation of uniformed and civilian women in peacekeeping operations at all levels and in all positions, including in senior leadership positions." It also reiterated the importance of the UN's zero tolerance policy for sexual harassment within peacekeeping missions.

**3.6. Current Targets:** The Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy for 2018-2028 specified new targets for proportional representation of uniformed women in peace operations. The 2028 target for women serving in military contingents is 15%, and is 25% for military observers and staff officers. The 2028 target for women serving in uniformed police units is 20%, and is 30% for individual police officers.<sup>19</sup> In order to monitor whether efforts are on track to meet these 2028 targets, the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy specifies yearly targets, and monthly reports by UN DPO (available on their website) track whether the target has been met. These monthly reports list each TCC and include a colour-coded tracking mechanism that mirrors a traffic light: those countries that have met or exceeded the female participation targets are in green, those with some women but not enough are in yellow, and those that are not deploying any women are in red. These monthly charts also stipulate the number of females that are needed from each TCC in order for that country to reach the target.

Are we on track at an international level? The targets that are being set are more realistic and progress is clearly being made. The 2020 target of 17% female has already been met for military experts, observers and staff officers (according to May

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<sup>16</sup> Interview with Ata Yenigun.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Major General Kristin Lund, Norwegian Armed Forces. First female Force Commander in UN history.

<sup>18</sup> This language is similar to CEDAW, article 5.

<sup>19</sup> In 1993, women made up 1% of deployed uniformed personnel. In 2019, out of approximately 95,000 peacekeepers, women constituted 4.7% of military contingents and 10.8% of uniformed police units in UN Peacekeeping missions. UN Peacekeeping, "Women in Peacekeeping," Access May 22, 2020 at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/women-peacekeeping>

2020 data, 578 out of 3195 are women, consisting of 18.1% total). The goal is to increase this by 1% a year to meet the 2028 target of 25%. Gender balance goals pertaining to troop deployments remain the most difficult to attain. The 2020 target had not been met as of May 2020: 4.83% of all troops deployed were female. The 2020 target is 6.5%. By far, the majority of peacekeepers are troops (approximately 90% of those deployed globally). Making significant strides on gender balance overall therefore depends on increasing the numbers of female troops.<sup>20</sup>

For police contributions, reports are also made on a monthly basis breaking down the number of female and male individual police officers (IPOs) and those serving in formed police units (FPUs).<sup>21</sup> As of May 2020, 10.9% of police serving in FPUs were women, and 28.3% of IPOs were women. The targets for 2020 (FPU target of 10% and IPO target of 22%) have therefore been met. In the next 8 years, the proportion of women needs to increase by a further 10% to meet the 2028 target for FPUs (20%), and another 8% to meet the 30% target of females for individual police officers.

The Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy is included as a priority of the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative which the UN Secretary General (UNSG) spearheaded in 2018 to renew the mutual commitment of Member States to peacekeeping goals. 152 member states have since endorsed the Declaration of Shared Commitments, including all 10 ASEAN member countries. The A4P initiative outlines 45 shared commitments pertaining to 8 priority areas. These include a commitment to “integrate a gender perspective into all stages of analysis, planning, implementation and reporting,” to promote the “full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace processes and peacekeeping,” and to increase “the number of civilian and uniformed women in peacekeeping at all levels and in key positions.”<sup>22</sup>

The Declaration also reiterates the importance of eliminating sexual exploitation and abuse committed by peacekeepers, stating:

“We collectively commit, within our respective responsibilities, to holding personnel and leadership accountable for proper conduct, including through support to the UN zero-tolerance policy with its victim centred approach on all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse.”<sup>23</sup>

**3.7. Covid-19, Gender and Peacekeeping:** At the time of writing this report, the world has experienced unprecedented lockdown in an effort to halt the spread of the coronavirus. The consequences to public health, and the social and economic ramifications of the virus and resulting lockdown continue to be felt, with the full implications not yet known. At the current time, peacekeeping deployments have been frozen: personnel who were deployed before the virus have not been repatriated, and many have had their deployments extended.<sup>24</sup> Some training exercises, contributions of equipment, and new initiatives and deployments have been delayed and cancelled. With increased economic stress and insecurity, and

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<sup>20</sup> DPO calculated that 1174 more female troops were needed to reach the goal at current troop contribution levels and again outlined the numbers of females that each country needed to deploy to meet the target at the national level.

<sup>21</sup> Unlike the monitoring of the TCCs, however, these reports do not outline whether the specific yearly targets have been met for police contributions or whether specific PCCs are on track.

<sup>22</sup> Secretary General’s Initiative on Action for Peacekeeping, <https://www.un.org/en/A4P/>

<sup>23</sup> United Nations, *Action for Peacekeeping: Declaration of Shared Commitments*. August 2018. <https://www.un.org/en/A4P/>

<sup>24</sup> This decision to halt any rotations was made on March 6th, 2020. A month later, the policy to freeze deployments (in place, no repatriations, and no new deployments) was extended to June 30th, 2020.

Covid-19 concerns occupying donor countries, there is concern that events and support to women, peace and security initiatives may be suspended.

However, the facts on the ground suggest that making progress on the women, peace and security agenda is just as important as ever, if not more so, due to the Covid-19 epidemic. One reason this is the case is because of the heavy military and police involvement in Covid-19 response.<sup>25</sup> Given continued lack of capacity with respect to understanding and addressing gender issues and women's rights protection, and low proportions of female soldiers and police, there is concern that the enforcement of lockdowns by the security sector and increasing surveillance due to Covid 19 will have negative implications not only women's rights but for effectively halting the pandemic. If women are ignored, they are not reached including on issues critical to public health, and the virus fails to be halted. Stopping the spread of Covid-19 and moving forward from this crisis will require a gender-informed response—one that understands and responds to the different Covid-19 related health and economic concerns of women and men and reaches both.

Conflict, humanitarian emergencies and disease outbreaks affect women and men differently. One gendered consequence of Covid-19, for example, is increased unpaid care work, which is predominantly done by women. As schools and day cares remain closed, and elderly and others particularly vulnerable to Covid-19 shelter in place, unpaid caregivers are further stretched. This not only impacts female participation in the labour force, and larger development goals, but also has consequences for women's engagement in peace and security. Women who were planning on deploying, or who aspired to be police officers, or were enrolling in educational or training courses related to peace and security, for example, may put their plans on indefinite hold, disproportionately so, as women are often the last ones able to re-enter workplaces and public life. Men are more likely than women to re-engage and access work and career opportunities post-lockdown if care work demands (exacerbated by Covid 19) remain high. Variables such as race, class, religion, gender identity, sexuality, language, and education intersect and complicate the access of women and men to these opportunities even further. Efforts need to be taken to reach out to diverse populations in both Covid-19 responses and recovery.

In spite of these increased pressures which tax the availability and supply of women for peacekeeping, many of the demands and needs for women peacekeepers have only increased as a result of Covid 19. This is due to the frontline roles that women often play on PKOs (and in both T/PCCs and host countries) in public health, and community engagement. Many PKOs have ramped up these activities during the Covid-19 crisis especially given the limited health infrastructure and fragile institutions in areas of conflict. "With COVID-19 creating panic and misinformation, our role has become even more critical," stated a female stationed at UNMISS (South Sudan) who works on an outreach radio program.

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<sup>25</sup> UN Women, "Women, Peace and Security, and Covid 19 in Asia Pacific," Action Brief, 2020.

“Most difficult has been dealing with the panic and assuring them that these small steps will be most effective in containing the spread and keeping the cases to a minimum,” explained a female medical officer deployed to MONUSCO (Congo) who implemented a hand-washing regime and temperature check program among the troops.<sup>26</sup> The repatriation of many aid workers and pared back services of NGOs and others during the pandemic has increased the need for peacekeepers to be further engaged in pandemic response, gender issues, and public health.

This elevated need has led senior DPO officials to increase the already-existing call for PKO partnerships with local women’s organizations and civil society groups. These engagements too are often led by female peacekeepers. “Women’s networks and organizations are key partners in UN peacekeeping. They provide innovative community approaches to resolve conflicts, and wage peace and reconciliation.....This is particularly critical at the local level, where COVID-19 prevention and response measures are anchored in community engagement, participation and sharing the right information.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> UN Peacekeeping, *Women Peacekeepers on the Frontlines of Covid 19*, May 28, 2020.

<sup>27</sup> Njoki Kinyanjui, Chief, Gender Unit and Senior Gender Advisor, UN DPO, “Covid 19: A Double Burden for Women in Conflict Areas on the Front Line.” *Africa Renewal*, 22 April 2020.



Photo: Vietnam News Agency, United Nations

## 4. WOMEN AND PEACEKEEPING IN ASEAN COUNTRIES



Photo: UN Photo



#### 4.1. Regional and National Policies Related to WPS:

ASEAN has a longstanding commitment to gender equality as evidenced by the Declaration of the Advancement of Women in the ASEAN Region in 1988 and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the ASEAN Region in 2004. At the 31st ASEAN Summit (2017), all ten ASEAN members endorsed a “Joint Statement on Promoting Women, Peace and Security in ASEAN”<sup>28</sup> which called on ASEAN members to integrate a gender perspective on all aspects of peace and security, increase women’s participation, and prevent and address violations to women’s rights, including conflict related sexual and gender-based violence. Other regional documents have spelled out broader commitments to gender equality, such as the Ha Noi Declaration on the Enhancement of Welfare and Development of ASEAN Women and Children from 2010,<sup>29</sup> and the ASEAN Declaration on the Gender-Responsive Implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and Sustainable Development Goals from 2017.<sup>30</sup> ASEAN’s first Regional Symposium on Implementing Women, Peace and Security Agenda was held on August 22-23, 2019 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

With respect to gender and peacekeeping in particular, all 10 ASEAN member states have endorsed the Action for Peacekeeping Initiative, six ASEAN countries have made pledges to the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System, and Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand and Cambodia are hosting, on a rotating basis, the Triangular Partnership Project to improve the engineering capacity of peacekeepers in the region and beyond. All of these peacekeeping commitments call for integrating a gender perspective and increasing female participation.

After the adoption of UNSCR 1325, the Secretary General and UN Security Council stressed the need for all countries to work in their own domestic environments to turn the principles of 1325 into reality by developing National Action Plans with concrete targets and commitments.<sup>31</sup> Two ASEAN countries have National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security. The Philippines was the first country in the region to launch a NAP (2010) and Indonesia launched theirs in 2014.

At the national level, there have been many policies enacted across the ASEAN region to boost progress on women, peace and security. A Gender Action Plan for law enforcement was drafted in Cambodia, involving the Cambodia Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice and other stakeholders. Myanmar enacted a National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (2013-2022). The Law on Gender Equality (LGE), passed in 2006 in Vietnam, guaranteed equal rights to women and called for gender strategies for each government ministry. The National Strategy on Gender Equality (NSGE) for Vietnam was also adopted in 2010. However, gaps between the laws and progress on the ground remain significant as the Global Gender Gap Report and other reports make clear. This is both with respect to gains on women, peace and security, as well as on other gender equality issues, pertaining to broader political and economic participation, and educational attainment, which as discussed below, impact the challenges faced when aiming to advance women’s participation in peacekeeping.

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<sup>28</sup> [https://asean.org/storage/2017/11/8.-ADOPTION\\_Joint-Statement-on-Promoting-Women-Peace-and-Security-in-ASEANACWC-Endorsed\\_rev2.pdf](https://asean.org/storage/2017/11/8.-ADOPTION_Joint-Statement-on-Promoting-Women-Peace-and-Security-in-ASEANACWC-Endorsed_rev2.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> Available at this link (accessed August 2020): <https://tinyurl.com/yyxspgxa>

<sup>30</sup> [https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/7.-ADOPTION\\_ASEAN-Declaration-on-the-GR-Implementation\\_CLEAN\\_Sept.8-2017\\_for-31st-Summit\\_CLEAN.pdf](https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/7.-ADOPTION_ASEAN-Declaration-on-the-GR-Implementation_CLEAN_Sept.8-2017_for-31st-Summit_CLEAN.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> The call for NAPs was outlined in two Presidential Statements S/PRST/2004/40 and S/PRST/2005/52 from the Security Council. The objective of NAPs is to kickstart a process in which national stakeholders identify priorities, determine responsibilities, allocate resources, and detail the strategy within a defined time frame to deliver policies and programmes that respond to the needs and priorities of women with respect to peace and security.

## 4.2. How ASEAN Countries Compare - An Overview:

As of April 2020, out of 123 countries participating in UN peacekeeping, African countries lead the charts in absolute and relative terms with respect to females deployed, irrespective of rank or unit. In terms of military personnel, South Africa, Ghana and Ethiopia have large contingents with relatively high proportion of women, 15%, 13% and 9% respectively. Ethiopia, Ghana and Rwanda have the largest absolute numbers of women (631, 424 and 409 respectively).<sup>32</sup>

South Asian countries are also among the top troop contributing countries in the world, with Bangladesh (2), Nepal (4), India (5), Pakistan (6) all in the top 10. South Asia also deploys significant numbers of women in absolute and relative terms: 256 females are currently deployed from Bangladesh, and 257 from Nepal. China has emerged as a major player in peacekeeping in recent years. It currently has 2449 peacekeepers deployed (making it a top 10 contributor), with 86 (3.5%) females. China, along with Bangladesh and India have deployed all-female Formed Police Units (FPUs).

In November 2009, 90 out of the 3890 peacekeepers deployed from ASEAN countries were women, 2.3% of the total deployment was female. Today (as of April 2020), there are 308 female peacekeepers deployed from ASEAN countries out of 4860, 6.3% female. Indonesia is the top-ranking ASEAN country in terms of the number of women currently deployed (159 as of April 2020). Although highest in absolute terms, females comprise 5.6% of Indonesia's total deployment (with a slightly lower proportion serving as troops, 4.5%). Vietnam and Cambodia are the most successful countries in terms of the proportion of female troops deployed: 10 out of 63 for Vietnam (16%) and 71 out of 744 (9.5%) for Cambodia.

### GENDER GAP REPORT 2020: ASEAN RANKING

ASEAN RANKING	GLOBAL RANKING	SCORE
Philippines	16th	0.781
Lao PDR	43rd	0.731
Singapore	54th	0.724
Thailand	75th	0.708
Indonesia	85th	0.700
Vietnam	87th	0.700
Cambodia	89th	0.694
Brunei	95th	0.686
Malaysia	104th	0.677
Myanmar	114th	0.665

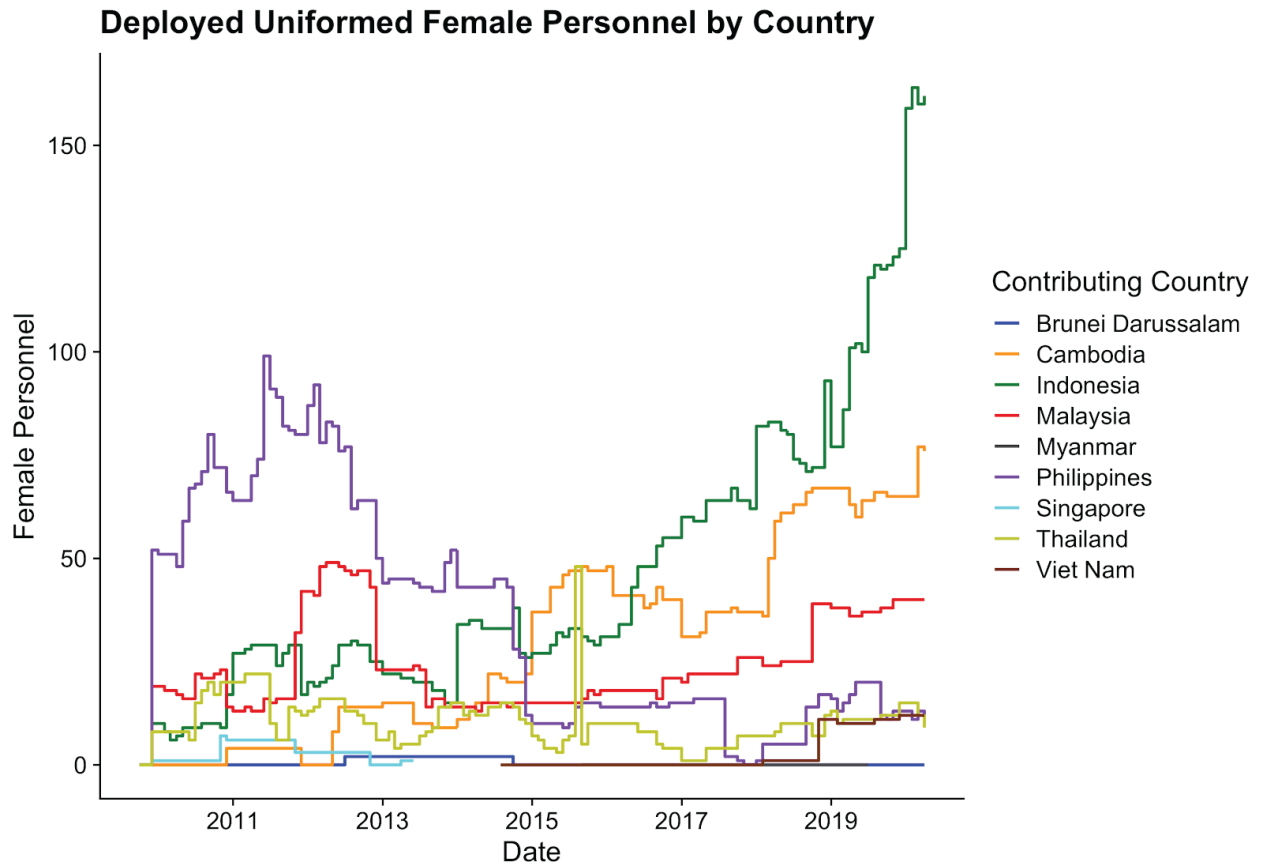
Source: World Economic Forum

The positive trend upward in terms of absolute and relative numbers of female peacekeepers from ASEAN countries is largely the result of Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam. Cambodia and Vietnam have significantly increased both their contributions to peacekeeping overall, as well as their absolute and relative numbers of females. Indonesia, Cambodia and Malaysia have deployed the highest absolute numbers of females in the ASEAN region for the past five years. The graphs below illustrate both the absolute and relative numbers of total uniformed female peacekeepers in the ASEAN region over the past decade.<sup>33</sup>

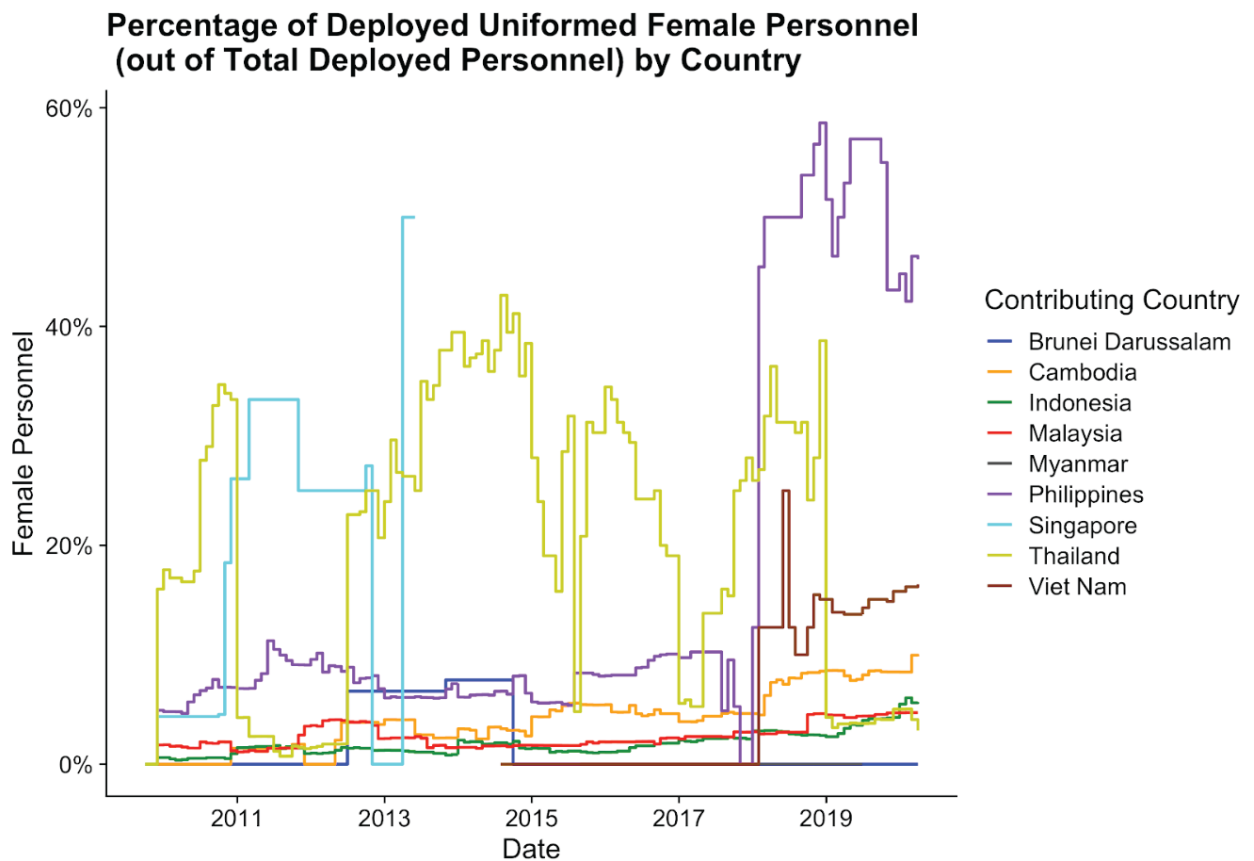
<sup>32</sup> UN DPO, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/data>

<sup>33</sup> With respect to the deployment of police officers from ASEAN countries, a total of 42 female police officers are currently deployed from Indonesia, and Indonesia is the only ASEAN country that deploys FPUs. The Philippines has 9 police deployed (to UNMISS), 5 are women. Out of 13 police officers currently deployed from Thailand (primarily also to UNMISS), 10 are female. UN DPO, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/data>

**Figure 1**



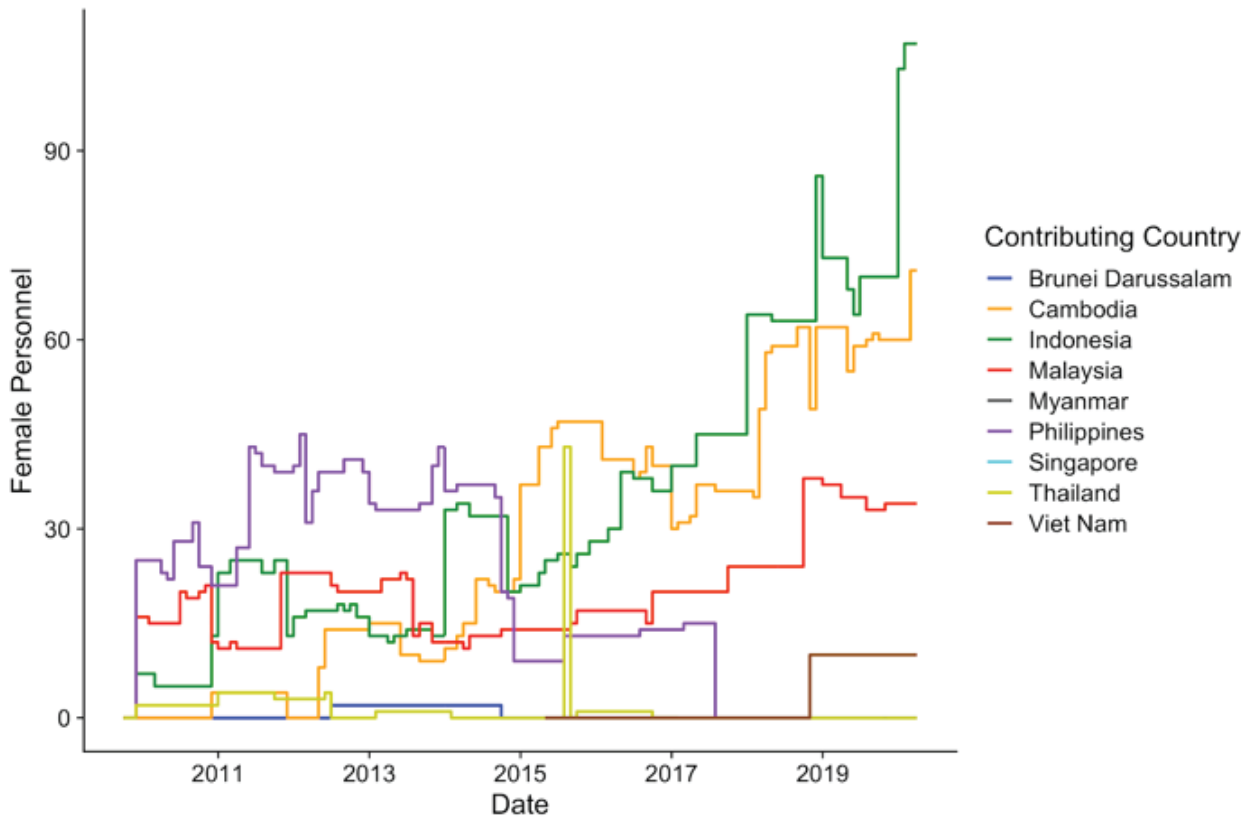
**Figure 2**



The graphs below illustrate the absolute and relative numbers of uniformed female peacekeepers in the ASEAN region in different posts: military, police and staff officers and experts on mission.

**Figure 3**

**Women Serving on Deployed Military Contingents by Country**



**Figure 4**

**Percentage of Women Serving on Deployed Military Contingents (out of Total Deployed Personnel) by Country**

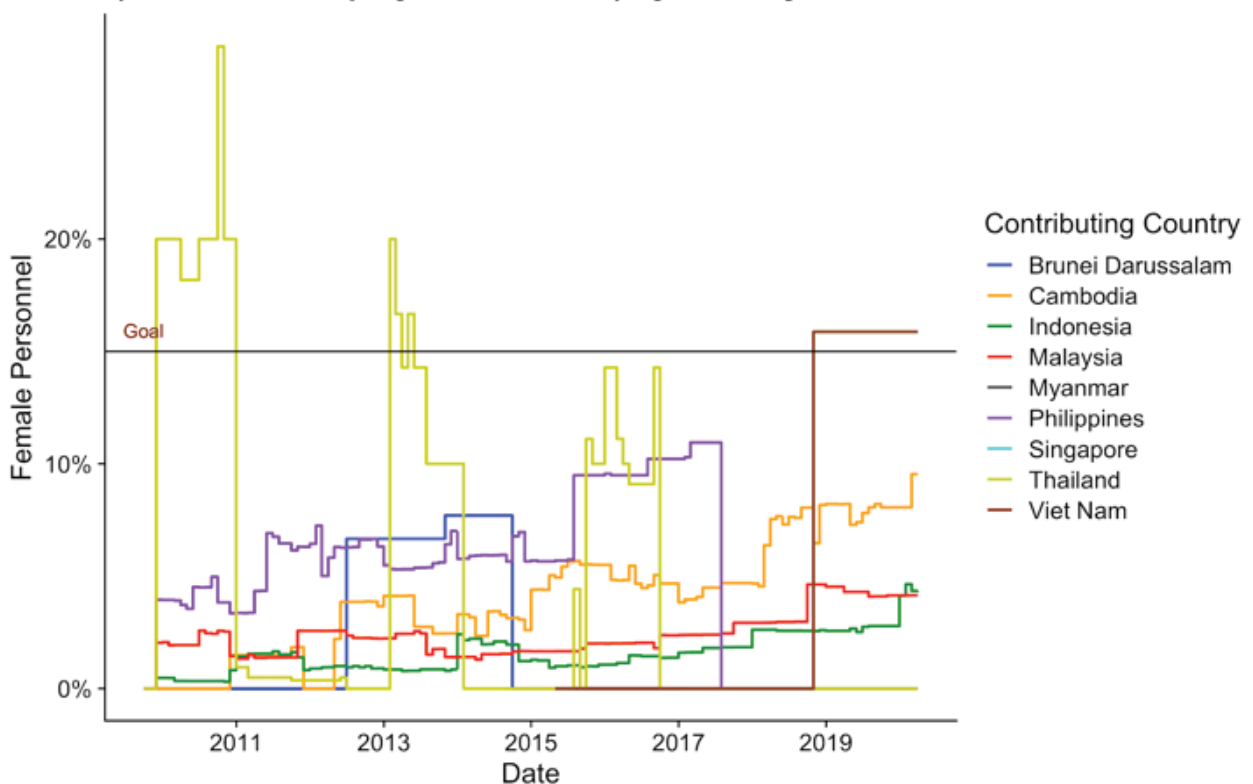


Figure 5

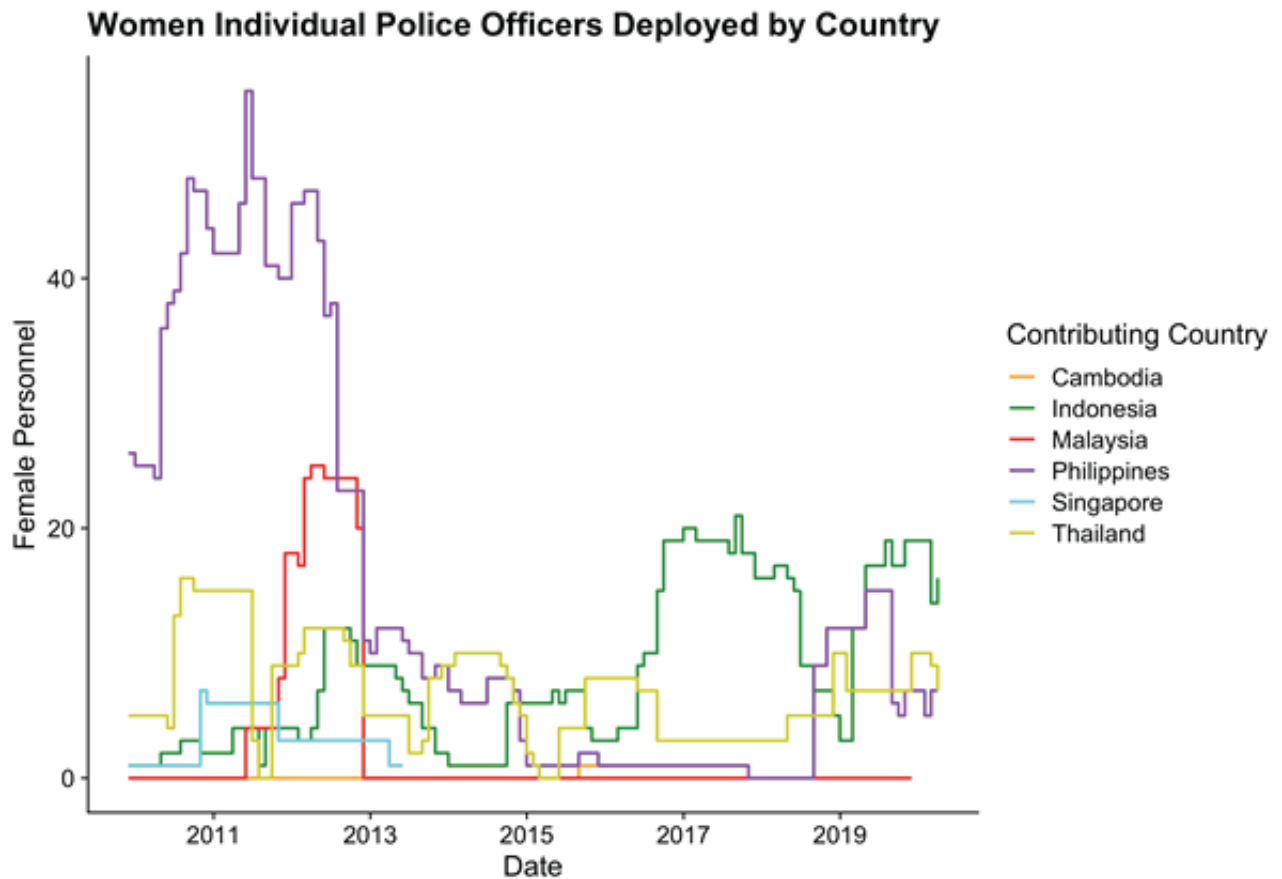
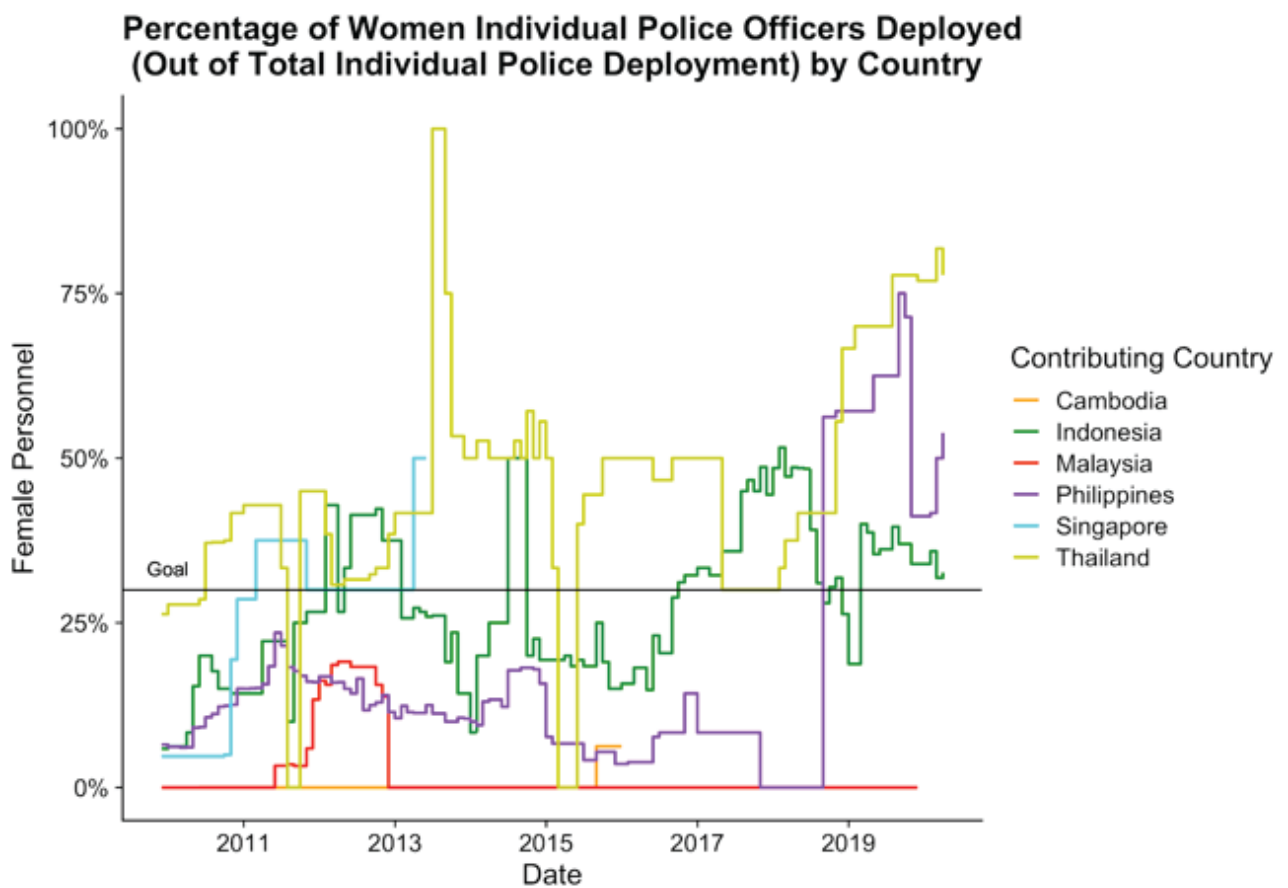
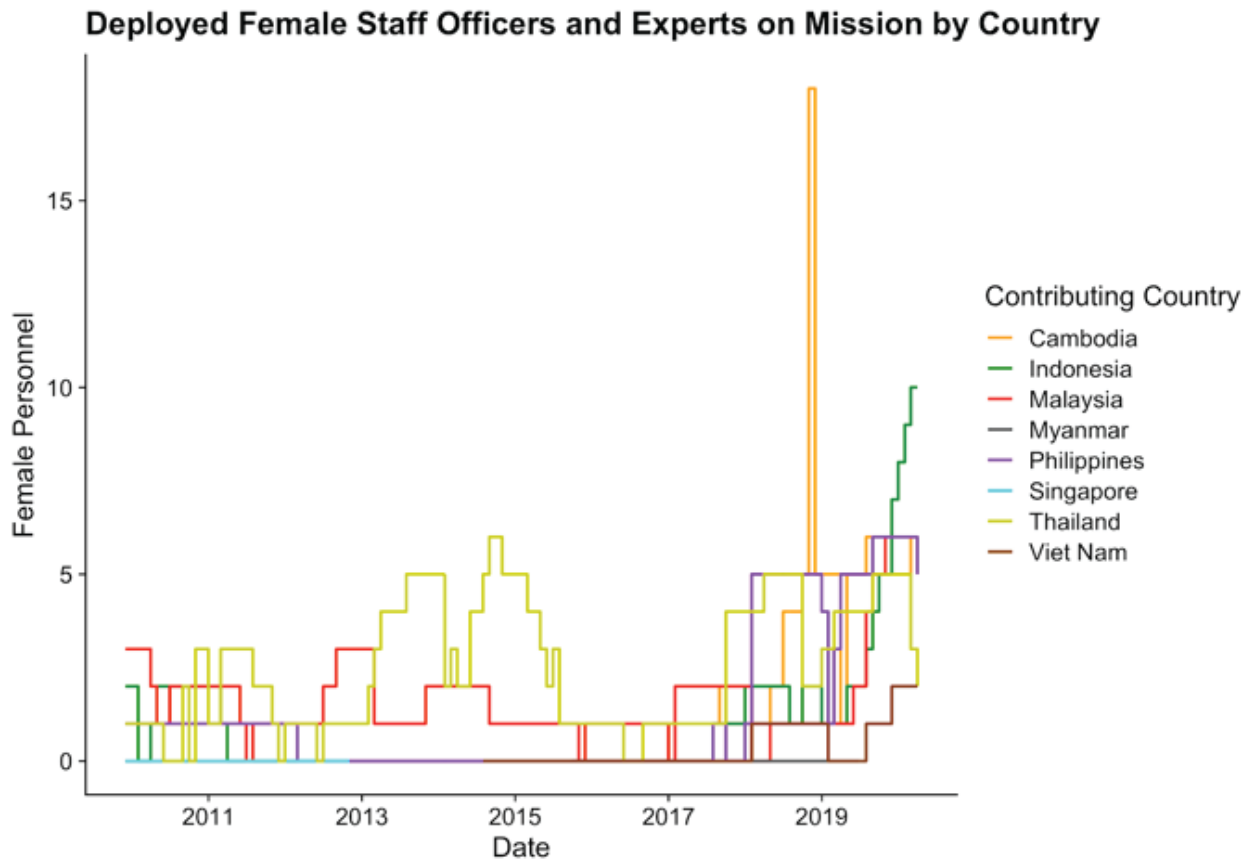


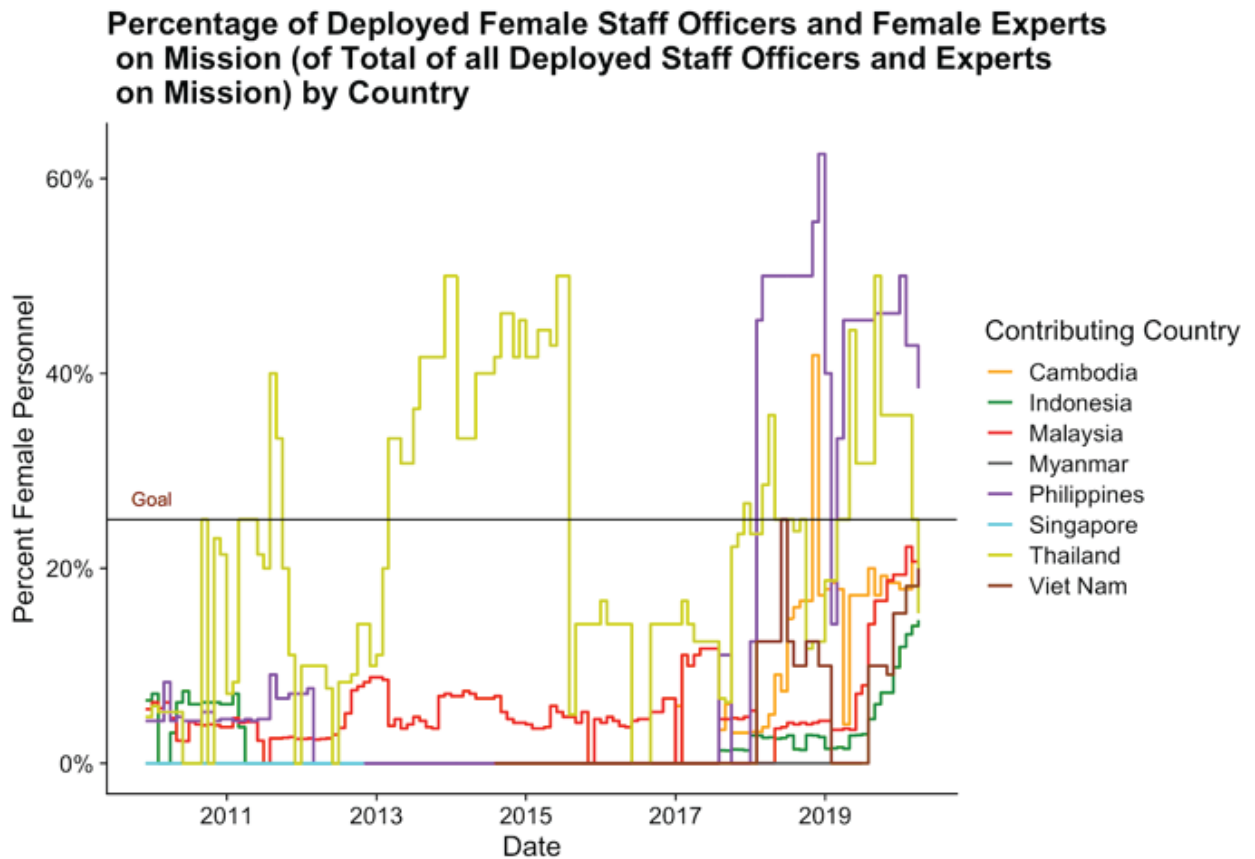
Figure 6



**Figure 7**



**Figure 8**



### 4.3. ASEAN Country Deployments:

The paragraphs below offer a brief overview of UN peacekeeping contributions and progress related to gender and peacekeeping in individual ASEAN countries.

**Brunei** has had a consistent deployment of close to 30 peacekeepers (troops only) to UNIFIL (Lebanon) since 2008, and rarely deploys females. For two years (2012-14), Brunei deployed 2 women to UNIFIL.

**Cambodia:** To date, Cambodia has provided a total of approximately 6,557 troops, including 338 women, to UN peacekeeping operations in nine war-torn countries, mainly in the African continent. In Cambodia, many of these deployed troops are engineering contingents, and those that focus on landmine clearance. Landmine clearance is an area of significant expertise for Cambodia, including with respect to the inclusion of women.

Out of Cambodia's 744 troops currently deployed, 71 or 9.5% are female. Cambodia does not deploy police officers. Of the military experts and staff officers deployed, 22.8% are women (5 females out of 22 total). Cambodia ranks in the top 20 countries out of all 123 countries deploying peacekeepers in terms of proportion of women, and it has exceeded UN gender targets for January 2020.<sup>34</sup> Cambodia's largest regional presence at the moment is in Mali where they have deployed 290 troops, 25 of whom are female.

Cambodia's success is especially interesting to note given the significant gender challenges that women in Cambodia face.<sup>35</sup> Several factors may have played a role: First, increasing the numbers of female peacekeepers has been publicly supported at high-levels, including by Cambodia's Defence Minister.<sup>36</sup> Second, in spite of entrenched gender roles, Cambodia has a long history of women being involved in conflict and security, including as female combatants, which may increase the social acceptance and support for female deployments. Third, there appears to be widespread public support for increasing the numbers of females in UN peacekeeping in particular, and it is a source of national pride. The Ministry of National Defence spokesperson, for example, expressed gratitude for how the "UN had praised the Kingdom for the heroism of its female peacekeepers...we see that this is a matter of pride for the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) as well as the government and Cambodian people across the country—especially women... It gives us great pride."<sup>37</sup>

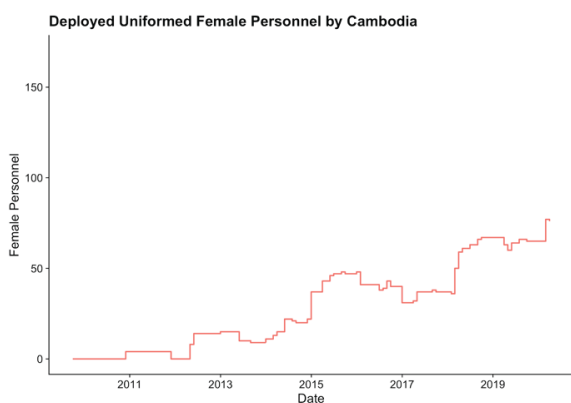
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<sup>34</sup> The most recent comparative sex-disaggregated data compiled by the UN Department of Peace Operations is from January 2020.

<sup>35</sup> According to the Gender Gap Report, Cambodia ranks 10th in the East Asia and Pacific Region (out of 20 countries, Philippines is 2nd, after New Zealand and Laos is 3rd). Cambodia is 89th in these gender rankings out of 153 countries. World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report 2020. Cambodia ranks low with respect to the Gender Development Index and Gender Inequality Index for 2020. UNDP Human Development Reports, 2020.

<sup>36</sup> Erin Handley, "Few women in upper ranks of Cambodia's military," The Phnom Penh Post, 6 March 2018.

<sup>37</sup> Ry Sochan, "Kingdom Ranks 17th for Number of Women in UN Peacekeeping Forces," The Phnom Penh Post, May 27, 2019.

**Figure 9****Figure 10**

**Indonesia:** For over a decade, Indonesia has aspired to be a major player in UN peacekeeping, spelling out its ambitions in its Roadmap Vision 4000 Peacekeepers 2015-2019. Indonesia achieved its goal of reaching the top 10 contributing countries, and now has the 8th highest contribution in the world (2847 personnel were deployed as of April 2020). Indonesia's largest deployment is to UNIFIL (Lebanon) where there are 1237 troops deployed (of which 64 or 5.2% are female).<sup>38</sup> There is also a significant deployment to MONUSCO (Democratic Republic of Congo), 1024 Indonesian troops are stationed there, 43 of them are female (4.2%).

In spite of significant gender-related obstacles, Indonesia has steadily increased the proportion of female personnel in UN deployments. In December 2016, Indonesia deployed 60 females and 2716 males (2.2% female). In its current overall deployment, there are 159 females out of 2847 males deployed, 5.6% women. In terms of units, 10 out of the 65 deployed staff and experts are women (15.4%). Out of the 278 police officers deployed as part of Formed Police Units, 29 or 10.4% are female and a high percentage of individual police are female (13 out of a total of 43 deployed, or 30.2%). Like most countries, the proportion of females is lowest in the military contingents, with 107 female troops currently deployed out of 2354 (4.5%). The Indonesian National Defense Forces, however, formally announced at an international conference in 2019 that it is committed to recruiting and deploying more women, aiming to shift the percentage from 4 to 7% although no timeframe was given.<sup>39</sup>

Although Indonesia faces many gender challenges,<sup>40</sup> the significant high-level support for gender equality, including with respect to peacekeeping deployments, has likely contributed to Indonesia's relative success in this regard. Indonesia's President, Joko Widodo, is known for making "gender equality a cornerstone of his agenda during his presidency" and is currently an ambassador for UN Women's #HeforShe campaign.<sup>41</sup> He has increased the number of women in Cabinet including Indonesia's first female Foreign Minister, Retno Marsudi. Marsudi has made women and peacekeeping in particular a priority and has championed the issue at international events and conferences. Indonesia hosted two Security Council debates during its tenure as President in May 2019, and both were focused on

<sup>38</sup> Data is from April 2020 deployments. As of summer 2020, these troops are still deployed. Deployments have been frozen (remained in place) due to Covid 19.

<sup>39</sup> Azis Kurmala, "TNI to Increase Participation of Female Peacekeepers," Antara News. 26 June 2019.

<sup>40</sup> See for example UNDP Human Development Report data on gender variables. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/data>

<sup>41</sup> Gitika Bhardwaj and Isabel Dunstan, "How Women are Transforming Indonesia," Chatham House, 20 May 2019.

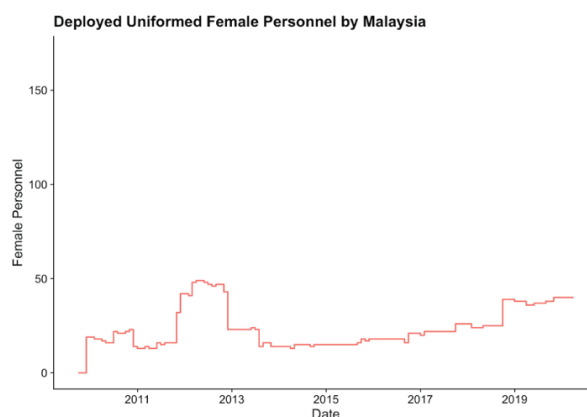


peacekeeping - one on training, and one on civilian protection. UN peacekeeping is clearly an area that Indonesia wishes to take global leadership on, and it is increasingly undertaking activities<sup>42</sup> to show its commitment to making gains on women and peacekeeping. Indonesia also has a growing women's rights movement in civil society.<sup>43</sup>

**Laos:** Laos is the only ASEAN member country that has not been involved in UN peacekeeping operations.

**Malaysia's** current deployment consists of 819 troops<sup>44</sup> of which 34 are women (4.2%). Of the 26 experts and staff officers deployed from Malaysia, 5 are women (19.2%). Malaysia currently only has troops stationed in Lebanon, serving on UNIFIL. It has a smaller deployment of 16 staff officers and military experts serving on other Missions, of which 4 are female. Malaysia has been participating in UNIFIL since 2007. Malaysia is the second largest ASEAN country contributor to peacekeeping after Indonesia. In Asia, it ranks 7th. In spite of significant gender challenges, Malaysia (like Cambodia and Indonesia) has had recent high-level support domestically for increasing the numbers of women in the Armed Forces and police services and has launched an active recruitment and advertising campaign to attract more women. The number of women being recruited into domestic armed forces has been increasing.<sup>45</sup>

**Figure 11**



**Myanmar:** Myanmar became involved in peacekeeping in August 2015 after a hiatus of almost 50 years. From 2015-2019, 1 or 2 male peacekeepers (officers) were deployed to UNMIL (Liberia) and UNMISS. The UN was under pressure however due to the Myanmar military's human rights record and offensive against the Rohingya to not accept peacekeepers from Myanmar. Countries such as Australia faced pressure by domestic civil society groups and international human rights organizations to not offer any training or support to the Myanmar military including for peacekeeping.<sup>46</sup> Others however supported Myanmar's role in peacekeeping, arguing that the exposure to troops from other countries, and to UN values on human rights and civilian protection, would be beneficial for Myanmar military leadership and peacekeepers.<sup>47</sup> Currently, there are no UN deployments from Myanmar.

<sup>42</sup> See initiatives detailed for example in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Indonesia, "Minister of Foreign Affairs Retno Marsudi and the Netherlands Minister of Foreign Affairs Sign Women, Peace and Security Cooperation," 10 March 2020.

<sup>43</sup> Gitika Bhardwaj and Isabel Dunstan, "How Women are Transforming Indonesia," Chatham House, 20 May 2019.

<sup>44</sup> Malaysia is in the top 30 peacekeeping contributing countries (as of May 2020, it was 26th).

<sup>45</sup> Sex-disaggregated data on military recruitment is not publicly available. However, recent media reports have suggested that Malaysia for at least the past 5 years has been actively working to increase the numbers of women in its armed forces. See for example, Yuen Mei Keng, "More women wanted in Malaysia's military groups," The Star/Asia News Network, April 16, 2016.

<sup>46</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Australia: Don't Cozy up to Myanmar's Army," Feb.20, 2020.

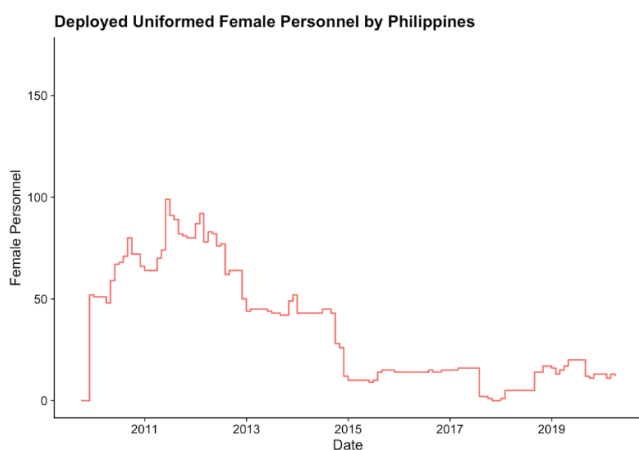
<sup>47</sup> Seamus Martov, "Burma Army Troops Serving as UN Peacekeepers," Irrawaddy, 3 Oct 2016.

**Philippines:** The Philippines has participated in peacekeeping since 2009. At its peak (2009-10), the Philippines deployed over 1,000 peacekeepers (including 99 women) when it launched its deployment to UNDOF (Golan Heights). The proportion of females on Filipino contingents tends to be high; between 6-8% of Filipino peacekeepers have consistently been female, most of whom were deployed as part of MINUSTAH (Haiti) and UNDOF. The Philippines also has fielded high ranking female officers, such as Navy Captain Camacho, who led the Philippines’s 155 personnel deployment to Haiti in 2013 after being the first female to command a Navy ship.<sup>48</sup>

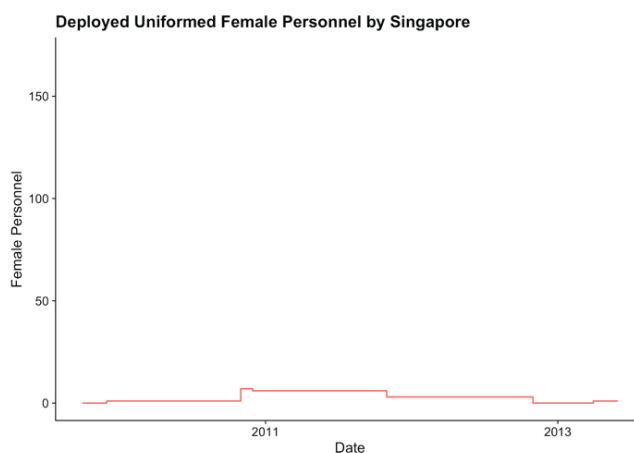
In 2014, after 75 Filipino troops narrowly escaped an attack by the al-Qaeda linked Nusra Front in the Golan Heights, the Philippines pulled all of its peacekeepers (331) from the UNDOF. The Philippines has not deployed similar troop levels since. Currently, the Philippines has a total of 27 peacekeepers deployed, of which 10 (37%) are women, consisting solely of military experts, staff officers and police. Although the Philippines has decreased its levels of deployments in the past five years, it remains engaged. The Philippines pledged last year (2019) to expand its peacekeeping force to approximately 300 personnel and expressed an openness to deploy to regions with higher security concerns.<sup>49</sup> It also expressed its support of the agenda to increase the numbers of female peacekeepers, and of the Vancouver Principles.<sup>50</sup>

**Singapore:** Singapore deployed peacekeepers from 2002-2013, mostly to UNMIT (Timor Leste). Singapore’s deployments (of about 10-15 total peacekeepers, with 3-5 women) have been comprised of police officers, Formed Police Units, staff officers and experts on mission. They have not deployed military contingents.

**Figure 12**



**Figure 13**



<sup>48</sup> Luzviminda and her senior officers were careful to emphasize that she was chosen not because she was a woman but because of her demonstrated skills in leadership (after effectively serving as “captain for several ships in the Navy”) and professionalism. Carmela Fonbuena, “PH’s first woman peacekeeping commander off to Haiti,” Rappler, October 2013.

<sup>49</sup> As mentioned in the official Philippine Statement: “The Philippines is ready to increase its engagement in peacekeeping operations. The Philippine Government has decided to allow the deployment of military and police personnel in any area regardless of the security threat level.” 29 March 2019, UN Peacekeeping Ministerial, NY. <https://tinyurl.com/y3kjtcef>

<sup>50</sup> The Vancouver Principles work to establish the prevention of the recruitment of child soldiers as an objective of peacekeeping missions. The Principles have been endorsed by 4 other ASEAN member countries: Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam.

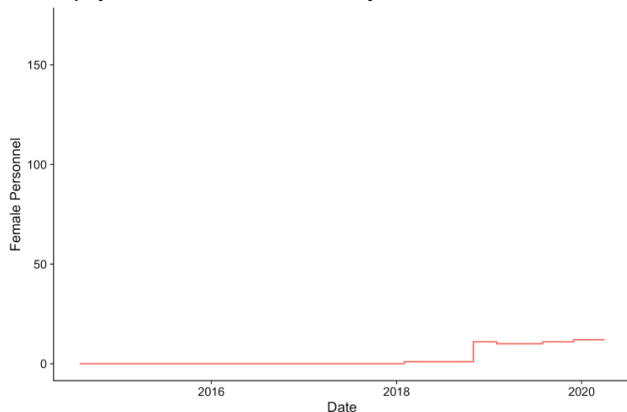
**Thailand:** Thailand has a long history of involvement in peacekeeping. During specific periods, Thailand has made significant contributions, such as deploying over 1581 peacekeepers to East Timor in 1999, and 800 troops in 2010 to UNAMID (Darfur). From 2012-2018, Thailand sent more modest numbers of peacekeepers, although continued to maintain a steady number of 10-20 experts and staff officers across UNMISS, UNAMID and UNMOGIP (India and Pakistan). Thailand increased its deployment in December 2018, sending 273 troops to UNMISS. As of April 2020, Thailand has 270 troops deployed to UNMISS (all male). It also has 13 police officers deployed, the majority of which (10) are female. Most of the police are stationed with UNMISS (8 Thai female police as well as 1 female staff officer). Thailand has consistently deployed a significant proportion of female military observers and staff officers (36% female as of January 2020). At the moment they are deploying 2 women (out of 11 total observers and officers). Thailand’s current total contribution is 296, with 12 women (4%).

**Vietnam:** Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung announced Vietnam’s decision to take part in UN peacekeeping operations at the UN General Assembly in 2013, and that same year, Vietnam amended its Constitution to allow its armed forces to be deployed abroad. Vietnam started deploying peacekeepers to UNMISS (South Sudan) in 2014. Vietnam then began sending more peacekeepers to both UNMISS and MINUSCA (Central African Republic) as liaison officers, military observers and staff officers. In 2017, Vietnam sent its first female officer to UNMISS.

As of January 2018, there were 8 Vietnamese peacekeepers deployed (3 in UNMISS and 5 in MINUSCA) including 1 female. In October 2018, the country deployed the first Level 2 field hospital in South Sudan, consisting of 63 officers and doctors. These troops were replaced in November 2019. As of April 2020, Vietnam has 63 troops in UNMISS, 10 of which are female (15.9%). They also have 4 experts and staff officers (3 male, 1 female) serving as part of UNMISS. Vietnam has a smaller contingent of experts and officers currently deployed to MINUSCA. At the time of this report, the percentage of women serving as military observers, staff officers and troops is 16.4% (12/73).

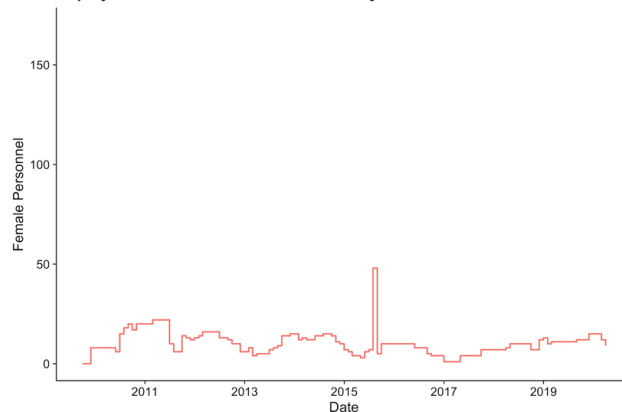
**Figure 14**

Deployed Uniformed Female Personnel by Vietnam



**Figure 15**

Deployed Uniformed Female Personnel by Thailand

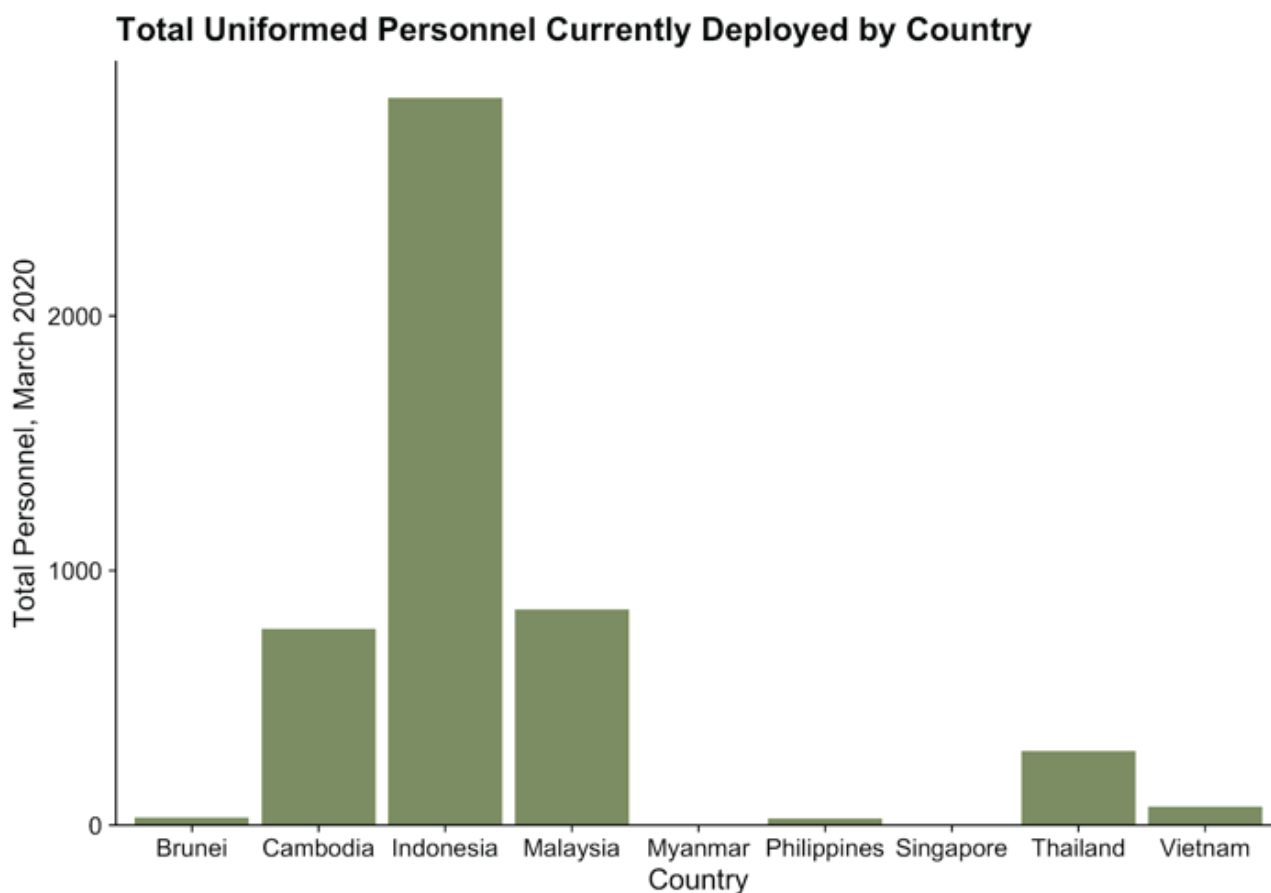


Vietnam is interested in expanding and diversifying its deployments. Although the current deployments have focused on medical staff and advisors, Vietnam hopes to deploy combatant units as well as police officers in future deployments.<sup>51</sup> The participation of women in peacekeeping is also an area of focus for Vietnam. WPS has been put forward as one of Vietnam’s seven priorities for its term as a non-permanent member of the UNSC (2020-2021) and is a top issue for Vietnam as ASEAN Chair in 2020. In the region, Vietnam is co-chairing an Expert Working Group (EWG) on UN Peacekeeping as part of the ASEAN Plus Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM+) during 2021-2023 and is working to ensure women and peacekeeping is a critical part of the EWG’s agenda. Given Vietnam’s early success with promoting female participation in UN Peacekeeping, its efforts have been recognized globally. The UN SG, upon thanking Vietnam for their successful presidency of the UNSC in January 2020, called on ASEAN to continue its efforts to increase “women’s participation in peace processes and peacekeeping” and to share “lessons learned with other regional organizations.”<sup>52</sup>

#### 4.4. Snapshots of ASEAN Comparative Data

The figures above showed female deployments from ASEAN member countries over the past decade, revealing the trends over time. Below are snapshots of current deployments (based on March 2020 data)

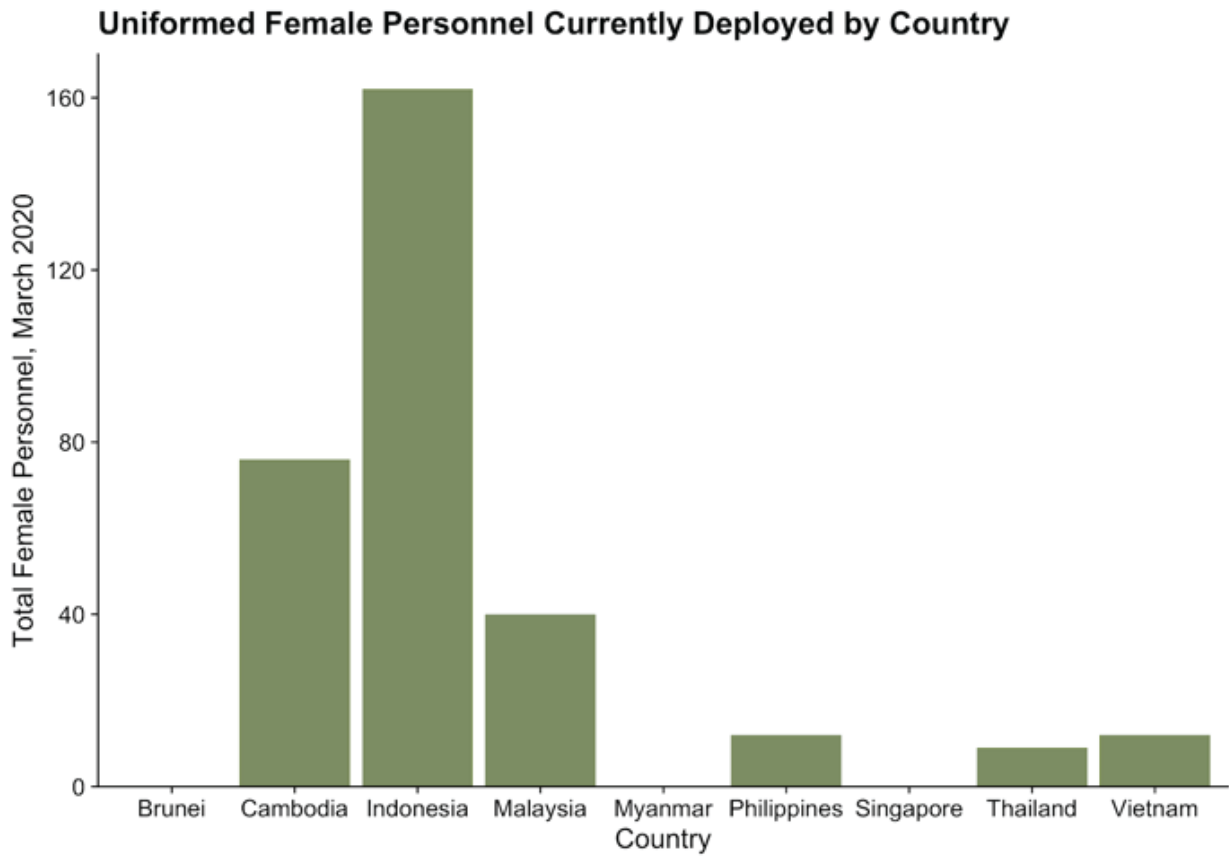
**Figure 16**



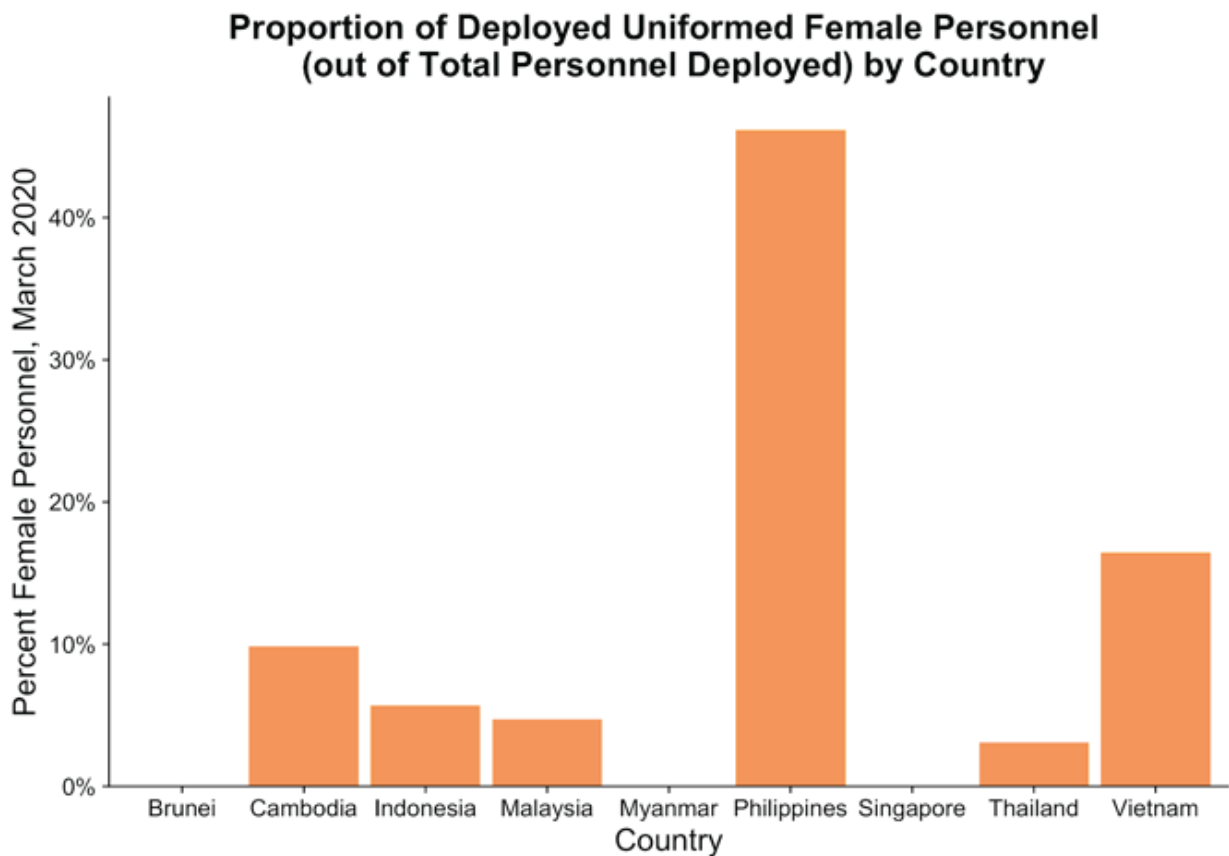
<sup>51</sup> Interview with members of VNDPKO.

<sup>52</sup> UN Secretary General, “Remarks to the Security Council on ASEAN-UN Cooperation,” 30 January 2020.

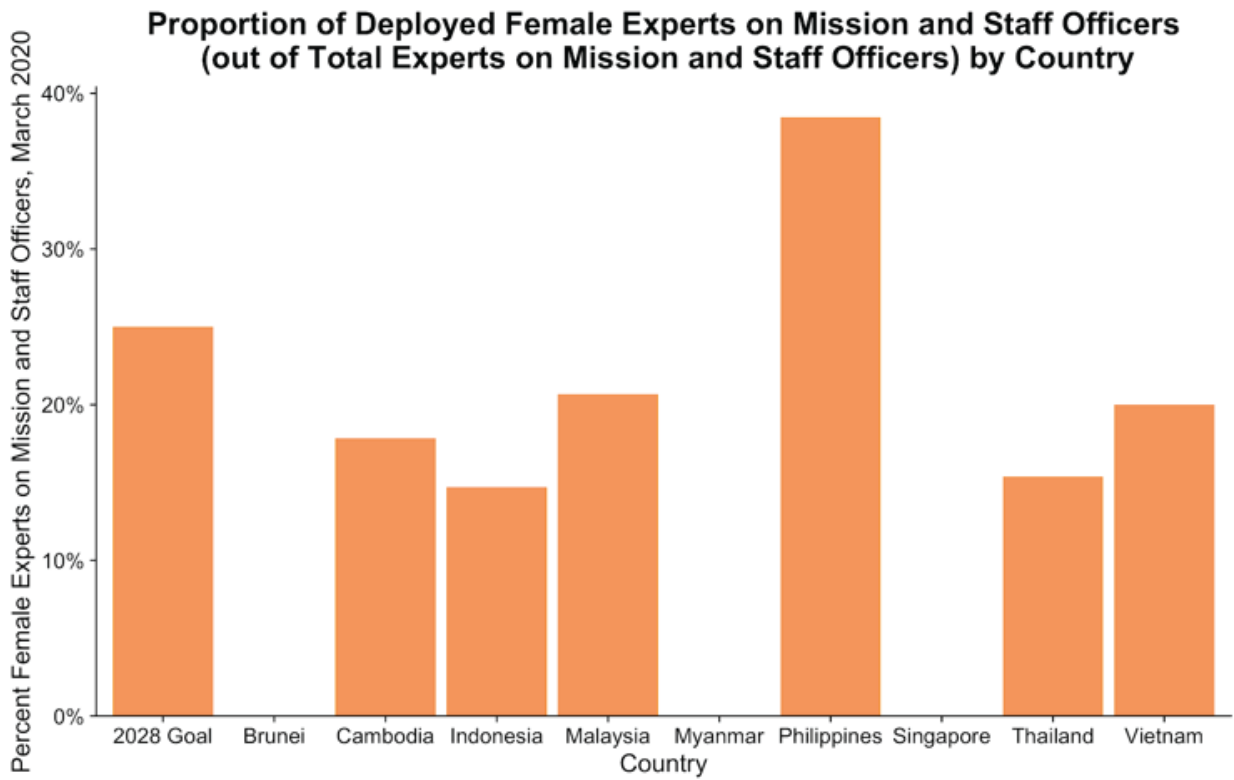
**Figure 17**



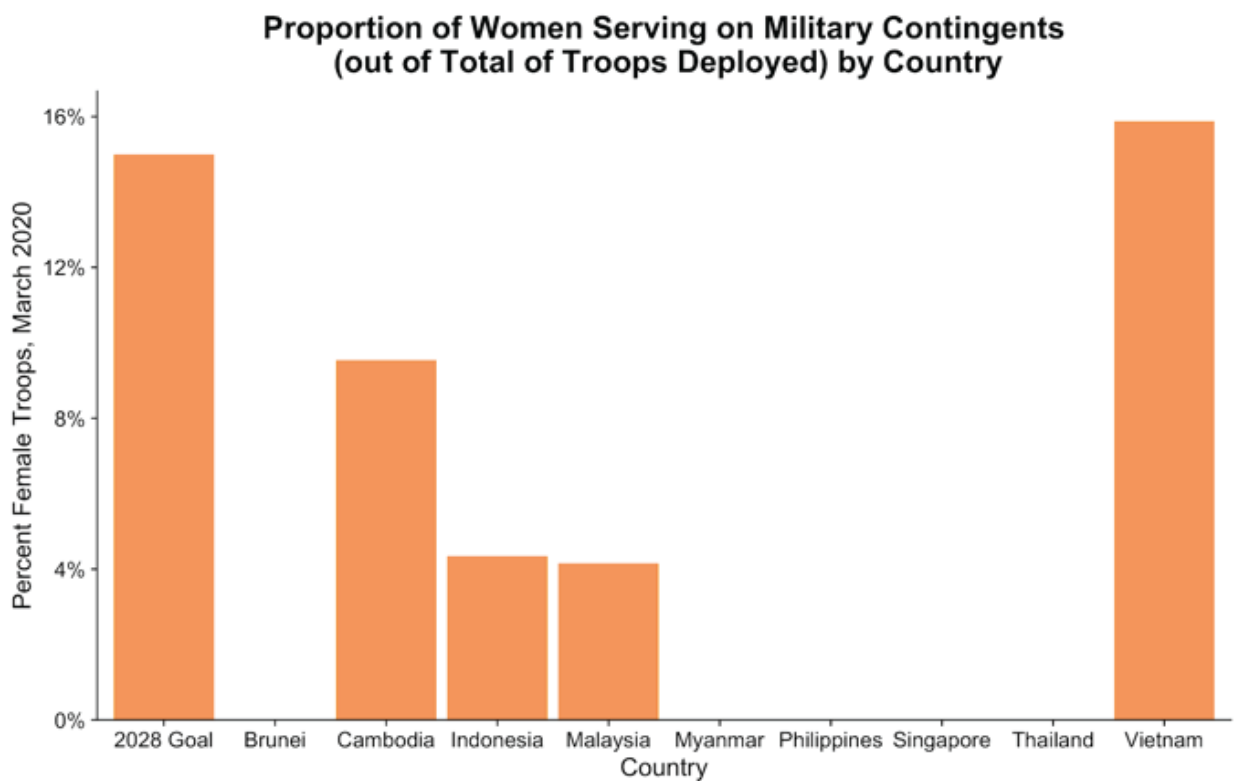
**Figure 18**



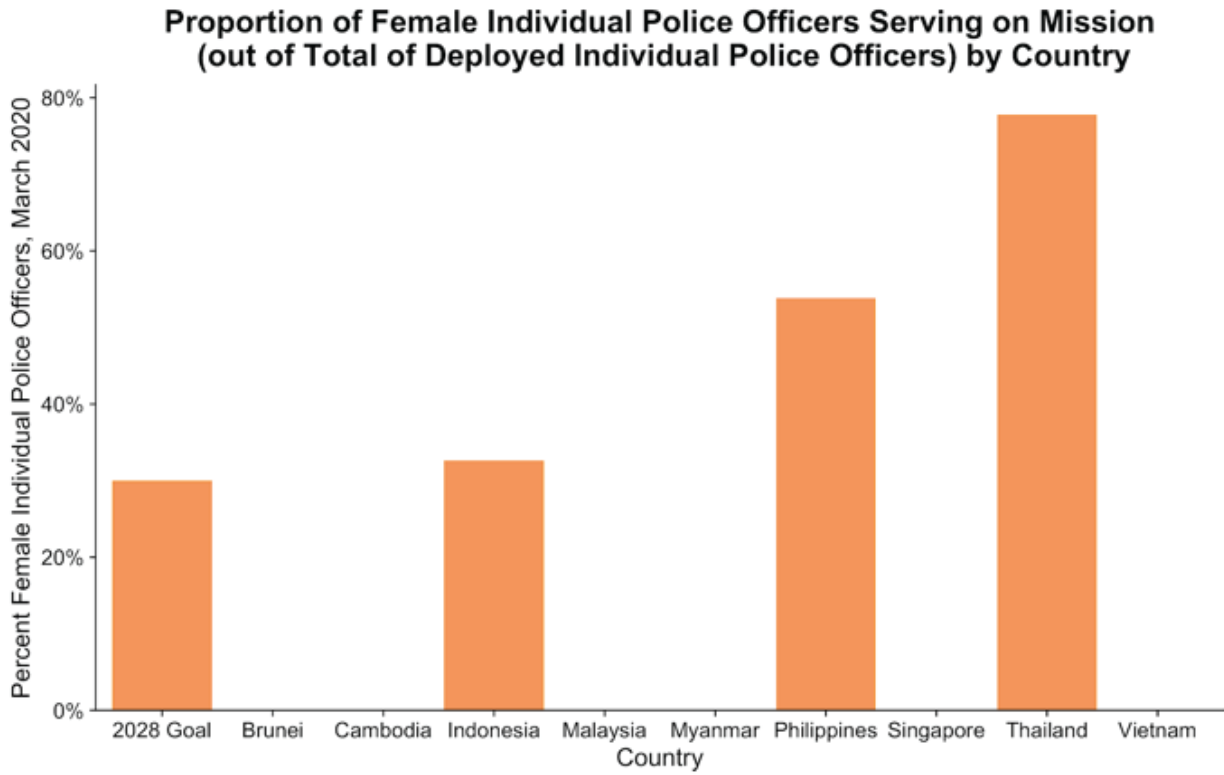
**Figure 19**



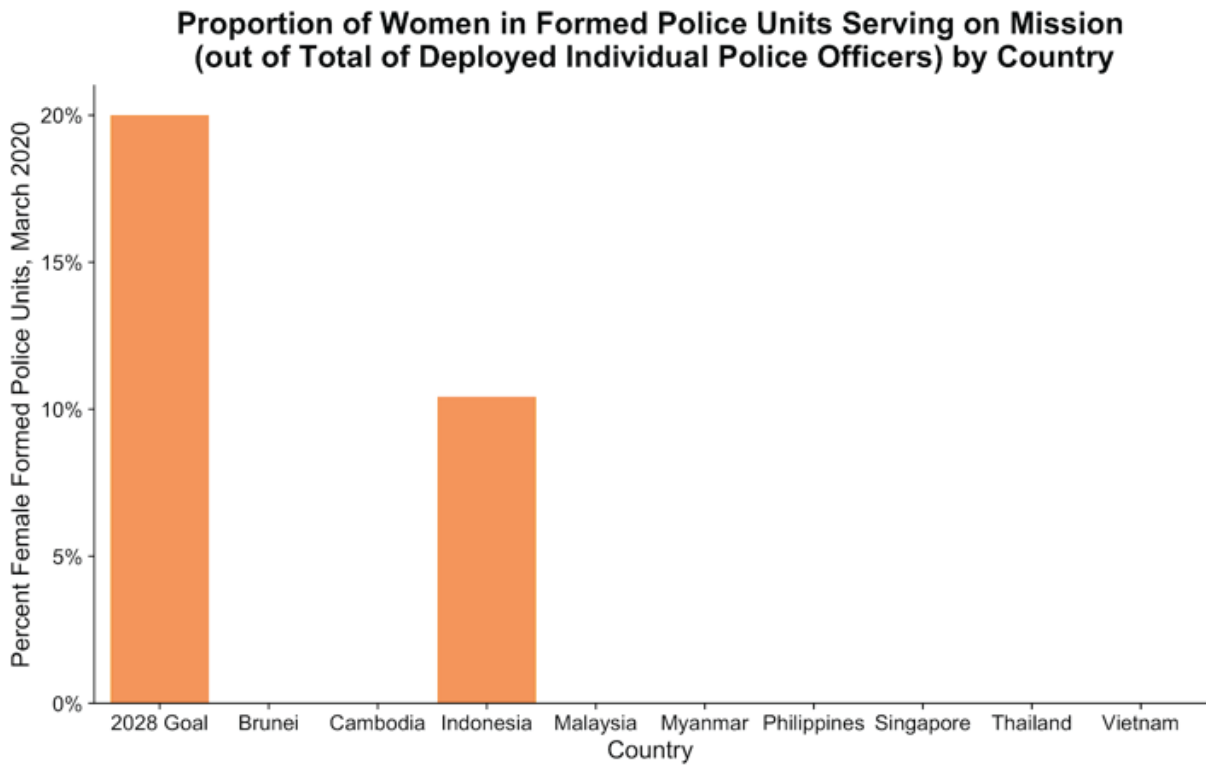
**Figure 20**



**Figure 21**



**Figure 22**

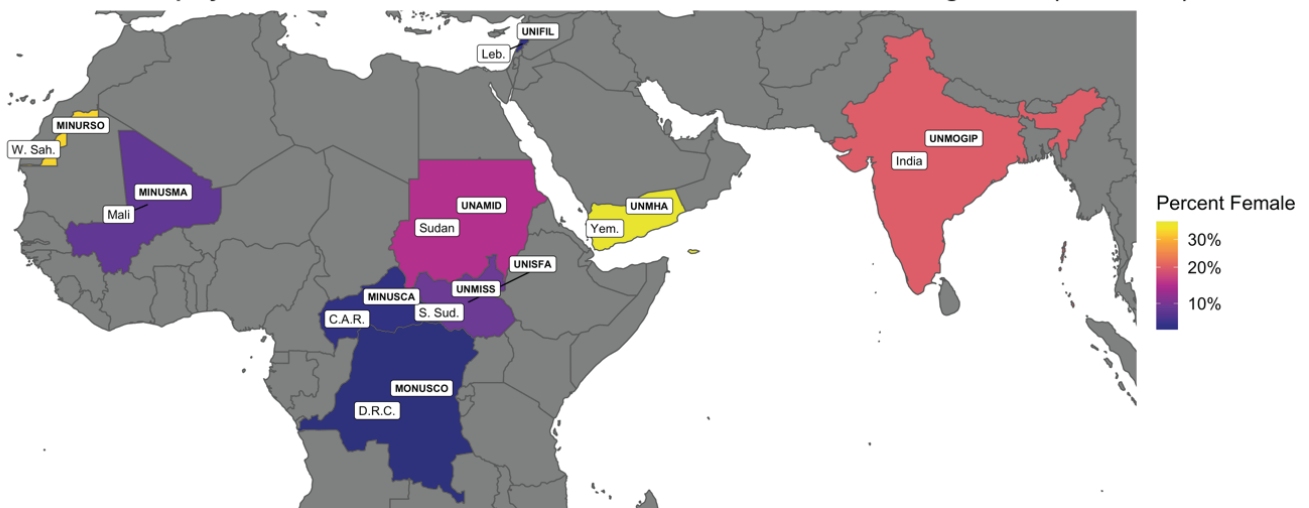


## 4.5. Geographical Concentration of Female Peacekeepers from ASEAN Countries:

The maps below illustrate the geographical concentration of female peacekeepers deployed from ASEAN countries. The largest absolute numbers of female peacekeepers from ASEAN region are deployed to UNIFIL, largely due to Indonesia's contribution of over 60 females, as well due to Malaysia and Cambodia's deployments to UNIFIL. However, the relative numbers or percentages of women, as clear from the second map, are not in the same region as the absolute contributions. Percentages of women deployed are generally highest where the total deployment from ASEAN countries is relatively low, such as to UNMHA, and MINURSO. In cases of small deployments, the peacekeepers are often military officers or advisors of which a higher proportion are women. The largest numbers of peacekeepers in general are troops, and troop-heavy deployments tend to have lower percentages of women.

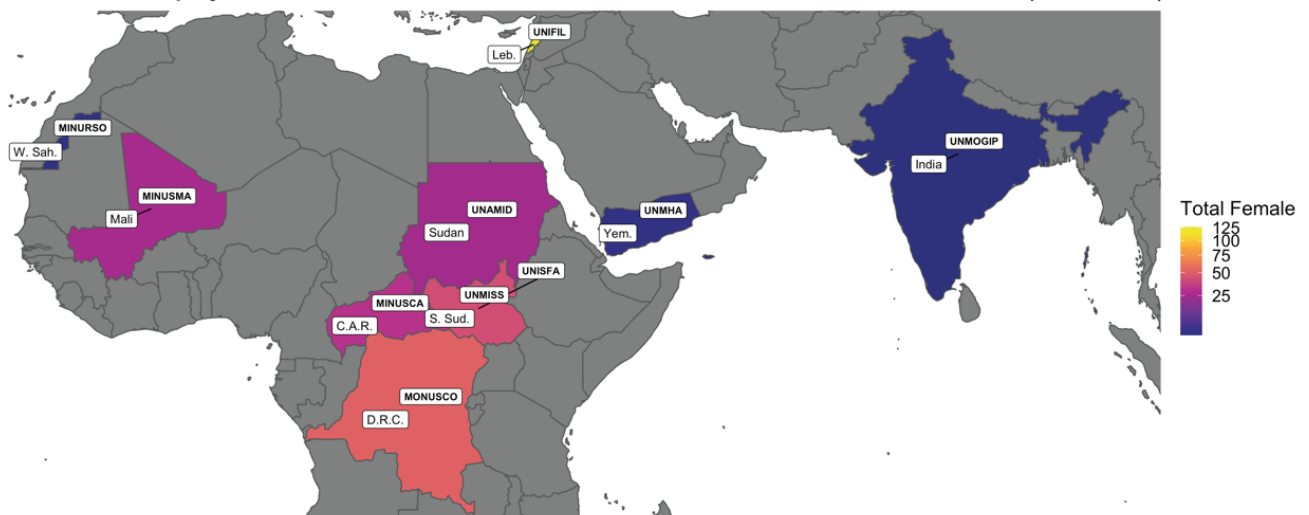
### Map 1

Distribution of Deployed Uniformed Female Personnel from ASEAN countries in Percentage Terms (March 2020)



### Map 2

Distribution of Deployed Uniformed Female Personnel from ASEAN countries in Absolute Terms (March 2020)





## 4.6. ASEAN Peacekeeping Centres:

Within the ASEAN region, there are peacekeeping training centres in Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. Although most of these centres have hosted training sessions on gender-related issues, the capacity to run gender training or to offer it as a routine part of the curriculum and activities offered by these Centres is unclear. The ASEAN region (like most regions around the world), would benefit from further development of curriculum on gender training of all armed forces as well as police services, specific gender training related to peacekeeping and deployments, and targeted training for female peacekeepers. This could be informed by best practices and lessons learned from within the region, for example from the Armed Forces of the Philippines' gender training programs, and Indonesia's Women, Peace and Security training program.

**Cambodia:** The National Centre for Peacekeeping Forces, Mines and ERW Clearance of Cambodia (NPMEC) was created in March 2005 and is responsible for building the peacekeeping capacity of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces, as well as training personnel in peacekeeping operations and the clearance of landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW). The NPMEC has four departments responsible for information, database, operations, and peacekeeping. It also has a dedicated peacekeeping training school. The Centre, which has received international technical support from several countries, especially France, the United States, Australia, and Japan, has trained more than 3,500 personnel in both peacekeeping operations and mine clearance. In its strategic goals 2011-2015, the NPMEC aims to reduce domestic landmine and ERW casualties in order to improve economic infrastructure and development, promote global stability and peacekeeping through the United Nations, and strengthen the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces' capabilities in demining and peacekeeping.<sup>53</sup>

**Malaysia:** The Malaysian Peacekeeping Centre (MPC) provides training and capacity building on multi-dimensional peacekeeping for international military, police and civilian personnel who will be embarking on UN peacekeeping missions. Established in 1996, the MPC aims to become a centre of excellence for peacekeeping training. To date, MPC has conducted more than 90 series of courses for over 2,500 local and international participants from 52 countries.<sup>54</sup> From 2010 to 2015, the MPC received support from governments of Japan and Norway to strengthen the capacity of Malaysia in multidimensional peacekeeping training. This was the first-of-its-kind multidimensional peacekeeping training programme which was managed by both UNDP and the Ministry of Defence Malaysia. The training programme included development of training modules on gender in peacekeeping.<sup>55</sup>

**Indonesia:** The Indonesian Peacekeeping Operations Centre, founded in 2012, is part of the larger Indonesian Peace and Security Centre. The Government of Indonesia aims to have the Indonesian Peacekeeping Training Centre (PMPP) become a regional hub and recognised centre of excellence for peacekeeping training. The United States has been a major donor of the Centre. Located on the outskirts of

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<sup>53</sup> Vannarith Chheang, Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace (CICP), January 2014.

<sup>54</sup> Malaysia at the UN SC, "Malaysia's Priorities: Strengthening the UN Peacekeeping Operations," 2015-2016.

<sup>55</sup> Documents and reports of the Project "Capacity Building Support for Malaysia's Role in Multidimensional Peacekeeping Training"

peacekeepers' training centre, the complex houses six other major facilities including the Defence University campus, the headquarters of the Indonesian military standby force for emergency deployment, the National Counterterrorism Agency, National Disaster Mitigation Agency, a language centre and military sports grounds. The Centre includes a mock hotel, ship and plane for counter-terrorism drills, as well as a language-training centre, a 600-meter shooting range, and simulated villages that resemble those of Congo and Lebanon, which were designed to prepare Indonesian troops for their deployment as UN peacekeepers.<sup>56</sup> In terms of gender-related training, Indonesia launched a Regional Training on Women, Peace and Security in April 2019 for 60 female diplomats from ASEAN countries, Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea.<sup>57</sup> The aim was broader women, peace and security issues, and was not targeted specifically at peacekeepers.

**Philippines:** The Philippines founded their peacekeeping centre in December 2019, supported (like Indonesia) with funding from the United States (Global Peace Operations Initiative, U.S. State Department). The centre provides training and administrative services to Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) personnel participating in peacekeeping operations. The AFP which has one of the strongest records of inclusion of women in the region has launched new gender training programs for their personnel and recruits, however, these are not delivered specifically by the peacekeeping centre.

Thailand: Thailand's Peace Operations Centre (POC) dates back to 2006.<sup>58</sup> As a national peacekeeping training centre, the POC leads pre-deployment training for units and individual peacekeepers. It also develops and delivers the national pre-deployment training curriculum. The POC also organizes peacekeeping symposiums. The Centre monitors Thai peacekeeping contingents serving on deployments, exercising command and control over contingents operating on the ground. The POC also aims to be a centre of excellence, by engaging with regional and global peacekeeping communities to exchange experiences and best practices. According to its Director, the centre develops and publishes national peacekeeping doctrine and training materials and produces its own academic research.<sup>59</sup>

**Vietnam:** Vietnam's Department of Peacekeeping Operations (VNDPKO) is the principal organization under the Ministry of Defence on peacekeeping matters. It houses Vietnam's Peacekeeping Centre which was founded on 27 May 2014.<sup>60</sup> The Centre's training facilities, funded by the US Government, include 15 classrooms which can accommodate 600 trainees and an auditorium with the capacity of over 250 seats. At the current time, the facility is primarily focused on facilitating training and support for domestic activities related to the UN Peacekeeping Operations. However, Vietnam intends to make the VNDPKO a regional training hub/centre of excellence for peacekeeping training, in partnership with international organizations. The first international conference on Vietnam's peacekeeping operations was held on 23 November 2018 with support and cooperation with UNDP, UN DPO and UN Department of Field Support and UN Police Division.

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<sup>56</sup> Yuliasri Perdani, SE Asia's Biggest Peacekeeping, Anti-terror Training Camp Opens, The Jakarta Post, April 8, 2014.

<sup>57</sup> Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Regional Training on Women, Peace, and Security: Women's Important Roles as Global Peace Agents

<sup>58</sup> The POC's website is: <http://j3.rtarf.mi.th/poc/versionenglish/about.php>

<sup>59</sup> Indo-Pacific Defense Forum, "A Question & Answer with Royal Thai Armed forces Rear Adm. Nuttapon Ketsumboon," April 22, 2019.

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.vnpkc.gov.vn/>



Photo: UN Photo/ United Nations Peacekeeping

## 5. BARRIERS TO FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN PEACEKEEPING IN ASEAN COUNTRIES

There are many barriers in ASEAN countries to women's full and equal participation in peacekeeping (that are common in much of the world). As part of the UN Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations, a baseline study and literature review<sup>61</sup> identified 10 key barriers to women's deployment. One recommendation of this paper is for countries to carry out comprehensive barrier assessments similar to those being undertaken as part of the Elsie Initiative. Below, several of these barriers (as well as others) are explored: problematic gender norms and expectations, unpaid care work, skepticism concerning female ability to perform difficult or dangerous tasks, and whether there is an eligible pool of women for deployment in domestic armed forces and police services. The aim of this section is to provide an overview; further analysis is needed to identify the key variables in different contexts and consider their impact on women's participation.

**5.1. Adverse Gender Norms and Exclusion from Certain Roles/Jobs:** Even in countries with higher levels of females deployed, the interest to have women participate fully and equally in peace and security operations does not always neatly square with gender expectations for women, such as that women should be quiet and primarily focused on their families. One report referencing Indonesia in particular echoes findings of many reports concerning the possible challenge of reconciling cultural gender norms in the ASEAN region with pressure to deploy female peacekeepers. "Indonesian society generally believes a mother should not go away on deployment but needs to take care of her kids. Unless these cultural barriers change, it will be very difficult to make big progress and reach the UN goal of 25 percent of female peacekeepers."<sup>62</sup>

At an event celebrating International Women's Day in Cambodia, the Defence Minister urged the military to promote women to higher ranks, describing them as "the backbone of the economy and society" and as "an indispensable power" in developing the country. At the same time, he told military women to uphold the "traditional value" of Khmer women. "Female soldiers must continue to maintain the tradition and dignity of Cambodian women in order to improve the social morality, women's value and the Khmer family forever," he said.<sup>63</sup> At the Sixth Army Women's Congress in Hanoi, Party General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong praised the achievements of women in the army in recent years and also encouraged military women to "continue to fulfil their assigned work in parallel with taking care of their families. This was a doubly heavy responsibility but also a double honour, he affirmed."<sup>64</sup>

The strong responsibility on women's shoulders for homelife and family, in the absence of policies that support military personnel with balancing care responsibilities with their work, has been reported to contribute to "restrictive working conditions" that limit women's ability to fully engage in security operations and

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<sup>61</sup> M. Ghittoni, L. Lehouk and C. Watson, "Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations: Baseline Study," DCAF Geneva, July 2018.

[https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Elsie\\_Baseline\\_Report\\_2018.pdf](https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Elsie_Baseline_Report_2018.pdf)

<sup>62</sup> Fitri Bintang Timur, "The Tales of Three Asian Countries: How Indonesia, India and the Philippines Recruited Women for UN Peacekeeping Missions," *Global*, Vol 18, No 1. May 2016.

<sup>63</sup> Erin Handley, "Few women in upper ranks of Cambodia's military," *The Phnom Penh Post*, 6 March 2018.

<sup>64</sup> "Party Chief Praises Contributions by Women in People's Army," *Nhân Dân*, 2016-12-08.

investigations. “For instance, we cannot be on duty at night. In some departments, it is simply not allowed. In other cases, the family does not permit us to work late at night. These limiting conditions make it difficult for women law officers to achieve the same level of expertise as male colleagues and progress up the career ladder.”<sup>65</sup>

Given these gender norms, the way women are often expected to join the armed forces is by serving in ways that conform to these roles, for example, as officers focused on communication or healthcare. More difficult is facilitating women’s participation in roles that are more at odds with traditional gender expectations, such as becoming fighter pilots, infantry or combat-ready soldiers. Although there are many examples throughout history of women in the ASEAN region serving as female combatants and soldiers, especially during wartime, these historical accounts of women are often overlooked, in part likely because they don’t easily align with other valued aspects and expectations of femininity. These cultural pressures likely have a role to play in the continued exclusion of women from military education, military positions and roles and experiences. Until recently, Indonesia did not admit women into the Military Academy. The first females graduated in 2017 (9% of the graduating class were women) and they are still excluded from certain positions and training. Given “Indonesian women military are still barred from combat roles, including in infantries, it remains impossible for them to reach the top military position of chief of staff. This restriction also puts a brake on their promotion opportunities.”<sup>66</sup>

The pressure on females to show they are both tough enough for a military job or deployment, and are still “sufficiently” feminine is intense, especially because these pressures often result in contradictory pressures. Journalists and government press releases profiling female soldiers and police in many ASEAN countries often speak about their looks, purity and beauty. Conforming to certain gendered ideals has even been reported to play a role in women’s recruitment to the police and military.<sup>67</sup>

Ensuring that women are treated with professional respect and have equal opportunities is critical for recruitment efforts. If women and their families do not feel that the military and police treat females with equal professional respect, they may be discouraged from joining by their husbands, family and community, or they themselves may be deterred from enlisting or deploying. This may be especially pronounced for women from more traditional or conservative backgrounds, who face added social barriers to being engaged in peace and security operations.

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<sup>65</sup> UNODC, “Cambodia fights sexual exploitation of children with more female police and by training all police on gender-based violence,” 12 November 2012.

<sup>66</sup> N. Sijasulta and F. B. Timur, “Welcome first female military graduates,” *The Jakarta Post*, August 5, 2017.

<sup>67</sup> Indonesia police and military were repeatedly condemned by Human Rights Watch for subjecting female recruits to virginity tests. The Indonesian police and military stated they halted this practice in 2017.

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/11/22/indonesia-no-end-abusive-virginity-tests>

**5.2. Family and Community Support:** More research is needed to understand the extent to which women feel supported to work in police or military, or to deploy. Evidence suggests that more men are encouraged (and women discouraged) by their social and family networks to participate in the security sector, or to travel abroad on military assignments, and that women with children especially face pressure to not deploy. Service women and men have suggested that it is easier when women are married to military husbands as they tend to be more understanding.<sup>68</sup>

In some cases, the need for family or a husband's support is formalized limiting women's independence and potential options for deployment. In Indonesia, a man, as the "legal head of the household," needs to formally allow his wife to deploy. "Married women need their husband's written consent, and this is Indonesia regulation, not the UN. Our reasoning is that women have greater family roles and they are the support system for their children, so we do not want to violate the social values Indonesia has. We need to check with the family first."<sup>69</sup> However, the consent in this case is given not by the family but by husbands; this illustrates the strong gender norm, still widely held within the region, that men and husbands are entitled to exercise control over the career paths of wives and women.

**5.3. Unpaid Care Work (UCW):** Throughout the region (as well as globally), women generally spend more time on unpaid care work in terms of household labour, and looking after children, and elderly or ill family members.<sup>70</sup> Military and police institutions which have always had significant male majority of personnel often do not have recruitment, retention and promotion policies that consider these pressures or provide family friendly policies, such as paternity and maternity leave or on-site childcare services. Although issues related to sexual harassment, and adverse gender norms often get more attention, empirical studies measuring the causal weight of different variables have found that care work may be one of the most important variables depressing female participation in labour markets,<sup>71</sup> and this may be especially pronounced in jobs related to peace and security (which can involve time living away from family for training or deployment purposes).<sup>72</sup> Women may be more likely to leave military or police positions to look after children or other family members, or to be overlooked for promotions (or lose their positions) because of maternity leave or other care responsibilities.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Interview with Farooque Choudhury, Training of Trainers Centre, UN DPO, Entebbe. May 12, 2020. "My husband is also a soldier so he shares more understanding and sympathy with me. He always encourages me to fulfill missions," one Vietnamese soldier explained before her deployment. People's Army Newspaper, "Shining Images of Vietnamese female doctor peacekeepers," February 19, 2018.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Indonesia official at the Peacekeeping Operations Centre quoted in "The Tales of Three Asian Countries: How Indonesia, India and the Philippines Recruited Women for UN Peacekeeping Missions," 2016, p.61.

<sup>70</sup> Jacque Charmes, "Unpaid Care Work and the Labour Market," ILO Working Paper, December 2019.

<sup>71</sup> See for example a study surveying over 4000 respondents in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia for UN Women that used advanced statistical methods to weight the causal effects of different variables on female employment.

<https://georgia.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/12/womens-economic-inactivity-and-engagement-in-the-informal-sector-in-georgia>

<sup>72</sup> One study involving a sample size of over 5000 men and women in various regions of Vietnam found that women carry out 2 hours more unpaid care work (housework, childcare etc.) than men per day. ActionAid, Making a House Become a Home, September 2016.

<sup>73</sup> See for example, Arwen Falvey, "I had to let my daughter go because of my job in the Canadian military," CBC News, June 22, 2017. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/opinion/single-parent-military-1.4169806>

**5.4. Numbers of Women in Police and Military:** Military and police data is generally difficult to access, and rarely published. Based on information gleaned from academic articles, reports, news articles and interviews, the proportion of women in the military in ASEAN countries ranges from between 5-10% with an even lower percentage in higher ranks. The percentage of women in police is higher (sometimes close to 30%) although it varies across the region. The number of women in the Cambodian armed forces is reported to be around 7%.<sup>74</sup> The Philippines has close to 11% and the Malaysian Armed Forces approximately 10% females (which is an increase from 3% in 2003 for Malaysia and 5% for Philippines in 2005). Vietnam police services are reported to have approximately 10% women<sup>75</sup> and the armed forces may have up to 20% female although not across all ranks and units.

Vietnam is reported to have the largest military in the ASEAN region in terms of the number of active personnel, and the only ASEAN country in the top 10 (ranked 9th globally). 2019 figures suggest there are 482,000 active military personnel in the Vietnam People's Army (VPA).<sup>76</sup> The next ranking ASEAN countries are Myanmar, Indonesia and Thailand (ranked 11th, 12th and 13th). Vietnam was reported to have 92,525 women in the armed forces<sup>77</sup> in 2016. Although there is a significant number of female personnel in the VPA, their roles and capacities tend to be different than male personnel, with many working as medical doctors or other health fields, and in an administrative capacity.<sup>78</sup> As in many ASEAN countries, there is strong interest in opening up more positions within the Vietnam People's Army to women, and in changing the marketing and recruitment campaigns to further interest and encourage women.<sup>79</sup>

Most ASEAN countries—Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam—have mandatory military service or conscription but for men only. There are no ASEAN member countries that have mandatory military service for both women and men. Although there is a trend throughout the region to remove formal barriers restricting female access to military colleges, training, as well as particular ranks and units, both formal and informal gender barriers remain. Only the Philippines and Singapore have opened combat positions up to women, most women are barred from applying to special forces, and only recently were women able to attend many of the military colleges. These formal barriers have remained in place in spite of the region having a long history of female soldiers, fighters and combatants, especially during wartime.

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<sup>74</sup> Cambodian women make up less than 3 percent of the military's upper ranks. In 2018, 88 women were reported as holding ranks of one-star general and above, with one woman ranked a four-star general and a deputy commander-in-chief of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces. There are an estimated 3,000 generals, at least, in Cambodia's military, meaning women make up just 2.9 percent of RCAF's upper ranks at best. Erin Hadley, "Few Women in the Upper Ranks of Cambodia's Military," Phnom Penh Post, 6 March 2018.

<sup>75</sup> Melissa Jardine, "Policing Vietnam: How Australia Could Help," The Interpreter, 8 Jan 2020.

<sup>76</sup> International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance*, 2019. Chart available here:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_by\\_number\\_of\\_military\\_and\\_paramilitary\\_personnel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_number_of_military_and_paramilitary_personnel)

<sup>77</sup> For references to these 2016 numbers see: Hai Quân Việt Nam, 2016-08-08 (<https://tinyurl.com/yxzdhxjd>) and "Party Chief Praises Contributions by Women in People's Army," Nhân Dân, 2016-12-08 (<https://tinyurl.com/yylf687m>)

<sup>78</sup> This is based on discussions with UNDP Vietnam and VNDPKO staff.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with VNDPKO officials.

In Malaysia, women are generally not foot soldiers, nor do they serve in combat units, but they do serve as fighter pilots and paratroopers in the Air Force, and warfare and logistics officers in the Navy. Many women hold positions in combat support and services, including posts in intelligence and strategy units as well as serving as military doctors and nurses. Malaysia allows women into two of its Elite Forces Units: the 10th Parachute Brigade (part of the Malaysian Army) and Special Actions Unit (Royal Malaysia Police). In 2018, Malaysia announced its intention to recruit and train women as commandoes, and to possibly form an all-female specially trained combat unit.<sup>80</sup> Females comprise approximately 12% of the police force, with reports of increasing the numbers of women in higher ranks.<sup>81</sup>

Similar to Malaysia, Indonesia has been actively working to increase the number of women across the military. About 30,000 of the country's 450,000 military personnel are women (approximately 6.6%) but the percentage of high-ranking officers is much lower. Most Indonesian military women are employed by the Women Army Corps (Kowad), Women Navy Corps (Kowal) and Women Air Force Corps (Wara). Each has its own centre of education and officer corps. The Indonesian military has expressed a commitment to having more high-ranking women in the armed forces.<sup>82</sup>

The Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) recruited its first female combatants in 1986, who served as artillery gunners, pilots and intelligence analysts. In 1993, the first batch of women were awarded the SAF Merit Scholarship, designed to prepare outstanding female officers for senior leadership positions. Singapore continues to target top academic females for recruitment into the SAF.<sup>83</sup> Women now make up 8% of the SAF's Regular force. This includes about 1,500 women serving as officers, warrant officers and specialists, and military experts.<sup>84</sup> Women have served in the Singapore Police Force for over 70 years. There are now 1,800 female police deployed in almost every police unit and serving in a range of frontline and organisational roles. They are reported to undergo the same training as male officers.<sup>85</sup>

The Philippines has a long history of women serving in the military. In 1993 women were allowed to enter the military academy and train as pilots, infantry and members of special forces. Combat roles have been open to women since the 2009 Magna Carta for Women outlawed discrimination between women and men in the military and police forces. Currently, the Philippines Military Academy (PMA) has a 20% quota for female recruits. In recent years, the numbers of women have often exceeded the 20% and women have often been at the top of the class.<sup>86</sup> In spite of this increased training, the numbers of women who enlist in the Armed Forces remains far lower than 20%, often due to gender-related reasons such as the difficulty balancing a military

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<sup>80</sup> Mohd Azam Shah Yaacob, "All-female army commando unit in the cards?" *New Straits Times*, 10 April 2018.

<sup>81</sup> The number of high-ranking Malaysian policewomen rose by 25 per cent from 59 in 2012 to 74 in 2016. 22 per cent of officers with a rank of Inspector and above are women. Yuen Mei Keng. "More women wanted in Malaysia's military groups," *The Star/Asia News Network*. April 16, 2016.

<sup>82</sup> "Women Moving up the Ranks in Indonesia's Military," *Indo-Pacific Defense Forum*, June 14, 2018.

<sup>83</sup> Jan Lee, "A-level Grads Sign on With Army," *The Newspaper (Singapore)*, Feb 28, 2018.

<sup>84</sup> Singapore Armed Forces, "Females in the Force," 1 March 2019.

<sup>85</sup> Natasha Razak, *Force Multiplier, Women in Policing*, 8 March 2019.

<sup>86</sup> In 2017, 8 of the top 10 graduates from the PMA, including the valedictorian were women, and of the 167 graduates, 63 were female Leila B. Salverria, "Defense Chief wants more men than women for combat duty,"



career with marriage and children. For military women “one of the common challenges they face as a mother and wife is managing their time on both priorities...We have to balance life and career, so there are times when we have to choose between the two,” said a female soldier.<sup>87</sup> The Armed Forces of the Philippines has launched more gender training programs for men and women to try to ensure women, who remain a significant minority in the forces, are protected from harassment, discrimination and violence.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Gabbie Parlade, “More Women Needed in the Army,” Daily Tribune Philippines, March 11, 2020.

<sup>88</sup> Aurora Quadra-Balibay, “AFP Intensifies Gender Equality for Women in Military Ranks,” Good News Pilipinas. April 26, 2018.



Photo: UN Photo/ United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)

## 6. TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FEMALE PEACEKEEPERS

There are many courses offered by governments, training centres and organizations around the world focused on building the expertise of women working in peace and security. These sometimes change year to year based on funding and political initiative. The paragraphs below highlight the objectives and activities of the major training programs for female peacekeepers. They are highlighted for two reasons: (1) as opportunities to which peacekeepers from ASEAN countries could apply; and (2) as resources for guide the development of training programs within ASEAN region.

### **6.1. UN Women Female Officers Course (FMOC):**

This course, which was developed in 2015, has three main objectives: First, to equip female military officers with the knowledge needed to enable them to be effective peacekeepers who are capable of serving in any role, including protecting women, children, and civilians from all violence, including SEA. Second, to increase the pool of trained female military officers with UN member states who could be made available to UN DPO for deployment to a UN mission at a short notice. Third, to promote the UN Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy by building the capacity of female peacekeepers, and their likelihood of being deployed on PKOs.<sup>89</sup> Approximately 75% of participants from FMOC courses have been deployed according to a 2017 report.<sup>90</sup>

The FMOC is a 10-day residential programme conducted over 2 weeks.<sup>91</sup> Over the past five years, ten sessions of the FMOC have been carried out in different areas of the world (India, China, South Africa and Kenya) training over 400 women.<sup>92</sup> Female peacekeepers from ASEAN region would be eligible for this program.

### **6.2. Peacekeeper Training Course for Women (UAE and UN Women):**

UN Women, the UAE's Ministry of Defense and the UAE's General Women's Union launched a training program for women in 2019. Two large cohorts of women have been trained, 134 the first year, and 180 the second (which completed in January 2020). A key objective of the course is to build capacity of women, especially from the Arab world, to join peacekeeping operations. The participants have been from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Chad, Gambia, Ghana, Jordan, Mauritania, Pakistan, Senegal, Yemen, and the UAE. All of them were nominated by their governments to participate although only about half of the women had experience in the military and police. The UAE Government and UN Women have agreed to expand the program to include more countries in Africa and Asia, suggesting that in future years, female peacekeepers could attend. The course is intensive, involving three months of basic military training followed by two weeks of peacekeeping training.

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<sup>89</sup> Bradley Orchard (UN Women), "A Briefing on the UN Women Female Military Officers' Course," *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, Vol. 15 (1), 117-121.

<sup>90</sup> UN Kenya, "Bolstering Female Military Numbers: 8th UN Female Military Officers Course," December 14, 2017. <https://www.genderinkenya.org/news/bolstering-female-military-numbers-8th-un-female-military-officers-course-fmoc/>

<sup>91</sup> A typical course has 40 students, from 20 to 30 troop contributing countries.

<sup>92</sup> Orchard, 120.

### 6.3. Finland's Military Observer Courses:

In 2016, the United Nations called on Member States to organize more military observer courses for women. In response, Finland, which has one of the oldest peacekeeping centres in the world,<sup>93</sup> led a UN Military Experts on Mission (UNMEM) Course in 2017 with a majority of female participants.<sup>94</sup> Out of 47 participants from 21 different countries, 27 were female.<sup>95</sup> The course was held by Finnish Defence Forces for three weeks, with the objective being to train military officers who would serve in UN peacekeeping operations as military observers, military liaison officers and military advisers.<sup>96</sup>

FINCENT (Finnish Defence Forces International Centre) has one of the most established military observer courses in the world and has been carrying out these courses since 1969. They have led 20 UN Military Experts on Mission courses with the majority of the students being male. In the past five years, they have been actively working to recruit more female participants, especially female participants from lower-income regions, who have been sponsored to attend by Australia, Canada, Finland, Norway and United Kingdom. Participants have attended from 21 different countries across Europe, Asia, South-America and Africa. FINCENT also works to ensure the instructors are both female and male and are from different countries (not just from Finland and Europe). This would be an opportunity for both male and female peacekeepers from ASEAN countries to gain practical gender and civilian protection training.

An important feature of this course is that the participants train in mixed male-female teams (as close to 50/50 as possible) in order to give them experience working through complex scenarios that they might face on PKOs with a diverse team (both in terms of gender and nationality). The course is largely focused on putting groups through experiential and realistic exercises. Teams go through mock-ups of actual scenarios involving civilians (actors), community leaders and conflicts.<sup>97</sup> Each exercise is followed by a feedback session, where the teams evaluate their own performance, and the students reflect on their own actions.

### 6.4. Exercises and Training on SEA Prevention and Response:

There may be cases where female victims of SEA prefer to speak with a female peacekeeper, and there may be PKOs in which for cultural or religious reasons, female civilians will not speak to male peacekeepers.<sup>98</sup> Given this, it is essential that female peacekeepers have gone through drills and exercises to prepare them for these scenarios. Often it is assumed, problematically, that women innately know what to do in these situations or that a quick pre-deployment training on SEA is sufficient. This is often not the case.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Finland's centre for peacekeeping operations training, the UN Training Centre Headquarters, was established in 1969. In 2001, it changed its name to its current name, the Finnish Defence Forces' International Centre (FINCENT).

<sup>94</sup> The Government of Germany conducted its first military observer course for female peacekeepers in 2018. 22 women from 20 countries participated.

<sup>95</sup> The rest of the students come from Nordic countries and Europe, Bhutan, El Salvador, South Korea and Saudi-Arabia.

<sup>96</sup> Defence Forces International Centre, FINCENT, UN Military Experts on Mission Course with a majority of female officers starts at FINCENT. August 15, 2017.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Anecdotal evidence from the field often suggests that both male and female victims of SEA tend to prefer to speak to female peacekeepers. Interview with Major General Kristin Lund, Norwegian Armed Forces.

<sup>99</sup> One study suggested that female peacekeepers working with victims of SEA did not feel that the pre-deployment gender training was sufficient. Although "women waiting to deploy felt confident that the training equipped them for all protection of civilian tasks that would be assigned.....women who'd returned from dangerous peace operations felt the pre-deployment training didn't adequately equip them. They found it especially challenging to handle complex cases where women and girls had experienced sexual violence related to conflict, were extremely traumatised, or required urgent assistance." Georgina Holmes, "Female military peacekeepers left feeling overwhelmed after inadequate training," *The Conversation*, May 29, 2019

Male peacekeepers may also encounter victims of SEA or have suspicions that SEA has or is occurring in an area that they are patrolling or investigating. It is critical therefore that they too have training on “survivor centred approaches” and are confident rather than reluctant when they find themselves faced with these situations. Effective training for emergency situations requires “every person in such a situation knows exactly what to do. This requires repeated exercises or drills. Planning and execution of these exercises has to be based on the experience of real scenarios...and the performance has to be evaluated. The drills have to be performed frequently to ensure that no one forgets the processes.”<sup>100</sup>

Similar to training launched by the UK military on conflict-related sexual violence<sup>101</sup> and FINCENT’s training approach, training for SEA should not be limited to a classroom but should be similar to other military drills. Exercises should model actual scenarios with people in mock real-life contexts. If peacekeepers do not feel comfortable and confident dealing with victims of sexual violence during these exercises, chances are low that they will be able to respond effectively when deployed. Peacekeepers should not be considered fully trained until they have satisfied instructor and inspector criteria for dealing effectively with conflict-related SEA scenarios. Mixed male-female drills can be helpful so that women and men gain experience and become comfortable working with each other on the sensitive issue of SEA.

### **6.5. Bystander Training:**

Bystander Intervention Training (BIT) trains participants on how to safely intervene in situations that could lead to sexual exploitation or violence and “how to interrupt a culture that is permissive of gender violence.”<sup>102</sup> There is a growing body of training and other informational materials<sup>103</sup> on bystander training, and many countries now train their military<sup>104</sup> and police services using this approach. The objective of this training is to go beyond explaining what SEA with a lecture or presentation, to giving participants training on how to identify problematic behaviour and gender dynamics that could lead to immediate harassment or violence, and what they should specifically do in those situations.<sup>105</sup> These trainings often involve scenarios and role plays, informed by real-life cases. The objective is to cultivate the idea that it is part of a peacekeeper, soldier and police officer’s job to prevent SEA, and to give security personnel concrete training and skills so that they can identify problem signs, and prevent SEA, especially SEA committed by peacekeepers themselves.

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<sup>100</sup> Klaus Kuhl, Kooperationsstelle Hamburg IFE GmbH, Germany, Emergency Drills and Exercises, [https://oshwiki.eu/wiki/Emergency\\_drills\\_and\\_exercises](https://oshwiki.eu/wiki/Emergency_drills_and_exercises)

<sup>101</sup> Aamna Modhin, “UK Armed Forces to Get Training on Preventing Sexual Abuse in Conflict,” The Guardian, 4 April 2019.

<sup>102</sup> John Hopkins University, “Bystander Intervention Training (BIT),” Homewood Student Affairs, Centre for Health Education & Wellness. Available at: <https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/chew/chew-crew/bit/> (March 8, 2019)

<sup>103</sup> George Vukotich, “Military Sexual Assault Prevention and Response: The Bystander Intervention Training Approach,” Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict, 17 (1). January 2013.

<sup>104</sup> Canadian Armed Forces, Operation Honour Training and Educational Materials as well as

<sup>105</sup> See for example, Canadian Armed Forces, “The Six Steps to Bystander Action,” <https://tinyurl.com/ybvsc14l>. The UK Defence Academy (<https://tinyurl.com/y9thgx5k>) and US also run Bystander Training Courses. See for example, S. Potter et al., “Bringing in the Bystander In-Person Prevention Program to a U.S. Military Installation: Results from a Pilot Study,” Military Medicine, Vol. 176, August 2011.

## 6.6. Peacekeeping Training for Female Police:

United Nations Police has led Female Senior Police Officer Command Development Courses in Addis Ababa, Kuala Lumpur and Dakar. For the first course in Addis in 2017, 47 course participants came from 24 countries. The rankings of the participants ranged from Lieutenant Colonel to Major General and approximately half had previously served in international peace operations. The instructors were also diverse; they came from 10 countries, and had backgrounds in UN policing, domestic policing, gender issues, and leadership. These trainings would also be an opportunity for ASEAN female police officers.<sup>106</sup>

The Norwegian National Police Directorate (POD), like the UAE training program, focuses on delivering training that give women experience in areas that they may have had fewer opportunities. Recognizing that in many countries, women have had fewer options for acquiring advanced driving skills, the POD supported driving courses in several African countries, including Ghana, which now conducts its own driving courses for female police officers. The POD and the ISS (Institute for Security Studies) also conducted an Integrated Gender and Sexual Gender-based Violence (SGBV) Course in 2014, with 71% female participation.

There have also been many trainings for female police, or on gender issues related to police work in the ASEAN region specifically. Interpol, funded by Canada, conducted a training and mentorship program involving 21 senior female leaders from law enforcement agencies from all 10 ASEAN countries at the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC) from 17-22 February 2019. UNFPA has led training courses for male and female police officers in Myanmar on gender-based violence in cooperation with the Myanmar Anti-Narcotic Association (MANA).

## 6.7. Summary of Key Elements Related to Training Programs:

- **Training of females for senior positions:** Some of these programs, such as UN Women's FMOC and the Female Senior Police Officer Command Development Courses aim to train women for attaining senior levels of operations and therefore target females of a certain rank or with experience.
- **Training of females to boost general overall numbers and participation:** Others, such as the UAE training, aim to boost the number of women entering peace and security fields, and accept women with recognized potential but low levels of experience. The UAE/UN Women course recognizes that in the Arab region, many women for gender-related reasons may not have started a career in peace and security.
- **Mixed male-female gender-related training:** Some training programs such as FINCENT's intentionally give male and female participants experience going through drills and exercises in balanced male-female groups. To ensure they have a high number of female participants from diverse regions, they partner with the UN and other countries to recruit and sponsor qualified females from lower income countries.

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<sup>106</sup> United Nations Office to the African Union, UNOAU Bulletin, United Nations Launches First Female Police Officers Command Development Course. November 2017-January 2018.

- **Military exercises and training related to SEA:** Military drills should encompass training to respond to cases of SEA, and utilize techniques such as bystander training to equip peacekeepers to recognize, prevent and address SEA committed by peacekeepers themselves
- **Addressing specific skills that women may have had fewer opportunities to attain:** Some training programs such as POD's police program, and the UAE/UN Women training focus on skills that women may not have had the opportunity to acquire to the same degree as men, such as driving and the use of firearms. Others such as UN Women's FMOC focuses on the role that female peacekeepers might play in preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence, especially for female victims.

## 7. INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS



Photo: Indonesian Mission UN



Implementing the women, peace and security agenda is a priority area for many countries as well as the UN system, and many donors have an interest in gender and peacekeeping in particular. With the two-decade anniversary of UNSCR 1325 this year, more attention is on this area, and countries, international organizations and civil society are planning events in which governments are often expected to announce new priorities and make pledges.

### **7.1. The United States GPOI Fund:**

One of the largest funders of peacekeeping in ASEAN countries has been the United States, especially through the State Department's Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI). Most ASEAN members have received support from the GPOI (which has annual funding of around \$100 million) including building and supporting National PKO Training Centres.<sup>107</sup> The US Military and GPOI have also funded activities related to women, peace and security but not extensively in ASEAN member countries. For example, in an effort to align its training programs with the commitments outlined in its own National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, the United States Africa Command launched programs for women from African militaries, and courses on gender integration in peacekeeping operations and responding to gender-based violence.<sup>108</sup> The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command also ran a two day Gender in Security Cooperation Course, tailored to foreign area officers and exercise planners. There are many opportunities that could be harnessed to ensure future support from the US also serve the US and ASEAN joint commitments to the women, peace and security agenda. Rather than always running separate WPS programs, for example, it is also important for gender-related issues to be considered in existing security-related programs and exercise. Future infrastructure/buildings, bilateral exercises and training should concurrently work to include female participants, integrate gender training, and construct buildings and barracks that can also accommodate women as trainers and participants.

### **7.2. Additional Key Donors:**

The EU,<sup>109</sup> Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom have all led and supported training programs to support peacekeeping operations. Many of these countries, such as Australia and the UK, have already been engaged in extensive partnerships with ASEAN member countries on peacekeeping. Opportunities to bring the WPS and peacekeeping agendas together and further partner with these countries should be explored especially given that these countries have already supported peacekeeping-related activities in the region, and they have their own targets and commitments to women, peace and security as spelled out by their own National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security. In every bilateral meeting or partnership related to peacekeeping and security, it should be asked: how can this also further the women, peace and security agenda?

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<sup>107</sup> David Capie, "Evolving Attitudes to Peacekeeping in ASEAN," in Katsuya Tsukamoto (ed.) *New Trends in Peacekeeping: In Search of a New Direction* (National Institute for Defence Studies, Tokyo: 2015), 120-1.

<sup>108</sup> Brenda Law and Cori Fleser, U.S. Africa Command, "AFRICOM develops a new tool to measure progress on women, peace and security," Jan 11, 2018.

<sup>109</sup> The Deputy Head of the EU Delegation to Vietnam met with Vietnam's Deputy Defense Minister in Feb 2020 to discuss their partnership activities, including the EU's support of training activities at VNDPKO.

### 7.3. UN Elsie Initiative:

ASEAN member countries can also explore opportunities to partner with the UN's Elsie Initiative Fund, an initiative led by Canada with additional funding from other UN Member States. The Elsie Initiative Fund:

- Supports T/PCCs (as well as countries intending to become T/PCCs) with undertaking a barrier assessment to ascertain the nature and extent of obstacles impeding their deployment of trained and qualified women peacekeepers.
- Allows T/PCCs to be reimbursed for some additional financial costs related to the deployment of women that are not covered by existing United Nations reimbursement policies
- Incentivizes T/PCCs to increase their meaningful deployment of trained and qualified women peacekeepers by offering a "gender-strong" unit premium.<sup>110</sup>

### 7.4. Asia Partnerships:

Opportunities for partnering on gender and peacekeeping initiatives with Asian countries such as Bangladesh, China, India, Japan and South Korea could also be considered. Bangladesh, China and India have all sent all-female Formed Police Units to UN PKOs. Learning from their experience with all female as well as mixed FPUs and contingents could be of interest as ASEAN countries further integrate women into their own peacekeeping deployments. Japan and South Korea have already been involved in supporting peacekeeping-related activities in ASEAN countries, and have their own commitments and experience with gender, peace and security that could be harnessed to support new partnerships related to WPS.

In summary, many countries have already been engaged in supporting peacekeeping-related activities, training and infrastructure in the ASEAN region. Most if not all of these countries have their own commitments and experience related to WPS. It is important to find ways to bring these agendas together, so that synergies for making progress on both agendas are harnessed. Indeed, evidence has shown that it is difficult if not impossible to make progress on either agenda without considering both concurrently.

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<sup>110</sup> A gender-strong unit includes but goes beyond just counting the numbers of women deployed. A gender-strong unit has substantial representation of women overall and in positions of authority, has provided gender-equity training to all unit members, and has adequate equipment and other material to ensure parity of deployment conditions for women and men peacekeepers. A "gender strong unit" engages both men and women in ensuring the unit promotes gender equality in all of its Mission activities. Global Affairs Canada, The Elsie Fund for Peace Operations Terms of Reference, 2019-2024. 14 March 2019.

## 7.5. Civil society partnerships:

Increasing partnerships with civil society organizations, especially those that are led by women, or in which women are centrally engaged, should also be considered. UN SG Antonio Guterres has urged Member States to support and partner with women's organizations that are already leading initiatives related to gender equality and women's rights protection, especially in fragile and conflict-affected states.<sup>111</sup> The need to increase these partnerships was also emphasized by UN Security Council in Resolution 2467. Enhancing partnerships with civil society during peacekeeping missions has been encouraged for over a decade at high levels of the UN system, but most of these partnerships remain untapped on the ground.<sup>112</sup> There are many strong examples of successful partnerships with civil society in peacekeeping related activities within ASEAN countries that could be further profiled. For example, civil society groups, including an all-female ceasefire monitoring group, have been critical to civilian protection functions carried out by the International Monitoring Team led by the Malaysian Armed Forces in Mindanao, Southern Philippines.<sup>113</sup> NGOs and civil society groups in ASEAN countries have also been global leaders in fielding highly trained all-female mine clearance teams, some of which have already been deployed to UN peacekeeping missions.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> UN News, "Real change involving women in peace and security still too slow Guterres tells Security Council," 29 October 2019.

<sup>112</sup> Civilian Capacity in the Aftermath of Conflict: Independent Report of the Senior Advisory Group. [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp), 22 Feb 2011.

<sup>113</sup> See Mary Ann Arnado, "Women's Involvement in Conflict Early Warning Systems: Moving from Rhetoric to Reality in Mindanao," Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, October 2012.

<sup>114</sup> Cambodia and Vietnam both have all female mine clearance contingents that have partnered with NGOs and civil society groups. One initiative, operating out of Quang Tri province in partnership with many donors and the Mines Advisory Group (MAG).

<https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/3045453/women-mission-clear-war-era-mines-vietnam>

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS



Photo: UN Photo/ Pasqual Gorizz



Photo: UN Photo/ Marco Dormino

Based on the analysis above of the global trends, ASEAN country deployments, persistent gender challenges, and innovative opportunities and best practices, the paper offers seven recommendations for enhancing women’s full and meaningful participation in ASEAN countries:

**8.1. Conduct barrier assessments** to identify the key challenges frustrating gender equality and female participation in peacekeeping deployments from ASEAN member countries.

**8.2. Create an enabling domestic policy environment** for making progress on women and peacekeeping, such as by developing National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security, and by prioritizing and incentivizing the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in police services and armed forces.<sup>115</sup> This should include policy options for ensuring women can be promoted and retain their jobs while balancing care responsibilities.<sup>116</sup> Gender equality needs to be prioritized at high levels within the armed forces and police services, with reasonable performance targets (such as recruiting or promoting a certain percentage of female personnel) included as part of employment compacts to ensure accountability and progress.<sup>117</sup>

**8.3. Aim to field “gender strong” units** for UN PKO deployment from ASEAN member countries, ones that are committed to promoting and upholding gender equality within their ranks and are trained to promote this value, as well as women’s rights protection, during the PKO.

**8.4. Identify and utilize training programs** that: (1) provide drills and exercises to mixed male-female groups that simulate actual civil protection and other scenarios, including those pertaining to SEA; (2) focus on female participants to address gaps in skill sets that women may have, such as driving experience, and firearms training<sup>118</sup>; (3) identify promising female police officers and female soldiers for high-level officer training to increase the supply of higher ranking female officers for PKO deployment;<sup>119</sup> and (4) offer bystander training to both males and females to prevent and address gender-related problems and SEA among peacekeepers themselves.

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<sup>115</sup> See for example, UNDP, *A Global Handbook: Parliaments as Partners Supporting the Women, Peace and Security Agenda*, UNDP Oslo Governance Centre, 2019

<sup>116</sup> ILO, *Care Work and Care Jobs*, 28 June 2018.

<sup>117</sup> “It needs to be in the compact for measuring the performance of the highest people and then they know they need to increase the number of women at all levels, it needs to be part of their job.” Interview with Ata Yenigun, Chief of UN Police Division’s Selection and Recruitment Section, May 20, 2020.

<sup>118</sup> Targeting females for all-female training can also be considered for high-level training. The Norwegian Army offers separate all-female training to females for Special Forces before merging them together “and the women were doing much better” with that model. Interview with Major General Kristin Lund.

<sup>119</sup> Interviews for this paper with those working on training, recruitment and operations stressed the importance of targeting women for training to build confidence and to fill gaps that women might have for gender reasons. However, the same interviewees also emphasized that it is just as important to open up opportunities to women so that they can gain experience and skills. Many stressed that governments, and military and police leadership need to be creative and flexible to ensure women have the opportunity to be deployed, enabling them to gain experience in areas and positions that they are prepared for, as this will further allow them to build their skills and confidence for more arduous tasks or high-ranking roles. “Offer temporary positions, for example to allow females gain the required language skills or get the proper driving training or licenses, but don’t let those issues result in turning females away.” Interview with Major General Kristin Lund.

### **8.5. Identify and harness synergies between demining groups, especially female demining contingents, the military, civil society organizations, and peacekeeping.**

Recognizing the grave security threat of mines, especially to civilians and children, UN SG Antonio Guterres has reiterated the importance of demining to peacekeeping missions, stating “peace without mine action is incomplete peace.” As mentioned above, ASEAN countries, especially Cambodia and Vietnam, have considerable strength in demining, as well experienced female deminers.<sup>120</sup> However, they are not always part of military or police units or tapped for UN missions. This could be a way for Laos to also cooperate further with ASEAN countries on WPS and perhaps UN Peacekeeping initiatives. Many UN PKOs, such as UNIFIL, rely on Cambodian demining expertise for their demining program.<sup>121</sup> This could be an area that ASEAN could build upon for women and peacekeeping.

### **8.6. Initiate an “ASEAN Female Peacekeeper Network”:**

The objective of this network would be to provide an online forum for female peacekeepers to connect in the region to share career advice, notify each other of opportunities, communicate about challenges they face in their careers and on deployments, and share strategies for addressing challenges.

**8.7. Launch a “Regional Centre on Women and Peacekeeping”** to catalyze and house the activities above. This would fulfill a need within the region for a training, resource and research hub dedicated to making concrete, measurable gains on women and peacekeeping.

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<sup>120</sup> “An increasing number of Vietnamese women are taking up mine-clearing jobs...Project Renew now has more than 60 women working for it, after 12 more women joined in the first three months of this year. The British-based Mines Advisory Group (MAG), which started work in Vietnam in 1999, has also seen the number of women workers double to 167 over the past two years.” Khairul Anwar, “44 years after war with US, Vietnam has an all-women team searching for unexploded bombs,” *The Week in Asia*, 9 June 2019.

<sup>121</sup> In UNIFIL, the demining program is comprised of deminers from Cambodia and China. On “8 January 2018, UNIFIL de-miners from China and Cambodia found and destroyed 22 deadly anti-personnel mines in Yaroun, clearing 31 square metres of land – all in a day’s work.” UNIFIL, “Keeping Peace Through Demining,” 19 Jan 2018.

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