

## **High Level Meeting: Strengthening the Conduct of Peacekeeping Personnel: Sharing Good Practices**

*Argentina – Written submission (June, 25<sup>th</sup> 2021)*

Below, the Argentine Mission to the United Nations shares the good practices of the Argentine Republic in terms of strengthening the conduct of personnel participating in peacekeeping operations. In the first part of the document, you will find inputs from the Ministry of Defense under whose orbit are the Armed Forces; while in the second part, inputs of the Ministry of Security under whose orbit is the police personnel. Finally, it is included a chapter pertaining to Argentina's practices about paternity and child support claims by mother and children of deployed personnel.

### **i. Ministry of Defense**

- a. The development of a Comprehensive Gender Policy Plan by the Ministry of Defense

The aforementioned Ministry has created a Comprehensive Gender Policy Plan, which has ten basic guidelines. One of these guidelines is aimed at promoting, at the national level, the necessary actions for the fulfillment of the commitments regarding women's rights in the area of women, peace and security adopted by the United Nations.

- b. The implementation of training courses in the Argentine Joint Training Centre for Peace Operations (CAECOPAZ) on the following topics:

- "Human Rights Training for Peace Operations": to provide with tools for the protection and monitoring of HRs;
- "Seminar on Gender Perspective in Peacekeeping Operations": related to the reinforcement of international and national regulations pertaining to Human Rights and especially with a gender perspective;
- "Basic Pre-Deployment Training Material": the course contains fundamental content required of all military personnel prepared for a peacekeeping deployment to function

effectively in UN PMOs according to established mandates, with a strong emphasis on lessons learned;

- "Protection of Civilians Course": specific content for protecting civilians with particular tools for peace missions, enabling the understanding of policies guiding the performance of personnel to be deployed in missions with a civilian protection mandate.

- c. Funding research projects with a gender perspective linked to the deployment of personnel in peace missions.

In 2017, the Ministry of Defense funded the project "Incorporation and strengthening of capacities and stress reduction of the personnel deployed in peace missions, humanitarian assistance and other risky activities. Innovative contributions to personnel management from a gender perspective has been incorporated through the "Defense Research and Development Programme", of the Secretariat of Research, Industrial Policy and Production for Defense. The results of this project will be part of the inputs to improve the conduct of personnel deployed in peacekeeping operations.

- d. Strengthening the Gender Office of the Joint Staff of the Armed Forces and appointment of Gender Liaison in the Operational Command

The Ministry of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces are working to strengthen the Gender Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces. In this sense, the Office Chief is studying a Specialization in Gender Policies in Institutional Management. Furthermore, a Gender Liaison has been created in the Operational Command of the Armed Forces and the Antarctic Command. The former initiative is in addition to the Gender Liaison of the Argentine Joint Training Centre for Peace Operations (CAECOPAZ). The aim is to continue strengthening training actions related to gender equality and raising awareness on eradicating gender-based violence.

- e. The Creation of Working Groups on Gender Mainstreaming in the Armed Forces by the Gender Policies Department of the Ministry of Defense

These actions mentioned above imply bringing together authorities of the Armed Forces who are strategic for transforming the institutional culture. Those actions are addressed to the Directors General of Personnel and Welfare, Legal Affairs, Education and Health, and the heads of the Gender Departments and ministerial officials, such as the Secretary of Strategies and Military Affairs. The Gender Policy Department coordinates the roundtables.

It is important to stress that work is currently underway to mainstream the gender perspective in the educational programmes of the Armed Forces, particularly concerning the training of Armed Forces personnel from a gender perspective. In this framework, the personnel of the Gender Offices of the Armed Forces are currently being trained through the Diploma in Gender Mainstreaming in the Armed Forces (UNDEF-MinDef). In 2020, more than 160 trainees were certified and during the academic year to end in September 2021, 200 participants are taking the course.

**ii. Ministry of Security**

Members of the Argentine National Gendarmerie (GNA) receive comprehensive professional training from the moment they join the Force, focused on protecting human rights, which is constantly updated. In this sense, the training institutes of the Force train the agents to respect the rules that govern it and the national legislation. They also inform them of the sanctions available in the event of misconduct.

- a. The disciplinary code that governs this institution establishes specific disciplinary offences that will be sanctioned by the Chief of that contingent if committed when the agent is deployed on a mission. In particular, paragraph 1 of this article states: "...the following, in particular, shall be considered as specific offences in peacekeeping or humanitarian operations (...) Failure to maintain a proper attitude of respect at all times in dealing with civilians, military or civilian personnel of the United Nations or other international organizations, and their symbols".
- b. Members of the GNA are obliged to comply with the institution's internal regulations and the ones of the country, which incorporate the Code of Professional Ethics and the Code

of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials established by the United Nations. Concerning the latter, they are updated every five years, and if they fail to do so, they are not eligible for promotion to a higher grade.

- c. The Police Peace Operations Training Centre has established pre-deployment courses on protecting civilians and the safety of women and children from developing the skills and competencies required for a UN peace operation according to UN standards and guidelines. During their training, candidates learn about human rights and core UN values. The training focuses on the protection of civilians and the safety of women and children. During this stage, they are taught the UN standards of conduct necessary for staff members to properly carry out their duties in the country in question, sharing experiences and examples from other missions. In general, the trainers have already been deployed on UN missions, so they have considerable experience in this field.

In addition, training is encouraged by all "measures to prevent possible misconduct in peace operations, including those aimed at ensuring efficient command and control". As a result, all personnel are made aware of the consequences of misconduct and wrongdoing for good behaviour and proper performance within the mission area. Appropriate conduct or behaviour enables staff members to build trust among the communities where they perform their daily duties. Measures taken to sanction or condemn misconduct prevent misconduct by certain staff members within the mission area.

In particular, the training of personnel to be deployed on Peace Missions is particularly based on the following UN Resolutions and Regulations:

- Declaration proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris (France) on 10 December 1948 in its "Resolution 217 A (III)".
- Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (United Nations General Assembly Resolution N°A/71/L.59 -GA/11894).
- United Nations Code of Conduct and Discipline, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in its Resolution 34/169, dated December 1979.
- Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13).

Deployed personnel are also encouraged to continue learning about certain issues, such as sexual abuse, misconduct, drunk driving, corruption, and gender-based violence, to suppress them.

Finally, the selection of the candidates is done taking into account the UN standards on its zero-tolerance policy and guidelines on sexual exploitation and abuse and integrity. In addition, they are urged to promote a gender perspective and enforce compliance with all international legal frameworks and provisions and human rights.

iii. **Argentina's practices about paternity and child support claims by mother and children of deployed personnel**

Concerning Argentina's practices about paternity and child support claims by mother and children of deployed personnel, the Argentine Republic is working hard to resolve four pending cases of SEA (Category 2), presumed paternity.

In this regard, the Gender Policies Department of the National Directorate of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (SEA Focal Point) of the Ministry of Defense has initiated actions in coordination with the Armed Forces and other state agencies, namely: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship, the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and the Family, the National Public Defender's Office and the National Genetic Data Bank.

These coordinated actions have made possible to take DNA samples from two of the presumed parents. Likewise, to advance in the necessary steps for transferring the children and mother DNA samples from their State to Argentina and, on the other hand, to make progress in taking DNA samples from another of the presumed fathers who voluntarily would give his DNA samples. Finally, these actions have permitted to work, together with the National Public Defender's Office, to identify an Official Public Defender who can represent the mother and child involved in a paternity and child support lawsuit.