

THE ROLE PLAYED BY WOMEN IN THE SECURITY SYSTEM: FROM UN RESOLUTION 1325 TO DIRECT ACTIONS

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***Abstract:** The role of women in the security and defense system has become increasingly visible in recent decades. Since the adoption of Resolution 1325 Women, peace and security of the Security Council of the United Nations Organization, on October 31st, 2000, member countries of this international organization, including our country, have taken steps to assume and implement new policies in the field of conflict resolution, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, which actively involves women. On the other hand, the intrinsic importance of women in the leadership and management of military structures, makes all legislative approaches related to this subject take concrete consistency.*

***Keywords:** female leader, gender, equality, legislative measures, leadership.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is a concept that is frequently discussed in various environments, a subject as sensitive as it is complex, encompassing a number of elements that arouse controversy. This implies the existence of equality between women and men, both in terms of their rights and opportunities, with the help of tools to eliminate psychological and social barriers that could jeopardize their achievement.

Nowadays, topics such as gender equality and equal opportunities between women and men are present in all social spheres, including security and defense, both at the national level and within international organizations such as the UN, NATO, EU, OSCE.

The United Nations presents gender equality as one of the global issues that it manages, but which still does not have a deeply visible solution at the level of all states. Respect for human rights is closely connected with equality between women and men, with a human aspect at its heart. This equality does not mean only equal access to resources or equal control over them, but also equal implication in decision-making and implementation and access to key, leadership positions.

In this sense, the provisions of Resolution 1325 of the UN Security Council on Women, Peace and Security are applied or in the process of being applied at the level of many states and international organizations, which are developing the legal and application framework to encourage the participation of women in missions and international peacekeeping operations, but also for their increased representativeness within the leadership systems at the level of public authorities or within the security and defense system.

2. THE ROLE OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325 IN TODAY'S WORLD

„United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, peace and security, adopted on 31 October 2000, affirms the important role of women in conflict prevention and resolution, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and post-conflict reconstruction and emphasizes the importance of the full participation and involvement of women in all efforts to ensure and promote peace and security.”[1]

There are 4 pillars on which Resolution 1325 rests, namely: **participation, prevention, protection and relief and recovery**. These pillars refer, on the one hand, to the involvement of women in the decision-making process at the national and international level, within the conflict resolution mechanisms, but also their participation in international peacekeeping missions under the auspices of the UN and the undertaking of measures to avoid violence against women during and after conflict and on the other hand to protect women against any type of sexual violence, including in the situation where they are in refugee camps and to support women by addressing their needs including in refugee camps.

By adopting Resolution 1325, the UN Security Council emphasized the fact that all conflicts involving the civilian population have a particularly strong impact on women and children, and at the same time, highlighted the idea that women have a particularly important role in achieving peace, maintaining it, but also in the post-conflict reconstruction period. This resolution has legal force and applies to all UN member states. In order to apply and implement the document, the UN Security Council supported the governments of all member states, but also civil entities, academic communities and other entities interested in developing and implementing action plans for the introduction of the gender perspective in the field of security and defense, by encouraging women to actively participate in peacekeeping missions, but also in post-conflict reconstruction missions.

At an international level, there is an Agenda on this topic, since its adoption eight more resolutions on this topic have been adopted, as follows:

- Resolution 1820/2008, which focuses on sexual violence as a war tactic;
- Resolution 1888/2009, which emphasizes the importance of UN maintenance missions of peace in the system of support and protection of women and children in conflict situations;
- Resolution 1889/2009, requesting the UN Secretary-General to bring to the attention a series of indicators for the application of the provisions of resolution 1325;
- Resolution 1960/2010, which calls for the creation of lists of people who commit violence against women;
- Resolution 2108/2013, which requests that the UN member states get involved in the application of the provisions of the Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security;
- Resolution 2122/2013, which elaborates measures to encourage and support the involvement of women in the resolution of conflicts at the UN level and beyond, and calls for the reduction of any impediments to this endeavor;
- Resolution 2242/2015, which focuses on new elements that have an important impact in this field: climate change, violent extremism, the increasing number of refugees and internally displaced persons;
- Resolution 2467/2019, which emphasizes the importance of eliminating sexual violence in conflict, elaborating measures to eliminate it.

Considering the importance of the mentioned theme in the contemporary security environment, the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda had and has echoes within other international organizations as well. At NATO this was achieved through the BISC Directive 40-1 Integration of UNSCR 1325 and the gender perspective in the NATO command structure, including protection measures during armed conflicts. The NATO document is an action plan that addresses the gender perspective, both at the level of NATO forces and in the plan of operations and missions that take place under the auspices of NATO. In the view of the North Atlantic Organization, the inclusion of the gender perspective must be carried out both in the planning stage, but also at all operational and management and evaluation levels. Deep awareness of this tool is the starting point for its implementation, at least at the organization level.

At the level of the European Union, the Women, Peace and Security Agenda is the mechanism by which equal opportunities between women and men are managed, as well as aspects related to violence and security, both inside and outside its borders. The overall vision of the Global FPS Agenda aims to achieve gender equality, peace and security.

In 2018, the EU Foreign Affairs Council adopted the Conclusions on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and the EU Strategic Approach to WPS, which wish to underline the full implementation of the WPS Agenda and the UN Strategy on Gender Equality, Peace and security.

The EU Council underlines the political importance of the WPS Agenda and welcomes its integration into various EU policies and action plans since the adoption of the Council conclusions in 2018. In this regard, the European Commission adopted the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 and the EU Gender Equality Action (GAP) III "An Ambitious Agenda for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in EU External Actions" 2021-2025, welcomed by the Presidency conclusions of 16 December 2020. *"The Council invites the High Representative and the Commission to report with on actions taken and lessons learned in the implementation of WPS commitments in reporting on the various policies and action plans and draw operational conclusions to accelerate actions in this regard."* [2]

The Council also notes that the implementation of the entire FPS Agenda remains a key priority for the EU-UN strategic partnership on peacekeeping and crisis management, as endorsed in its conclusions of 24 January 2022, as and for partnerships with other international and regional organizations such as the OSCE, NATO and the African Union. It calls for stepped-up efforts to accelerate the operationalization of the joint EU-UN engagement on FPS, with particular attention to the protection of human rights defenders and women involved in peacebuilding against reprisals, threats and violence. *„The Council encourages the EU and its Member States to systematically adopt a gender-sensitive approach and integrate a gender perspective and analysis, as well as the participation of women in all EU external actions, including all CFSP/ CSDP, civilian and military, as well as to political dialogues, human rights dialogues and international partnerships."* [3]

Therefore, as concerns the two previously mentioned international organizations, NATO and the EU, the WPS Agenda is assimilated and integrated into their action plans and policies, being an important tool for managing the issue of integrating women into various management teams and encouraging women's participation in construction and peacekeeping operations and missions in areas marked by conflicts, but also in areas requiring reconstruction.

3. THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE SECURITY SECTOR IN ROMANIA

In the last 50 years, society has gone through multiple periods marked by economic or social transformation, which determined the implementation of new social roles related to women, some of which belong to the field of security. Despite this aspect, the social image of the woman is still connected with the household, raising children, and that of the man with the idea of supporting the family financially, the social perception towards the roles of each gender has not improved to a satisfactory level.

3.1 Gender equality at the national level

At a national level, Romania has a legislative framework that refers to gender equality and combating discrimination, which was based on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, concluded in New York on December 19, 1979 and ratified by the Decree State Council no. 342/1981, which refers to the social, economic and political rights of women, being a first approach to equal opportunities between women and men, in all social sectors.

Subsequently, a series of subsequent documents related to this subject were issued, which regulate the promotion of equal opportunities between women and men, in order to eliminate direct and indirect discrimination based on sex, in all spheres of public life in Romania.

„Due to the awareness of the importance of UNSCR 1325 (2000), but especially the specific activities carried out, in 2014 the Implementation Plan was developed at the level of the Ministry of National Defense of UN Security Council Resolution 1325/2000 "Women, peace and security" and related resolutions, as well as the complementary documents approved at the level of various international organizations, of which Romania is a member - 2014-2024.”[4]

In our country, the Ministry of National Defense is the structure responsible for the integration of the National Action Plan.

The Ministry of National Defense is staffed by female personnel, both military and civilian personnel, who are employed in executive and management positions, at all hierarchical levels. From the point of view of the positions that can be occupied by women, in the Ministry of National Defense there are no regulations that prevent women from accessing certain positions, military or civilian, obviously in compliance with the general regulations corresponding to weapons and military specialties.

„Beginning in 2001, the Romanian Ministry of National Defence resumed a female recruitment and selection programme aimed at developing, utilizing and promoting women according to their genuine professional skills and potential.”[5]

Moreover, with our country's accession to NATO, the Romanian Army went through an extensive modernization process, which consisted of revisions on multiple levels, including: human resources field, and womens' access to the army that became unrestricted.

However, in 2005, at the level of Ministry of National Defense, it was decided that the number of women admitted to military institutions should be limited. The reason was the number of women who were admitted to the army in the period 2001-2005, was more than 50% of the total number of candidates to the military profession.

Nevertheless, as of 2017, this limitation has been removed, and the number of vacancies for access in military institutions was not restricted by gender.

3.2 Female leadership in national defense

At the military institutional level, the leadership is the most important segment that ensures the survival and the development of the organization.

Regardless of the resources, policies and strategies at their disposal, organizations cannot function without strong leadership and without decision-makers able to make correct, firm and timely decisions.

In the military field, as I mentioned before, the presence of women in military institutions is a relatively recent one. Also, „*at the level of NATO member states, the average number of military women present in armies is approximately 12%, an increase compared to 2015, when it was recorded only 10.8%.*”[6]

Despite these low numbers and all the stereotypes existing in the collective mind, in our country, women successfully occupy leadership positions in the military field, proving that they can be effective leaders in an organization that until recently was exclusively dedicated to the male side. Moreover, the way in which women led certain military structures or microstructures revealed that they possess remarkable leadership skills, and certain characteristics of them highlighted the importance and essential role they hold in the organization.

In military organizations, leadership is a complex of actions and activities that involve the ability to lead people and the organization itself, to establish and achieve the goals and missions related to the organization, to adopt decisions in a very short time, sometimes in crisis situations, to inspire, motivate, influence, encourage subordinates to perform at the highest level. These aspects can be put into practice by female military personnel, having the same effectiveness or even surpassing the level of effectiveness of male military personnel.

Addressing all aspects of the military leadership process requires a wide range of skills, cultures and a broad vision to make decisions with lasting impact. Increasing institutional performance, risk management, human resource management, solving crises that can arise in a very short time frame are just a few key areas that require answers filtered through a wide range of skills and talents of leaders. In the situation when we analyze the management of these issues from a gender perspective, we will find that the approach of female leaders can be different from that of male leaders.

In what follows, we will conduct a brief analysis based on empirical data of the attributes of military women in leadership positions that help them to establish a more constructive leadership relationship than men in similar situations.

First of all, by their nature, women possess both well-developed emotional and social intelligence, which makes it extraordinarily easy for them to interact with subordinates. The military environment is one in which teamwork, close cooperation between members of the organization is the key to solve many situations or even some crises. In this sense, the leader is the one who constitutes the link between individuals, being the facilitator of social relations.

Second of all, female leaders are highly organized, serious, and details-oriented. Regardless of the nature of the mission they have to perform, women focus deeply on accomplishing all the related tasks, sticking to the time and organizing the work in great detail. They focus on work results, but at the same time pays close attention to the needs of team members. These two aspects merge, and in this way, the effectiveness of female leadership increases.

In terms of communication style, the manner of conveying information, unlike men in management positions, who prefer to be as neutral as possible in communication, women in the same positions communicate with greater ease, using empathy, tending to help team members with their expertise to complete some challenging tasks for the team.

Moreover, an extremely important aspect specific to women leaders is the intuition.

This is „an immediate and irrational understanding of reality, a direct perception of spontaneously organized elements in a determined whole, or even "a kind of instantaneous and unpredictable illumination" that allow us to immediately understand the essence of a being or the solution of a problem.”[7] Intuition, along with big-picture thinking and emotional intelligence, are the foundation of a mid-term and long-term vision that any effective leader must have. Now, more than ever, the military organizational environment needs visionary leaders who have the ability to look into the future and to be able to easily adapt to future transformations. Women leaders in the military possess these important characteristics and they certainly help them in the process of leading troops.

CONCLUSIONS

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, peace and security, adopted on October 31, 2000 and all subsequent resolutions and documents were the pillars on which the human resources policies were developed regarding the integration of the gender perspective in the Romanian Army. This organization needs strong, trained, professionally competent leaders who are able to make decisions in any type of situation in a complex, volatile, uncertain and ambiguous operational environment.

Despite the preconceived ideals about the military profession, intended until recently for men, despite all the existing prejudices and stereotypes, in the international environment, women demonstrate that they can perform the same missions and perform the same functions, based on the same standards and conditions, as men.

Leadership has no gender, and leaders should not be selected using this metric. In leadership, both female leaders and male leaders must pursue efficiency and achievement of objectives, and the natural, biological differences between the male and female profiles must be used in favor of achieving results beneficial to the military organization.

As such, the society as a whole owes it to give up prejudices or destructive mentalities, to become open to new aspects, to accept the idea that women can lead any organization, and the leadership positions in the Romanian Army are not only dedicated to the male gender, but these they must be filled by truly competent people with genuine leadership qualities.

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