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## **WOMEN IN PEACEKEEPING**

A top priority for UN Police is to increase the number of female police officers in peacekeeping operations and encourage the recruitment of women in domestic police services. The United Nations ensures gender-sensitive policing throughout the work of United Nations Police as an operational necessity to address the differentiated security needs of women, men, girls and boys. Women bring importantly - extra dimension, which is the most important task of bringing peace, stability and development to people in countries recovering from conflict.

Female police officers act as role models for gender equality, inspiring women and girls to advocate for their own rights and pursue careers in law enforcement. Female police officers, moreover, provide a greater sense of security to women and children and improve access and support from law enforcement agencies to local women. They also help the United Nations address and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse. A female police officer may undergo more scrutiny or stress than her male counterparts.

The increased recruitment of women is critical for:

- empowering women in the host community;
- addressing specific needs of female ex-combatants during the process of demobilizing and reintegration into civilian life;
- helping make the peacekeeping force approachable to women in the community;
- interviewing survivors of gender-based violence;
- mentoring female cadets at police and military academies;
- interacting with women in societies where women are prohibited from speaking to men.

The presence of women peacekeepers can also:

- help to reduce conflict and confrontation;
- improve access and support for local women;
- provide role models for women in the community;
- provide a greater sense of security to local populations, including women and children;
- broaden the skill set available within a peacekeeping mission.

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