

PERSPECTIVES OF  
NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS  
ON THE SUBJECT  
REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE:  
AFRICA

Presented by  
Cecil B. Griffiths  
President

Liberia National Law Enforcement Association

# Introduction

I am very delighted to be a part of this very important event and to be able to share perspectives from the region of Africa relating to women in peacekeeping operations, progress that have been made and challenges that still need to be addressed. My presentation will focus on perspectives from Liberia, Nigeria and Cameroon highlighting contributions to UN missions, mechanisms for protecting the rights of women, and mechanisms for addressing sexual harassment and abuse particularly for women in the police and armed forces.

# Women in Peacekeeping Missions\*

- ▣ Women are deployed as police, military and civilian personnel within peacekeeping missions. They work across all areas from the protection of civilians to political and civil affairs, planning, logistics, and communications.
- ▣ In 2022, 7.9% of military, police, justice and corrections personnel in field missions were women. Women made up 5.9% of military contingents, 14.4 % of police contingents, and 42% of Justice and Corrections in UN Peacekeeping missions. 30% of civilian personnel were women.

# Africa's contribution to Peacekeeping Efforts

- ▣ As of July 2024, about 118 countries contributed troops to UN Peacekeeping operations.
- ▣ Of this number 35 African countries were engaged in peacekeeping operations .
- ▣ The top 10 African countries contributing troops were: Rwanda, Ghana, Morocco, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Egypt, Senegal, South Africa, Cameroon and Zambia

# Top Ten African Countries with Highest Number of Peacekeepers\*

Country	Male	Female	Total	% Female
Rwanda	5296	580	5876	9.8706603
Ghana	2197	429	2626	16.336634
Morocco	1667	34	1701	1.9988242
Ethiopia	1332	206	1538	13.394018
Tanzania	1351	161	1532	10.509138
Egypt	1366	95	1461	6.5023956
Senegal	1080	212	1292	16.408669
South Africa	921	229	1141	20.070114
Cameroon	984	122	1106	11.030741
Zambia	738	224	962	23.284823

# General context relating to Peacekeeping

- ▣ Liberia has been involved in UN peacekeeping initiatives since 2013 and has contributed troops to peacekeeping efforts in Mali, Sudan and South Sudan. Over 800 peacekeepers were deployed in Mali over the 10 year period and as of December 2023, Liberia's peacekeepers ended their mission in Mali. However, Liberian Police and Corrections officers are still deployed in South Sudan.
- ▣ About 10-12% of Liberian peacekeepers are woman.

# Training of Peacekeepers

- ▣ The Armed Forces of Liberia and the Police do not have a specialized Peacekeeping training Center, but provide peacekeeping training for officers selected for peacekeeping duties. The training covers key aspects of peacekeeping, human rights, gender issues including sexual and gender-based violence, sexual harassment and abuse.
- ▣ Since 2013 when Liberia commenced deployment in peacekeeping missions, there has not been any case of sexual harassment or abuse among its personnel.

# The Armed Forces of Liberia

The Armed Forces of Liberia was established in 1956 by an Act of the National Legislature. As part of the reform and restructuring of the AFL following the civil conflict, a new Act, the New Defense Act of 2008 was enacted which provided for the duties and functions, composition of the Armed Forces, eligibility for service, code of conduct which covers standards of conduct, political neutrality, respect for human rights, equal opportunity and non-discrimination, outside employment and legal obligations and protection for members of the Armed Forces



# Duties and functions of the AFL

- ▣ Defend the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Liberia
- ▣ Participate in International peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations
- ▣ Provide command, communications, logistics, medical and other humanitarian support to civil authorities in the event of man-made or natural disasters
- ▣ Assist civil authorities in search and rescue , and in peacetime, support national law enforcement agencies when such is requested and approved by the president.

# Composition of the Armed Forces

The Armed Forces of Liberia is composed of three branches: The Army, Coast Guard and Air wing

At present, the AFL comprises, one brigade, two infantry battalions, a support service company, a military support company and a logistics command and the Liberia National Coast Guard.

- The Air Wing is yet to be activated.

# Constitutional Provisions related to Defense and the Armed Forces.

The 1986 Constitution of Liberia provides that:

- The national legislature has the power to provide for the common defense, declare war and authorize the Executive Branch to conclude peace; and to appropriate funds for the upkeep of the Armed Forces and to make rules for the governance of the AFL
- The President serves as Commander in Chief, and may order any portion of the Armed Forces in a state of combat readiness in defense of the republic
- Appointment and commissioning of members of the AFL from the rank of Lieutenant or its equivalent and above.

## Laws relating to the security systems, organization of national security and security policy

Several laws have been enacted for the governance and organization of the law enforcement and security sector in Liberia. Key among these are:

The National Security Reform and Intelligence Act of 2011. This Act identifies the key National Security institutions and provides for the establishment of the Executive Protection Service, the National Security Agency, the National Security and County security Councils.

# Other Key Security Agencies Acts

- ▣ Major security agencies have their individual Acts:
  - ▣ Liberia National Police Act of 2015
  - ▣ Liberia Immigration Act of 2015
  - ▣ Liberia Drug Enforcement Act
  - ▣ Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission Act
  - ▣ New National Defense Act of 2008
  - ▣ Financial Intelligence Agency Act
  - ▣ Liberia Revenue Authority Act, covering the Bureau of Customs and Rehabilitation
  - ▣ The Executive Law, covering the Ministry of Justice and Liberia National Fire Service and
  - ▣ The Criminal Procedure Laws, covering the Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation

# Military Justice and Discipline in the Army

Liberia's Uniform Code of Military Justice of the Armed Forces was enacted on October 2017. However, the Court-Martial Tribunal have not been fully established due to the lack of trained Military judges.

For violations of military rules, the AFL relies on AFL Regulations 10-4 - Command Policy to institute discipline on violators.

However, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of National Defense have signed a memorandum of Understanding to enhance accountability within the Armed Forces of Liberia through the Civilian Justice System. This allows for the prosecution in a civilian court of members of the AFL suspected or accused of any offenses beyond the authority and capability of the AFL Disciplinary Board and any criminal offense a member of the AFL commits against a civilian.

# Discipline in the Police

- ❑ The Police Act provides for internal and external oversight mechanisms for addressing misconduct of Police officers.
- ❑ The Professional Standards Department is established for internal investigations, while the Civilian Complaints Review Board is responsible for reviewing all complaints made against police officers and civilian personnel, and the Police department itself. It serves as the oversight body for the complaints and investigation processes within the Police and ensure that complaints are professionally handled. However, the Police Code of Conduct does not clearly define sexual harassment and abuse. Officers involved in rape, or sexual assault are processed and forwarded to the courts for prosecution. In some cases officers are charged with “Acts unbecoming a Police officer”, and investigated internally.

# General context of the incorporation of women into the armed forces and the police

Article 18 of the Liberian Constitution prohibits employment discrimination based on sex. The Armed Forces of Liberia adheres to this policy and recruits both men and women into its ranks. Likewise the Police.

Liberia's National Action Plan on women, peace and security 2019-2023 sets targets for the increased participation and leadership of women and young women in Security Sector Institutions including a target of LNP – 30 per cent, LIS – 30 per cent, LDEA – 20 per cent, AFL – 10 per cent and BCR – 30 per cent.





# Status of women in the Army and Police

In December 2020, the AFL reported that of the 1858 members, 81 (4.4%) were women, which includes 4.3 female officers (6 female and 134 male), and 4.4 per cent female enlisted personnel (75 females and 1643 males).

For the Police as of June 2024, of the 4,974 personnel, 1023 were females amounting to 21 per cent.

The Police 421 commissioned officers (8.5%) and 4553 non-commissioned officers.

Female recruits for Military undergo the same training as the male counterparts. This also applies to the police recruits.

# General context, rules, norms and challenges on sexual harassment and abuse in the region

Many countries in the region have Incorporated International and regional protocols for the promotion of gender equality and the containment of sexual harassment and sexual abuse. Liberia is no exception.

# International Instruments embraced by Liberia

Liberia is a signatory to several human rights treaties, including: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ratified 2004), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICCPR) (ratified 2004), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ratified 1976), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (ratified 1984); the Optional Protocol was signed in 2004 but is still to be ratified, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (ratified 2004), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), Women, Peace and Security Agenda and the General Recommendation 30 on Women in Conflict Prevention, Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations (GR30) among others

# National Legal and Police Framework

Liberia has enacted several laws and policies to address sexual and gender-based violence to include:

1. The Domestic Violence Act in which harassment is punishable as a second degree misdemeanor. The Domestic Violence Act of 2019 Sec. 26.11 defines harassment as:

“ Engaging in a pattern of conduct that induces the fear of harm to a person including:

- Repeated watching, or loitering outside or near the building, or place where a person resides, works, carries on business or studies;
- Repeatedly making telephone calls to or inducing another to make telephone calls to a person whether or not conversation ensues with the intent to cause physical harm to that person; and
- Repeatedly using the Internet or other electronic means to make unwanted or malice communication to a person whether or not conversation ensues.

Under the or more aggravating circumstances are present, such as inflicting bodily injury, brandishing a deadly weapon or prior conviction , at which time offense is punishable as second degree felony.

# National Legal and Policy Framework

- ▣ The Penal Law of Liberia classifies harassment as a crime. Section 14.28 provides that: A person is guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree if, with intent to frighten or harass another, he:
  - ▣ (a). Communicates in writing a threat to commit a violent felony
  - ▣ (b) Makes repeated telephone calls, anonymously or in offensively coarse language; or
  - ▣ (c) Makes repeated telephone calls, whether or not a conversation ensues, with no purpose of legitimate communication.
- ▣ For Misdemeanor of the second degree, a person may be sentenced to a definite term of imprisonment by the court at no more than thirty days.

# National Legal and Policy Framework

- ▣ The Domestic Violence Act of 2019 defines Sexual Abuse as follows: “Sexual Abuse” means any conduct that abuses, humiliates, degrades or otherwise violates the sexual integrity of the person, including any act or threatened act of sexual violence comprising any behavior that constitutes sexual assault under sub Section 14.77 of the Penal Law, irrespective of the nature of the relationship between the defendant and the survivor/victim, such as forcing a person to witness, maintain or participate in unwanted sexual intercourse by means of intimidation, threat, coercion or the use of force that causes the person to commercialize or to use, in any way, his or her sexuality; or that forces a person to marry, to become pregnant, to have an abortion or to engage in prostitution through coercion, blackmail, bribe, manipulation, intimidation or other illegal means, and confining or detaining a person against their will.

# National Legal and Policy Framework

- ▣ The civil service standing orders addresses sexual harassment in the workplace – it defines sexual harassment as “unwelcoming sexual advances for sexual favours and other conduct of sexual nature – such as unwelcome verbal, visual or physical advances. – that tend to create a hostile intimidating, or offensive work environment.

# Sexual harassment and abuse in the Armed Forces

The Policy of the Armed Forces of Liberia is that sexual harassment is unacceptable conduct and will not be tolerated. The leadership at all levels will be committed to creating and maintaining an environment conducive to maximum productivity and respect for human dignity. Sexual harassment destroys teamwork and negatively affects combat readiness.



# Sexual harassment and abuse in the Armed Forces

Chapter 7 of the AFL Command Policy, provides for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment in the AFL. It covers, Chain of Command responsibilities, definitions, categories of sexual harassment, types of sexual harassment, techniques of dealing with sexual harassment, training and How to file complaints.

# Offenses highlighted in the AFL Policy

- ▣ Rape and sexual assault
- ▣ Stalking
- ▣ Sexual assault /rape of a child
- ▣ Forcible pandering
- ▣ Viewing/visual recording or broadcasting
- ▣ Indecent exposure

# Penalties for perpetrators

- ▣ 180 days of correctional custody
- ▣ Forfeiture of 2/3 pay per month for 6 months
- ▣ 45 days of extra duty
- ▣ A Reprimand
- ▣ A reduction of grade
- ▣ Restriction to specified period not exceeding 180 days
- ▣ Administrative discharge

# Cameroon

Over the years, Cameroon has continuously contributed to the United Nations peacekeeping operations, demonstrating its dedication to global peace and security initiatives. Cameroon usually provides personnel of both sexes to these missions who serve in a variety of capacities such as police officers, military personnel, civilian staff and experts in different roles.

Since 1992, Cameroon has participated in a number of UN peace-keeping operations including Cambodia in 1992, Kosovo, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire (2004), the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Haiti and Sudan. Cameroon has participated actively, to put an end to the on-going crisis in the Central African Republic under the banner of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), since 2014; supporting the transition process, facilitating humanitarian aid, promoting and protecting human rights, providing support for justice and the rule of law, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

In 2008, Cameroon established a training program, referred to as the International School for Security Forces (known by its French acronym as EIFORCES), to train police and law enforcement contingents for peacekeeping missions. In April 2020, Police Commissioner Oyono née Thom Cecile became the new Deputy Director General of the training school, the first woman to hold the position.

# Policy Declaration on the Integration of Women in Development;

Cameroon has developed several policies to advance gender equality and protection such as:

- The Multi-sectoral Plan of Action on Women and Development; and
- National Plan of Action on the Integration of Women in Development.
- In 2011, Cameroon adopted the National Gender Policy Document 2011-2020 by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family (Ministère de la Promotion de la Femme et de la Famille: MINPROFF).

Other key documents worth mentioning are:

- The National Strategy to Combat Gender-Based Violence (2017-2020), which aims at contributing to the reduction by half the prevalence of various forms of gender-based violence by 2020.
- The National Strategy to Combat Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Cameroon 2022-2026, which was launched by the government of Cameroon in November 2022, as a second generation 4-year long strategy which aims to contribute to the reduction by at least half the rate of GBV by 2026
- The National Action Plan for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Cameroon 2022-2026.
- The 3 documents were listed in a statement by the Cameroon Human Rights Commission to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women in 2023, as being adopted and implemented at the national level as instruments of the national policy for the promotion and protection of the rights of women and the girl child, including combatting violence against women.

# Rights of Women in the Police

As far as protecting the rights of women in the police is concerned, the only provision in the statute is on the issue of granting maternity leave for policewomen in addition to other leave benefits for police officers. Article 44 of the Statute, makes provision for 14 weeks of maternity leave for policewomen. The Statute lacks regulations on the issue of sexual harassment and gender-based violence within the police force, but notes that any professional or extra-professional misconduct exposes its perpetrator to a disciplinary action, irrespective of possible criminal sanctions or a judgment on accounts. Article 94 (e) addresses violence and assault by prohibiting “violence, assault or brutality towards a law enforcement officer, a person in police custody or any person brought to the police station”.

# SEXUAL HARASSMENT/ABUSE AND RELATED AGAINST WOMEN IN THE ARMED FORCES AND POLICE

In a study carried out with the aim to understand the lived experience of female soldiers in the Cameroonian army, the author notes that there is a continuous increase in the number of women engaged in the Cameroonian army, even though their involvement is still disproportionate to that of men. The study further reveals that women in the armed forces face many gender-related challenges; mainly stereotyping, sexual harassment and underrepresentation in combat arms branches, which made their experiences in the army difficult.

Participants reported that there are too few women in the army that their voices cannot be heard, stating that it's a man's world. Female soldiers are usually stereotyped by their male counterparts when they are given a promotion or a command assignment. They would consider them as whores and accuse them of sleeping with a commander, colonel or general to have the position. Other participants revealed that they felt unsafe because they have either experienced verbal or physical advance of a sexual nature or have heard about incidents of sexual harassment. Other forms of gender harassment which participants reported include; resistance to authority, gossip, rumours and indirect threats.

# Case study - Cameroon

In conclusion, sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence are common in the Cameroon defence sector which is a male-dominated sector. Enhancing the protection of women in the armed forces against these vices is therefore very crucial and requires a multifaceted approach involving developing comprehensive policies, training and capacity-building programs, developing safe reporting mechanisms, putting in place accountability measures and engagement of stakeholders. If these recommendations are put in practice, Cameroon can create a safer environment for women serving in the military and police.



# Case study – Cameroon

## Recommendations

Cameroon needs to revise its codes; particularly the labour code, the military code of justice and the Special Statute of the Corps of National Security Officials to include provisions on sexual harassment and gender-based violence and equally provide technical and financial support to justice institutions to be able to handle such issues.

# Case study – Cameroon

## Recommendations

It is vital for the government to establish safe, easily accessible channels for women experiencing GBV or sexual harassment in the armed forces to report. The government ought to establish independent bodies or hot lines where victims can report incidents without worrying about shame or reprisals. To encourage more women to come forward with their experiences, these systems need to ensure that they remain anonymous and that they are protected.

# Case study – Cameroon

## Recommendations

Include modules on GBV, sexual harassment and gender equality in human rights training courses in police and military academies, and equally organize more capacity-building workshops for all military personnel and not only for those who would be deployed to peacekeeping missions.

# Case study – Cameroon

## Recommendations

There is a need for the government, through the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family, the Ministry of Defence, the General Delegation for National Security, as well as Civil Society Organizations, to thoroughly revise the NAP on the UNSC Resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security given that it was made to run for the period 2018-2020. The revised NAP should take into account the evolving dynamics of conflict in Cameroon, as well as incorporate the lived experiences of servicewomen who face unique challenges related to sexual harassment. In revising this plan, it is crucial to engage with female service members through consultations or focus groups to gather insights into their specific needs and concerns. The updated NAP should include clear strategies for curbing sexual harassment, supporting victims, and advancing gender equality within the military.

# Case study – Cameroon

## Recommendations

- ▣ The government should make available data regarding incidents of sexual harassment within the armed forces. This would enable researchers, advocacy groups and policy-makers to gain a better understanding of the prevalence and nature of sexual harassment within the military and facilitate discussions around the subject. This can further enable stakeholders to identify trends, assess the efficacy of existing policies and develop targeted initiatives. Additionally, making this data available to the public may promote accountability within the armed forces and a culture that places a high value on the safety and respect for all personnel irrespective of gender.

# Case Study - Nigeria

Nigeria has participated in United Nations peacekeeping operations since its independence in 1960. The first recorded mission was to the Congo from 1960 – 1964. Since then, Nigeria has participated in several peacekeeping missions at the global, regional and sub-regional levels.

Nigeria as of 31st July 2023, has deployed 475 uninformed personnel to UN peacekeeping operations. 354 out of this number are men and 121 are females.

# Case Study - Nigeria

A peacekeeping office was established for the NPF in 2005 with a vision to “research, train and deploy for global peace support operation” and a mission “to equip personnel with requisite skills and competencies required to meet complex peace support operations environment through the delivery of quality internationally recognized and professional training.” Since its establishment, the office through its directorate has trained and deployed officers for peacekeeping missions in the AU, ECOWAS and UN and has served as a liaison between while monitoring and reporting to the inspector general of police. It is said that in the last 50 years over 12,000 personnel have been deployed by the office to support peacekeeping operations in the UN, AU and ECOWAS, the first recorded mission having taken place in 1960 where officers were deployed to the UN mission in Congo. Based on participation in several peacekeeping missions, the NPF has facilitated training at peacekeeping centers across the world.

# Case Study - Nigeria

Training is conducted primarily at the Martin Luther Agwai International Leadership and Peacekeeping Centre where the capacity of the officers is built to undertake peacekeeping operations prior to deployment. Courses on peacekeeping have been embedded in regular training for the armed forces to ensure widespread knowledge of the rules and regulations of peacekeeping and the technical and operational skills needed on the missions.



# Laws Protecting Women in Nigeria

The existence of Laws that protect women in Nigeria is not lacking. The issue has remained the knowledge of the existence of Laws and the processes and procedures for the implementation of the Laws. Another challenge is the lack of clarity on the provisions of the Law, the flexibility/discretion afforded to the judiciary on sentencing and the lack of clear definitions for some of the offences. Although the VAPP Act has enhanced the criminal jurisprudence by defining most of the gender-based violence offences, most prosecutors across states in Nigeria still leverage on the Criminal and Penal Code Laws in enforcing the rights of survivors of gender-based violence. Given the stated challenges with its provisions and the minimal penalties for persons convicted for the offences, deterrence remains significantly low and underreporting of cases significantly high.

# Laws Protecting Women in Nigeria

The penalty for the offence of rape as provided for in section 1(2) of the VAPP Act is life imprisonment as a maximum and 12 years as a minimum for adult offenders. Where the offender is less than 14 years, the sentence would be a maximum of 14 years, and for rape by a group of offenders, the maximum sentence would be 20 years with no option of fine. A survivor/victim of rape is entitled to compensation as awarded by the courts subject to its discretion (section 1(3)) and a perpetrator convicted of the offence will be included in a register for offenders accessible to the public.

# Persons responsible for receiving complaints

For the police, complaints of sexual harassment and assault are typically reported to the following authorities:

**Police Public Complaints Committee (PPCC):** The PPCC is a statutory body established under the Police Act 2020 to investigate complaints against police officers. Complaints of sexual harassment and assault can be lodged with the PPCC at the state or federal level. (Section 131 of the Police Act 2020)

**Internal Affairs Unit (IAU):** The IAU is a department within the NPF responsible for investigating internal matters, including allegations of sexual harassment and assault. Complaints can be lodged with the IAU at the state or federal level. (Section 21 of the NPF Regulations)

**Police Service Commission (PSC):** The PSC is an independent body established under the Police Service Commission Act (Cap. 346, LFN 2004) to oversee the police force. Complaints of sexual harassment and assault can be lodged with the PSC. (Section 6 of the Police Service Commission Act).

# Persons responsible for receiving complaints

For officers of the Nigerian Armed Forces, the Armed Forces Act was enacted. The Act provides for offences and penalties and the procedures and processes for seeking redress as well as the mechanisms for disciplinary actions. For the purposes of this research, the applicable offences are Rape, Defilement, Sexual Relations, Fraternisation and Sodomy.

# Persons responsible for receiving complaints

In Nigeria, the military code of conduct is outlined in the Armed Forces Act (Cap. A14, LFN 2004) and the Nigerian Army, Navy, and Air Force Regulations and complaints of sexual harassment and assault are typically reported to the following authorities:

**Chiefs of Staff:** The Chiefs of Staff are responsible for investigating complaints against military personnel. Complaints of sexual harassment and assault can be lodged with the Chiefs of Staff at the national level.

**Judge Advocate General's Office:** The Judge Advocate General's Office is responsible for investigating and prosecuting military personnel for criminal offenses, including sexual harassment and assault. Complaints can be lodged with the Judge Advocate General's Office.

**Military Police:** Military police units are responsible for investigating and enforcing military laws and regulations, including complaints of sexual harassment and assault.

# Challenges

The avenues and mechanisms for the reporting of offences in the security agencies are in place, however, the major challenges being experience by complainants within the security agencies in bureaucracy, fear of job loss, lack of trust for anonymity, lack of trust in the reporting mechanisms, low conviction rate for perpetrators, threats, humiliation, lack of support and delays in feedback on complaints lodged. The challenges deter complainants from lodging complaints or following through on complaints lodged. Adding to their frustration is the apparent lack of safe spaces for complainants and strong religious and cultural norms that frown against such offences.

# Nigeria Case Study - Conclusion

The Nigeria case study concludes that Nigeria has made tremendous strides in ensuring that the institutional and legal frameworks are in place to enhance women's participation in the security agencies, however, the knowledge of the support systems and the implementation of the Laws and policies remains a barrier to attainment of full participation and support.

Nigeria should leverage on the opportunities and support from the international agencies and organizations to enhance its capacity on gender mainstreaming and inclusivity to attain its desired goal and strengthen the mechanisms in place to ensure a conducive environment for participation. Once implementation is enhanced, a robust framework will emerge where both genders will be adequately supported in the discharge of their roles and responsibilities; and perpetrators of violence deterred from the commission of offences.

# Recommendations

The following recommendations are suggested:

The gender desk officers in the armed forces, and police should ensure consistent gender integration into the armed forces with regular training modules on best practices to enhance transparency and ensure accountability.

The officers in the armed forces and the police especially the women need to be properly sensitized and educated on the measures in place in the legal and institutional frameworks that provide protection to them for offences perpetrated.

Further capacity building specially for gender should be integrated and routinely conducted for the armed forces and the police.

Provision should be made for mental health and psychosocial support for survivors of gender-based violence at no cost to the officers.

Revision of the Armed Forces Act and other gender policies should be undertaken to enhance the support afforded to women officers.



# Concluding Recommendations

- ▣ Improving the participation of African countries in peacekeeping operations, especially in addressing sexual harassment and abuse, requires a multi-faceted approach. May I advance the following recommendations:
  - ▣ 1. strengthening National Policies. African countries should develop and enforce robust national policies that address sexual harassment and abuse within the military and police forces. This includes clear reporting mechanisms and strict penalties for offenders.

# Concluding Recommendations

2. Training and Education: Implement comprehensive training programs for peacekeepers that focus on gender sensitivity, human rights and the prevention of sexual harassment and abuse. This training should be mandatory and regularly updated.

3. Enhanced Accountability: Establish independent and transparent mechanisms to investigate allegations of sexual harassment and abuse. Ensure that perpetrators are held accountable regardless of their ranks or position.

# Concluding Recommendations

4. Promoting Gender Equality: Encourage the recruitment and promotion of women in peacekeeping forces. Gender balanced teams are less likely to engage in sexual harassment
5. Community Engagement: Engage with local communities to raise awareness about the importance of preventing sexual harassment and abuse. This can help build trust and cooperation between the peacekeepers and the communities they serve.