



Preface

RESDAL [Security and Defence Network of Latin America] was created eleven years ago. Its first programme started in September 2001. Four years later, it released one of its main products –the first edition of this Comparative Atlas of Defence published in 2005—making a qualitative step forward and becoming recognized for producing with a collective group of people the first publication of its kind in the region.

We are now presenting the Fifth edition of the Atlas. Since its creation, it has been elaborated with the conviction that information is a precious asset, given the value currently given to knowledge and the idea that information is a confidence-building measure, especially when referring to defence matters. As always, we seek to continually update information. In that information-building process, our team makes daily contacts with ministerial officials, members of the armed forces and experts of RESDAL, to whom we wish to thank for their patience when they receive our calls requesting data, as well as for their effort to minimize the number of errors in this publication. The Atlas has evolved. More countries are now covered. We are now reporting not only about Latin America, but also the Caribbean countries. This idea was actually conceived in the 2010 edition, as a way of deepening knowledge and to advance in bringing Latin America and the Caribbean closer together.

Thanks to the support of the Open Society Foundation (OSF), we have been able to continue this effort regularly. The support of the Centre for Civil-Military Relations (CCMR), from Monterrey, has enabled us to publish once again the English version of the Atlas. This is a significant development, given that one of the purposes underlying this work is the value of this kind of information in other spheres. The countries of the region have made progress in their legal reforms, providing a framework to their defence policies, and have adopted reforms that have strengthened the institutions responsible for conducting and carrying out these policies, inserting the defence area into the new democratic context. This situation, presently expressed more clearly, is the result of a process that has taken place for the last twenty to thirty years, which also involved the decision by the countries to work in coordination and cooperation with their neighbours, either at the hemispheric or sub-regional level.

Sharing key data on the sector reform in the region and on ways of cooperation and organization adopted by the various countries is extremely valuable for nations from other regions, which are also immersed in similar processes of change. The pages of this publication were written with that spirit in mind. The region must advance towards the understanding that taking part in the international sys-



tem is important and involves more than acting as troop-contributing countries; there are experiences and reforms that offer opportunities for the region to play leading roles in this field. Thus, by sharing its experiences, the region can make a significant contribution. Therefore, when preparing this edition with Marcela Donadio, we decided to include additional information on the Latin American involvement in peacekeeping operations and their challenges, introducing not only the experience in MINUSTAH (Haiti) but also in MONUSCO (Democratic Republic of the Congo). In a near future, we hope to cover an edition in Portuguese, so as to widen the spectrum even further.

We believe it is worth making this effort. Edition after edition, this tool has proved to be useful for actors from different spheres and fields. The Atlas can be found in libraries and offices of the most diverse places, and receives a large number of visits and queries through our website and social networks. It is also used as a source of reference at ministries and armed forces around the region, and its recent editions were distributed at the Conferences of Defence Ministers of the Americas (CMDA). We are aware that there are new subjects and issues still to be covered and information to be obtained and analysed even further. Likewise, we have been able to gradually collect data on the officer corps recruitment, but there is still more to be done in this area. We also know that a rebirth of the defence industry is taking place across the region. We have here provided only primary references, but we expect to expand them in the next edition.

Furthermore, we have attempted to cover the intricate map of international relations which cover ministries and forces, treaties, agreements and various fora, some of which are older or have a higher level of formality than others. In some cases, basic information on the deployment of defence forces has also been included, although without data on equipment and weapons, as we know there are

excellent publications that address this issue. Moreover, care should be taken in the use of resources to carry out the cross-checking of approximately 8,000 data published. We have also included papers expressing their authors' ideas and challenging the reader to find other positions that also exist and are present along the publication's pages.

With this fifth edition about to be printed, we are already analyzing the contents for the next edition and its key points, as deep economic, social and political changes are taking place in the region, though still presenting a small impact on the actions of defence ministries and military forces. We also know that similar publications on citizen and public security need to be developed in parallel, a significant challenge that began with in the *Índice de Seguridad Pública y Ciudadana en América Latina. El Salvador, Guatemala y Honduras*, published in 2011.

Finally, we would like to thank all the ministries and armed forces of the different countries that have greatly contributed to this Atlas. We also wish to express our appreciation to Juan Rial for his relentless advice and thoughts, to Samanta Kussrow for her coordination efforts, and to Hal Klepak for his invaluable assistance. We also thank our graphic designer, the printing house and the translators' team who are once again working with us, and to the team of RESDAL's Executive Secretariat. They have all contributed to the task of compiling all the information and designing it to have an appealing product. Today, it is important not only to have data available, but also to present it in a way which that may captivate the reader. And this is the endeavour we have embarked upon for the last seven years, with a spirit to continually improve our work.

Paz Tibiletti
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